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CONTEMPORARY LIFE OF CZECH IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM
1985

Jana Koudřová

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D.

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

V Olomouci dne.....

Podpis

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1. Introduction

Considering the fact that there are more than half a million people of Czech origin living in the United States nowadays, people might think about what their life looks like. What do they do for a living? Where do they live? Are they still Czech citizens or are they Americans now? Many things have changed for them, the way of life, the language they speak and the most important the attitude toward their dreams coming true.

The emigration of Czech people to the United States dates back to the seventeenth century and is still happen. Because of religious problems, the first emigrational wave, introducing Augustine Herman and his followers, took place. Lack of knowledge of the English language, not enough money and exhaustion from the journey overseas made it difficult for the Czechs to adapt and survive. The next emigrational wave is considered to have taken place after the Revolution in 1848, with the leading role of the journalist Vojtěch Náprstek, who was informing Czech people about the situation in the United States. In 1862 the U.S. government helped immigrants by giving a hundred and sixty acres of rough land to use, resulting in ownership after five years. This Act attracted many Czech families, who worked together and benefited from the land. Czech immigrants afterwards established many cities, quarters and villages. They were also building churches and schools. As they lived in the United States for a longer time and generations grew wider, Czechs became more adapted to the live in the country. They learnt the language, familiarized themselves with American culture and eventually held jobs in governmental and public sectors. Between and after the World Wars, immigrants sometimes found their way home, but disappointed and frustrated came back to the United States. Comparison of the countries was cruel and had a severe impact in the process of preserving the Czech culture among immigrants. Not until Kennedy's motto became famous had people started to discover their family history and wanted to search for Czech relatives. After the Warsaw pact invasion in 1968, Czechs got really upset about the political situation and many decided to abandon the country. With the conditions for emigration being difficult, many firstly succeeded in reaching Western countries and eventually the United States. Ever since the communist regime was overthrown in 1989, citizens could enter the United States only with a visa issued in the Embassy of United States.

Czech citizens only need to fill in an application at Visa Waiver Program from November 13, 2008 and can afterwards enter the United States with no bigger issues for no longer than ninety days.

As time progressed, the conditions for the journey changed and people are able to travel with fewer troubles, therefore do it more often, which is the reason why I decided to write this thesis. There are many sources, for example diploma works, books or internet articles about the emigration process and its history, but not many are written about the contemporary life of the Czech immigrants in the United States. Some individuals think that people who migrate seeking better life conditions or work opportunities, should not be called emigrants, but this is not correct. Anyone who decides to live abroad is called an emigrant from the original country and an immigrant to the new country.

This thesis could serve as a guide for new immigrants in the United States, because it describes the steps an immigrant must follow in order to live and work there. Different kinds of visas and permits are presented in the subsequent chapters, as well as the different cases of usage in various family roles and expectations.

The practical part of the thesis is based the author's personal experience, which was gained during a visit in Atlanta and its surroundings. As the author had the opportunity to meet dozens of Czech immigrants, much valuable information were gained and consequently used in the process of composing this work. The reader of the thesis will learn about the situation of contemporary Czech immigrants. The adaptation process of the Czechs is mentioned and the results of a survey are shown. The survey was conducted while the author was staying in Atlanta and personally met some of the emigrants; questionnaires were also filled in and sent via internet by the immigrants.

2. Theoretical part

2.1. Migration, emigration, exile

Migration is primarily considered to be used in a sociological context, but it is also rather a biological, demographical and geographical term.¹ Migration is defined as follows in Nové Universum.

“Migration [...] spatial movement of population, usually related to the change of permanent residence. National migration takes place between the territories of one state (migration for work, into rarely colonized regions, from villages to cities), international migration takes place across state borders, which results in population growth and decline and transmission of cultural traditions. International migration can be immigration (incoming) or emigration (leaving the state). A special case is emigration because of political or religious reasons (historically exile) and forced migration (expulsion).”²

According to this definition, even those who have recently migrated to the United States can call themselves emigrants, which some people having difficulties understanding. The reason why Czechs classify emigration only to political problems during the communist era is mainly the political history of our state. As it is stated above, emigration occurs when a citizen of one country changes his/her permanent residency to another country

¹ Bulisová, Jiřina. *Ottova všeobecná encyklopedie ve 2 svazcích*. (Ottovo nakladatelství, 2009)

² Nové universum. *Všeobecná encyklopedie A-Ž*. (Euromedia Group k. s. - Knižní klub, Praha, 2003), pg. 663, heslo migrace

2.2. The history of Czech emigration to America

Although this bachelor thesis deals with the contemporary life of Czech immigrants living in the United States, facts must be stated about the history of this movement. There were several emigrational waves from the Czech Republic into America. The first one is considered to be around the year 1620 after the Battle of White Mountain. Tens of thousands of people emigrated due to religious problems, when they did not share the catholic faith and were not able to stay in the country. Augustin Herman being one of them, who settled in former New Amsterdam after a journey with a stop in Netherlands, and was known for his cartographic talent and also became one of the largest exporters of tobacco in North America. He accomplished one of the first maps of the borders of Maryland and Virginia.³⁴

Another emigrational wave occurred after the Revolution in 1848; one of the most significant personas is Vojta Náprstek. Náprstek's role was to inform Czech people, especially Borovsky about the life in America. However, being a journalist did not earn him much money, so he tried to earn money through other jobs. He is considered to be an opponent of Habsburg government, one of the political refugees.⁵ Around this time, the traveler expansions lowered and the luxury concerning the travel expanded. New steamboats were built and more people survived the journey overseas.⁶⁷ Other emigrants were helped by the Homestead Act 1862 - Kansas and Nebraska, thanks to which they could gain 160 acres of yet rough land and become the owners after a 5 year usage. There were 1770 emigrants in Nebraska in 1870, but in the 1890's there were 17000 of them. The whole families would work on the farm, trying to earn as much money as possible. They could not afford to spend money away, planting mostly corn.⁸

In the year 1870, 40000 people said they had Czech origin (Census 1870). St. Louis had a first catholic church in America in 1855, consecrated to Jan Nepomucky. The first newspaper and a Czech school appeared here as well as the catholic newspaper "Hlas". Chicago was also determined as a place where many emigrants lived. They established Czech quarters Praha, Plzen, which had to be moved after the great fire of Chicago. The new generations of

³ Podlišenský, Josef, Nesvadbík, Lumír. *Češi a Amerika*. (Praha: Karolinum, 1996) 12.

⁴ Saxon-Ford, Stephanie. *The Czech Americans*. (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers 1998)

⁵ Molinari, Christine. "Czech Americans." Everyculture.com. Accessed Apr. 22, 2013. <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Czech-Americans.html>

⁶ Podlišenský, Josef, Nesvadbík, Lumír. *Češi a Amerika*. (Praha: Karolinum, 1996) 26.

⁷ Raková, Svatava, and Josef Opatrný. *Stručná historie států USA*. (Praha: Libri, 2003) 215.

⁸ Podlišenský, Josef, Nesvadbík, Lumír. *Češi a Amerika*. (Praha: Karolinum, 1996) 26-43.

immigrants, those born in the United States, did not experience severe problems finding a job. Their level of English was intermediate, therefore they could become policemen, officers etc.⁹

California was invaded in 1848 to 1850 when a golden rush emerged. At the beginning of twentieth century, more people indeed started to immigrate to California, mainly due to film industry. Greater numbers of immigrants appeared after Ray Kroc bought McDonald's later in twentieth century.¹⁰

New York was popular thanks to cigar factories, which was the reason why Czechs became friends with Cubans and Spaniards. Until the World War, the Czechs were everywhere, including Florida, Louisiana and Virginia, but the official numbers of emigrants decreased. Czechs had already gained American citizenship and became an important minority for elections.

During the First World War, the Czechoslovakian National Council of America was established to reach democracy. Tomas Garrigue Masaryk himself visited America on April 29. 1918. He led talks with Woodrow Wilson to reach independency and democracy from Hapsburg monarchy and eventually, on November 8, Czechoslovakian independence was declared in Carnegie Hall¹¹.

Between the Wars the relationship between the emigrants and Czechoslovakia has changed. Those who had decided to go back to an independent country realized the country was not economically and politically independent and mostly came back to America. It brought disappointment to emigrants and no intention to ever move back. They started to build their own carriers in America. Anton Čermák filled the highest spot. He became the mayor of Chicago and one of the most famous Czech immigrants. "I came to America the soonest I could – as an infant"¹²

Considering the fact, that America had joint the Second World War due to the attacks on Pearl Harbor, the situation of Czech immigrants was different from the situation in the World War I. After the war was over, the Czechs living in America could not bear the increase of power of the communist party and therefore started to feel truly American. They started to forget the Czech language, or celebrate Czech festivals. It was President John Fitzgerald

⁹ Podlišenský, Josef, Nesvadbík, Lumír. *Češi a Amerika*. (Praha: Karolinum, 1996) 30-42.

¹⁰Molinari, Christine. "Czech Americans." Everyculture.com. Accessed Apr. 22, 2013. <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Czech-Americans.html>

¹¹ "Declaration of Czechoslovak Independence, 18 October, 1918" First World War. Accessed April 22, 2013. http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/czechstate_declaration.htm

¹² Vošahlíková, Pavla, a kol. Biografický slovník českých zemí : 10. sešit : Č–Čerma. (Praha : Libri, 2008, 503–606) 589–590

Kennedy and his motto “America is a nation of immigrants”, which led to further investigation of their family history.¹³

2.3. The number of Czech emigrants living in the USA

According to 2000 US Census, there are 1,262,527 Americans of full or partial Czech descent, plus there are 441,403 people listing their ancestry as Czechoslovaks¹⁴. United States citizens born in Czechoslovakia or the Czech Republic usually call themselves Czech Americans, but when talking about their children, they call them Americans with Czech ancestors.

Czech Americans’ way of life differentiated according to the place and community they lived at. It also depended on their income, therefore occupation. Nevertheless, living in shared rented flats were the first suggestions. The second option was to rent a flat on the outskirts of a city. Everyone knows that it is extremely overrated to live downtown. The negative factors about living in the suburbs area include the lack of public transport and cultural activities. It can be especially hard for a solitaire, which is one of the reasons why immigrants spend their first money on a car.¹⁵

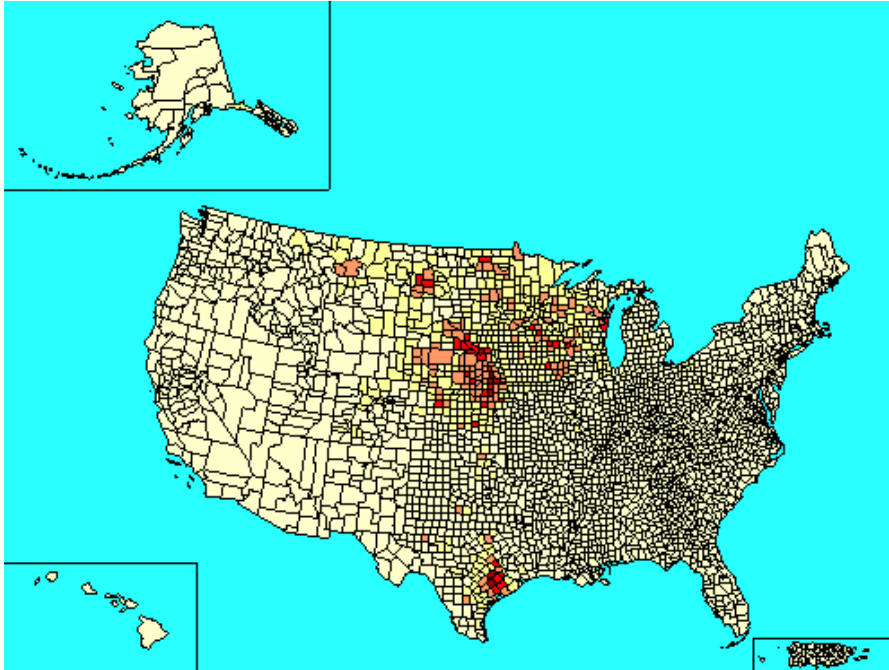
“Chicago's Czech community followed a common pattern of migration from inner-city working-class neighbourhoods to middle-class areas further out and on to the suburbs. This gradual movement followed the economic progress of many Czech immigrants and the influx of other ethnic groups”¹⁶

13 “John F. Kennedy “A Nation of Immigrants.””American humanity, accessed April 16, 2013, <http://americanhumanity.wordpress.com/?s=john+f.+kennedy>

14 “Fast Facts,” History – U.S. Census Bureau, accessed March 23, 2013, http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/.

¹⁵ Zvelebil, Jan. *Na vandru s Reflexem I*. (Praha: Nakladatelství BRÁNA, a.s., 2007) 147

¹⁶ Cozine, Alicia. “Czechs and Bohemians,” *Encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org*. Chicago Historical Society, Inc. 2005 Accessed. 20 April 2013. <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/153.html>



Geographic distribution of Czech Americans in the United States according to the 2000 Census¹⁷

It can be clearly seen from the picture above, that the highest number of Czech Americans living in the United States can be found around the city of Chicago. Additionally, there are many Czech Americans living in Nebraska, Minnesota, or Texas.

2.4. Obtaining a permit to live in the United States of America

In order for a foreigner coming from the Czech Republic to enter the United States of America, he/she must obtain for a visitor visa. A visitor visa belongs into the nonimmigrant category. Traveling to the US for other reasons than visiting or business requires an application for a visa in the appropriate category. Nevertheless, a tourist can apply to change the nonimmigrant status. He/she must apply before the authorized stay expires by filing a request with USCIS on the appropriate form.

A tourist from selected countries can freely enter US without a visitor visa for no longer than 90 days. The Czech Republic is one of the many mostly European countries that use Visa Waiver Program. Visitors or business people only apply through internet on the website <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. Non-European countries using the Visa Waiver Program

¹⁷ Wikipedia contributors, "Census Bureau Czechs in the United States," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 12 April 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Czech1346.gif>

include Australia, New Zealand, Japan or South Korea. The cost for processing of the application is 4 dollars, 10 dollars for the acceptance of authorization to travel to US.

Recent migration from the Czech Republic to the United States has altered since the changes after the fall of “iron curtain” in 1989. Immigration usually does not precede with ideas of permanent stay, but seeks financial improvement for mostly single young people. Young people tend to work illegally, earn a certain amount of money and return back home. It is said that there are tens of thousands of Czech citizens working illegally in the United States. The fact is, however, that some illegal workers would like to legalize their stay.¹⁸

2.4.1. A working visa

There are two types of workers- temporary (nonimmigrant) and permanent (immigrant) workers. A person who comes to the US with the special purpose of a visit for a certain period of time is a temporary worker. They must stick with the purpose they were granted the visa for and are forbidden to do anything else. There are different categories divided by the job variation. For example I VISA is for foreign press, radio, film or other foreign media; P-1A VISA for internationally recognized athletes; R-1 for Religious workers. It is obligatory for the employer to fill in a petition on behalf of the foreign worker (I-129, Petition for a nonimmigrant worker).

On the other hand, a person who is authorized to live and work permanently in the United States is called a permanent worker. Only foreigners with extraordinary skills, education or work experience, can gain an immigrant visa based on their job skills. In order to gain a permanent residency for an alien worker, the I-140 form called a Petition for Alien Worker must be submitted.

A person who migrates to the United States must have not only a working visa in order to be able to work, but must also possess an Employment Authorization Document which stands for a permit to work. This document not only helps the employers to verify the identity and eligibility to work for all new employees but also states the authorization to work for the employees. Eligibility to work is something that all employees must prove, no matter if they are citizens or permanent residents of US.

Employment Authorization Document is a plastic renewable card usually valid for one year, issued by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Foreigners who belong into categories mentioned further (those, who are temporarily in the US) can file form I- 765,

¹⁸ Otta, Tomáš. “Florida: Ráj českých gastarbeitřů.” *Týden*. No. 36. 2001, p. 28-33.

Application for employment authorization, in order to request EAD : asylees and asylum seekers, refugees, students seeking particular types of employment, foreign nationals in the United States pursuing the final stage of permanent residence, nationals of certain countries given Temporary Protected Status (TPS) due to conditions in their home countries, fiancés and spouses of U.S. citizens, dependents of foreign government officials, J-2 spouses or minor children of exchange visitors, and other workers depending on circumstances.¹⁹ The fee for this application is 380 dollars.

On November 6, 1986, Immigration Control and Reform Act was passed, with the main purpose of making it a crime to hire an illegal immigrant, and secondly granted a citizenship to immigrants living in the US since 1982. This Act of 1986 introduced the I-9 Form, which has been used since. In fact, the expiration date of this form was 31 August 2012, and nowadays employees must be using 03/08/13 dated form. Older forms are valid only until May 7, 2013. The revision date is shown on the lower left corner of the form. This form must be completed by every worker at latest on the day of hire²⁰.

Finally, if a person obtains a green card or becomes a citizen of the United States, he/she does no longer need a working visa. These categories will be dealt with in the upcoming chapters.

2.4.2. A green card

There are several ways how to become a permanent resident of the United States. Why do so many people want to hold a green card? It is simple. Being a green card holder allows them to live and work permanently in the U.S. A permanent resident card is a plastic card that must be carried on at all times and is issued for 10 years. The card must be renewed before it expires.

It is definitely not a simple process in any sense, although it can be simplified if an alien (alien= in national and international law, a foreign-born resident who is not a citizen by virtue of parentage or naturalization and who is still a citizen or subject of another country²¹) immigrates because of a family relation. When a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the

¹⁹ Doyle, Alison. "How to get a permit to work in the United States." *About.com*. Accessed April 12, 2013. <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/work-united-states/a/work-permit-us.htm>

²⁰ Siskind, Susser. "ABCs of Immigration: I-9 Compliance - Avoiding Immigration Bombshells" Accessed March 26, 2013. <http://www.visalaw.com/07jan1/2jan107.html>

²¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*; s.v. "alien," accessed March 29, 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/15390/alien>

U.S. is decides to marry a foreigner, they must fill in form I-129F, called Petition for alien fiancé and submit the amount of 340 dollars. Unmarried and married stepchildren or adopted children can also be a matter of green card application, the form I-130 must be used in this case and the fee is 420.

As was mentioned above, a green card can also be obtained through employment. There are five different preferences into which employees are sorted. First preference EB-1 includes those with extraordinary abilities, outstanding professors, or researchers, multinational executives or managers. The second preference EB-2 includes members of the professions holding an advanced degree or its equivalent, or foreign nationals with an exceptional ability. If an alien is a skilled worker, professional or other worker with a fulltime job offer, he belongs into the Third preference EB-3. In most of the cases mentioned above (EB-1,2,3) the employer must file a I-140 form, Petition for Alien Worker. the fourth preference EB-4 introduces special immigrants. A special immigrant can be anyone from this list - a religious worker, broadcaster, Iraqi/Afghan translator, Iraqis who have assisted to the United States, International Organization employees, Physicians, Armed forced members, Panama canal zone employees, retired NATO-6 employees, spouses or children of NATO-6 employees. Lastly, Fifth preference refers to immigrant investors. These investors must invest in a new commercial enterprise, which can be a sole proprietorship, partnership, holding company, joint venture, corporation, business trust or other entity privately or publically owned. The amount of 1000000 dollars is the minimum qualifying investment, creating at least 10 full time U.S. jobs. Another possibility is the investment of 500000 dollars, which must be invested in a high unemployment area or in rural area.²²

²² USCIS Employment- Based Immigration: Fifth Preference EB-5. Accessed April 14, 2013. <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=fac83453d4a3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=fac83453d4a3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD>

Lastly, a green card can be obtained through a lottery. It is called a Diversity Visa Program (DV-2015 is the most recent one). This program makes 50000 visas available annually for immigrants who are coming from states with low rates of immigration to the United States. People who win are selected randomly.

USAGC
DV LOTTERY SERVICES

USA GREEN CARD LOTTERY PROGRAM

Choose Language ▾

First name
Last name
Email address
Confirm your email address

You need to type your email address again to ensure it is saved correctly.

Select Country of Birth:
Select Country ▾

Phone Number:
Select Country ▾
Phone

Select your marriage status:
 I am not married I am married

Do you have a job OR Have you finished high school?
 Yes No

Apply now for a Green Card

Our Advantages

- ★ Registration 365 days per year.
- ★ Photos can be sent by postal mail.
- ★ Multilanguage support by professionals.
- ★ Contact details can be updated 24/7, 365 days per year.
- ★ Ensures error free application submission.
- ★ Professional help to ensure your photo is accepted by State Department.

Private entity:
USAGC Organization is a non governmental entity providing a value added paid service for the registration to the DV Green Card program. Our experienced immigration specialists provide assistance in 12 different languages to ensure that even if English is not your language, you can still submit a correct application.

Apply now on the official site

You can apply to the diversity visa lottery with the US State Department website during the registration period only (usually during October). Applying through the official website is a self-service free process with no review of the application, no support, no help and only in English.

Picture above shows a lottery program, provided by a non governmental entity, but also shares a link for applications on the official site²³

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services warn applicants about fraudsters, who send emails to people, claiming they have won a green card. USCIS appeals to people not to send any money to these fraudsters. Money for the application for a green card is paid at the U.S. Embassy or consulate cashier when the applicant has a scheduled appointment only. Whether the applicant is successful or not can be found on this website: <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov>. Every applicant must check his/her status online; the U.S. Government does not send any emails to the lucky winners.

²³“USA Green card lottery Program”, USAGC Organization Ltd., Yeke Ltd. Accessed April 2, 2013, http://html.usagc.org/pages/google/landingpage_eng.html?afk=GOOG-12-DV14_Green-Card-US_GreenCard-US_ktb&gclid=CIKmw7yYrbYCFREwzQodvkgATA#

U.S. citizenship and immigration services have issued a book called “Welcome to the United States a Guide for new immigrants”²⁴ where rights and responsibilities for permanent residents are stated. Among rights belong: living and working permanently, owning a property, applying for a driver’s license or attending public schools and colleges. Obeying all federal, state and local laws, paying taxes or registering in Selected Services (only for males 18 to 26 years of age) are among the responsibilities.

2.4.3. A citizenship

“1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”²⁵

Being a holder of a green card for at least 5 years introduces a first step towards obtaining naturalization as a citizenship of the United States, but there are other ways how to become a citizen of the U.S. A human being can become one either at birth or after birth. If becoming a citizen at birth, the child must to be born to parents who are citizens of the U.S. There also exist situations, when a baby becomes a citizen of the U.S. if it is born in the United States or in certain territories. It can also occur that a baby is born abroad, but if the parents are citizens, it is passed on to the descendant. If becoming a citizen after birth, the person must apply for Citizenship through parents and must meet certain requirements such as following- at least one parent must be a citizen and the child must be in his/her legal and physical custody and the child must be under 18 years of age. When a person needs a certificate of citizenship, he/she is advised to use a form called “Application for Certificate of citizenship (Form N-600)”.

Lastly, a process called naturalization can take place. Whoever wants to apply must fill in the “Application for naturalization (Form N-400)”

²⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Citizenship, *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*. (Washington, DC, 2007, Revised Edition.)

²⁵ U.S. Const. Amend. XIV

If the green card holders apply, they must be over the age 18. They must prove that they were physically present in the U.S. for at least 30 months during the time in which they held green card (5 years minimum), but yet must be continuous residents of the U.S. Additionally, they must have lived in the state for at least 3 months preceding the application process. Not to mention, an applicant for citizenship must know English language to be able to speak it, write it and read it and must know the American history (civics). Last condition is being a decent man. According to the principles of the Constitution of the United States a person must be of a good moral character.

Once again, using a book called “Welcome to the United States a Guide for new immigrants”, a citizenship swears his/her loyalty to the United States. Agreement to support and defend the Constitution of U.S. must be done as well as the future citizen must accept all responsibilities. U.S. citizens are asked to show their patriotism in order to show their commitment to their new country. They are also obligated to pay taxes, serve in the military, or on a federal jury. Citizens can also bring family members to the U.S., with the advantage of them being prior to other petitioners for a permanent stay. A citizen can also become an elected official or apply for federal job.

Dual citizenship is possible for citizens of the United States. A child of two U.S. citizens can get a different citizenship based on a country where he/she was born, although this citizenship must be obtained by automatic operations of different law systems, rather than by voluntarily actions. A person, who applies for a different citizenship voluntarily, has the intention to give up a U.S. citizenship and will have it removed.²⁶

According to Czech Collection of Laws (40/1993 Sb.)²⁷, if a person had a Czech and Slovak Federative Republic citizenship until December 31, 1992, he/she is a citizen of the Czech Republic from January 1, 1993. But in order to receive the citizenship, the person must be physically present in the Czech Republic; therefore emigrants were coming back the Czech Republic in order to receive the Czech citizenship. Law 40/1993 also states, that after a person gains a different citizenship, he/she loses the parallel one. It additionally mentions the fact, that if a Czech citizen gains American citizenship through marriage, i.e. voluntarily, he/she can be both a citizen of the United States and the Czech Republic. The child of American and Czech citizen can also have dual citizenship. If at least one of the parents is Czech citizen, it is

²⁶ U.S. Department of state. “U.S. State department dual nationality.” Travel.state.gov. Accessed April 2, 2013. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html

²⁷ Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

automatically considered to be a Czech citizen as well, no matter if while being born gained a different citizenship as well.

When contemporary life of Czech political emigrants is dealt with, unlucky emigrants must be mentioned. Due to the fact, that no one knew when the communist regime would be overthrown, people were emigrating from the Czechoslovakia even in years 1987, 1988, 1988, 1989, with their first target mainly being Austria or Yugoslavia. Although they decided to emigrate all the way to the United States many times. In order to do so, they had to wait in the crossing country sometimes for longer than a year to receive political asylum to the United States. The President of the United States regulates the numbers of political refugees accepted.²⁸ Once they were granted asylum, they could enter the United States and became political refugees. After the immigrants were political refugees for one year, they could apply for permanent residency. After five years had passed after they were given the green card, which was not the color of green, they were eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship through process of naturalization. It took them at least six years to become American citizens. According to the Czech law 40/1993, if any Czech citizen applies for another citizenship, he/she automatically loses Czech citizenship. Therefore, emigrants, who left the country in 1987 and were hoping to maintain both citizenships, were desperate in the end. Even though, they were practically political emigrants, the Czech citizenship was removed from them. Everyone who received American citizenship before December 31, 1992 can have dual citizenship, but this does not include political emigrants from 1987 and above. When asked how they feel about this situation, American citizens who belong to this category say that it is not fair to them.

3. Practical Part

3.1. The way Czech emigrants are seen in the USA

With the area of almost 79 000 square km²⁹, the Czech Republic belongs among middle sized European states. Although it is one of the middle sized states, it is still considered to be a small state in the heart of Europe and as we know from videos on youtube.com, geography is not the strongest subject for some Americans. Usually, when a Czech is asked the question “Where are you from?” and replies that he/she is from the Czech Republic, a confused

²⁸ Andora, Bruno. *Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy*. (Congressional Research services, 2012)

²⁹ Bateman, Graham and Egan, Victoria. *Encyklopedie Zeměpis světa* (Praha: Columbus s.r.o., 1999) 332-333

expression appears on inquirer's face. It sometimes helps to refer to Czechoslovakia, which is more known. Yet even after Czechoslovakia is mentioned, there is no guarantee, that not only Americans, but any other country's citizen could precisely show it on a map. What can help is mentioning Prague, which is a famous tourist destination and is referred to in recent Hollywood films and TV series.³⁰

Recently many Czechs were offended by the confusion of the Czech Republic with Chechnya after the affair of the Boston marathon bomb attacks on April 15, 2013. CNN also assumed that the two terrorists were from the Czech Republic. These facts attach a very bad light onto the Czech Republic. The Ambassador of the Czech Republic in the United States, Petr Gandalovič, came up with a statement to clarify the misunderstanding.

“[...] As more information on the origin of the alleged perpetrators is coming to light, I am concerned to note in the social media a most unfortunate misunderstanding in this respect. The Czech Republic and Chechnya are two very different entities - the Czech Republic is a Central European country; Chechnya is a part of the Russian Federation”³²

It seems to be a greater problem for the people living in the Czech Republic than for the immigrants. Immigrants living in Atlanta area have informed the author, that no one has tried to blame them for having origins in the country, which is situated in the middle of Europe³³.

Because the United States is considered to be a melting pot, Ebru TV has launched a TV series called World in America. With five series already released, the Czech Americans were introduced in the last season, episode five, which was shot in 2010. It is a 23 minutes long video about an American family with Czech descendants called the Simons, Czech traditions, festivals, puppets and simply Czech life. The father in the family was born in the Czechoslovakia in 1970 and emigrated to the United States in 1979. Even though he was raised in the U.S., finished school and found a wife there, he and his family yet still come back to the Czech Republic once a year to remind his children of his homeland. The children

³⁰ “Top Ten Movies to watch before visiting Prague” *CometoPrague.com*. <http://cometoprague.com/top-10-movies-to-watch-before-visiting-prague/>

³¹ Škvorecký, Josef. *A tall tale of America*. (Hradec Králové: Kruh, 1991.)

³² Gandalovič, Petr. “Statement of the Ambassador of the Czech Republic on the Boston terrorist attack” Czech foreign ministry. Accessed April 20, 2013. http://www.mzv.cz/washington/en/czech_u_s_relations/news/statement_of_the_ambassador_of_the_czech.html

³³ Karina Velimirovich, e-mail message to author, April 19, 2013.

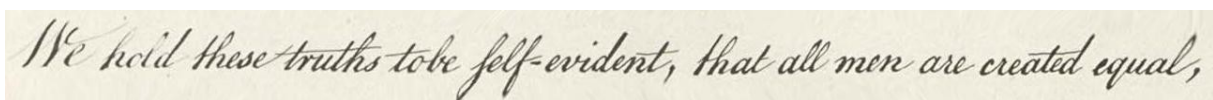
can speak a little bit of Czech language, which always refreshed after a stay in the small country.³⁴

Not only the Simons visit the Czech Republic often, but also other immigrants. It depends on the occupation they have, in order to be able to buy a flight ticket and visit their families and friends. Some of the respondents claim that they come back to their homeland a few times each year. The reason for this is their job. There are two Czech flight attendants living in Atlanta area, both working for Delta Air Lines. Among the benefits the employees are offered are flight tickets for them and their families with great discount in price, but at the same time no guarantee of available seats for the so called standby. In this case, the immigrants who can travel huge distances quite often, the immigrants are regarded as the lucky ones. After a visit to their homeland, the immigrants can share photos on social media or show them to friends, which is when the questions come up. Americans ask about the historical places, which interest them and if they get very interested, they sometimes visit the Czech Republic themselves to enjoy and explore.

Because of the fact, that immigrants try to work hard in order to reach their American Dream, they are seen as any other immigrants. Czech Americans are being looked at as a successful community with law-abiding and family orientated ideas.³⁵ After talking with many of the immigrants in Atlanta region, neither regrets nor reproaches came up. The immigrants only mention the reality. Because the Czech Republic is such a small country, it can be tricky to find someone who would know some historical background. They however also claim that they do not blame the Americans, yet try to teach and inform them about the Czech Republic, its history and current situation and convince them to visit.

3.2. An American Dream

The myth of American dream can be defined by many meanings, but the most important is rooted in the United States Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson. It begins with these words: We held these truths to be self-evident, that all men are equal...



We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,

³⁴ Ebru TV. "Czech Americans" in World in America TV series. Video. 22:55. Created in 2010. Accessed April 14, 2013. <http://www.ebru.tv/en/genres/LifestyleCulture/world-in-america/episodes/5/505-czech-americans>

³⁵ Molinari, Christine. "Czech Americans." Everyculture.com. Accessed Apr. 22, 2013. <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Czech-Americans.html>

A photography of a line of the United States Declaration of Independence, which contains Thomas Jefferson's words.³⁶

As being rooted in the Declaration of Independence, it can be also found in minds of all Americans or those, seeking to become one of them, that all men are created equal. It not only states equality, but also offers ability to achieve success through hard work. Different origin does not matter while seeking the dream. Being born to a poor or rich family does not prove your poor or rich qualities or show your life expectations. The most essential part of American dream is that anyone can reach it, showing individual effort and accomplishments.³⁷

In addition to materialistic advantage elements of the American Dream, it has at times been presented as having moralistic elements and also has been presented with more about the nature of a person, rather than just talking about materialistic elements using compassion, charity work and dignity.³⁸

Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States, a son of a man from Kenya and a woman from Kansas, is the first African American president in the history of the United States. He took office on January 20, 2009, in the middle of the worst economic crisis, but had to face it. Some say he is being successful, some do not.³⁹ His official motto is "The Audacity of Hope".⁴⁰ In 2004, he was elected to the U.S. Senate and was a key role speaker

"[...] it's the hope of slaves sitting around a fire singing freedom songs. The hope of immigrants setting out for distant shores. The hope of a young naval lieutenant bravely patrolling the Mekong Delta. The hope of a mill worker's son who dares to defy the odds. The hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too. Hope! Hope in the face of difficulty! Hope in the face of uncertainty! The audacity of hope! In the end, that is God's greatest gift

³⁶ Wikipedia contributors, "All men are created equal." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 13 April 2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:All_men_are_created_equal.JPG

³⁷ Wyatt-Nycholl, Heather. The enduring myth of the American dream: mobility, marginalization and hope. *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behaviour* 14(2), 258-279

³⁸ Rowland Jones, 2007 Rowland, R.C. & Jones, J. M. (2007). "Recasting the American Dream and American Politics: Barack Obama's Keynote Address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 93 (4): 425-448.

³⁹ Marczak, Trisha. "Success and failure: looking back at Obama's First Term." Mint Press News. Issued Dec 31, 2012. Accessed April 13, 2013. <http://www.mintpressnews.com/success-and-failure-looking-back-on-obamas-first-term/>

⁴⁰ Organization for action "About Barack Obama" Accessed March 17, 2013. www.barackobama.com

to us, the bedrock of this nation. A belief in things not seen. A belief that there are better days ahead.”⁴¹

It can be seen that Americans tend to stick together under a strong leadership. They do not fear, but also not blindly follow anyone. They live in a place where hard work can emerge into better future. That is what an American Dream stands for. Encyclopedia Britannica defines the American Dream as follows; it is an academic social ideal that stresses egalitarianism material prosperity; also the prosperity or life that is the realization of ideas. The usage dates back to 1931. On the other hand, the Oxford English dictionary defines it as the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination and initiative.⁴² In the history of the Czech Republic, when the country was called Czechoslovakia and was under the rule of communist party, people felt like in a cage. Unless being a member of a communist party, it was almost impossible to attend a university, get a good job or travel abroad. From family talks with our parents or grandparents, it is obvious that life was different. For some, it was better. It was not hard to find a job, field work, factory work or work for blue collars was available. But what about intellectuals or those who were simply seeking for better life with more freedom, opportunities and independency? Especially when Radio Free Europe could be turned on, rather quietly, so the neighbors, members of communist party, would not hear it. Radio Free Europe reports uncensored news, open debates or discussion in countries where free press is banned to promote democratic values and democratic institutions.⁴³ Surely news from the United States was being presented as well and it helped people to decide to emigrate.

People were emigrating from the Czechoslovakia because of political reasons mainly before the Czech Republic was established. They were also looking for better paid jobs, wealthier and better life. But after the communist regime was no longer the highest power, Czech citizens no longer needed to be afraid of the future.

Nevertheless, they were still migrating, seeking the American Dream. As is shown in the survey below, many people have been leaving the Czech Republic even after the establishment of the Republic in 1993. The only difference between the emigration before and after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 is that nowadays they can come back any time they want.

⁴¹ White, Deborah. “Barack Obama’s Inspiring 2004 Democratic Convention Speech” About.com Accessed March 28, 2013.http://usliberals.about.com/od/extraordinaryspeeches/a/ObamaSpeech_3.htm

⁴² "American, n. and adj." OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6342?rskey=eulCCb&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

⁴³ “About” Radio Free Europe. Accessed April 10, 2013. <http://www.rferl.org/>

Emigrants, who left before the Velvet Revolution did not know how long it would take until they will be able to visit their families and friends. As soon as they left, their houses or flats were locked and everything inside was all of sudden in possession of the state. A Czechoslovak citizen transformed into traitor of the state. There was a trial held, where the emigrant was convicted of abandoning the Republic.⁴⁴ If a person was found guilty of abandoning the Republic, he could be sentenced up to ten years in prison and his/hers assets belong to the state. While talking to some of the emigrants, the author was told some tricks and tips which were done in order to save at least some of the assets which belong to the emigrants. They usually received a permit to be able to leave the country for holidays, funerals or visits to family members. Emigrants asked the friends or family to move the rest of the assets (furniture, family pictures, gold) to their homes. They asked them to accomplish this task at night, so no one could observe such action. Emigrants say “everything had to be quick; you never knew who was watching.”

3.3. The way Czechs have adapted to American lifestyle

“The basic idea of the Anglo-conformity perspective or assimilation theory is that after many generations, all immigrant or ethnic groups will inevitably and completely assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture and institutions. That is, each new immigrant group will eventually lose its cultural traditions and social institutions; learn the dominant group’s language (i.e., English), norms, values, behaviour, customs, laws, and world view; and become incorporated into the dominant economic, political, legal, and educational systems. Ethnic interaction results in a total absorption of the new immigrant group by the dominating group.”⁴⁵

When considering the adaptation process of contemporary immigrants, we classify it as the third stage of adaptation throughout the time. This stage begun approximately in 1950’s. Immigrants who belong into this stage are “Americanized”, which means their lives are

⁴⁴ Karina Velimirovitch, email message to author. April 13, 2013.

⁴⁵ Yang, Philip Q. *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

determined by the American culture. This process is understandable, especially when the Czechs living in the United States do not meet regularly and pass along the traditions. Even if they officially acknowledge themselves as with Czech origin, the Czech origin is only proven during Christmas times or Easter.⁴⁶ As the research showed, approximately 75 percent of respondents celebrate Christmas like they would in the Czech Republic, with potatoes salad and some also claim they eat carp, yet all of them unwrap Christmas presents after dinner on twenty fourth of December. Their children are happy about it, because they get presents earlier than their friends.

Two other stages of adaptation process are preceding; first, with dominant Anglo-conforming environment, yet very strong sense of preserving Czech culture; and second showing more assimilation towards American culture. First stage occurred during the first waves of immigration, when immigrants were required to forget or lose their original traditions and culture. Assimilation of Czech immigrants, adaptation to American culture and therefore interculturalism is characterized as second stage.⁴⁷

Nowadays, the process of adaptation is much smoother for the Czech immigrants, considering that Czech culture and lifestyle has changed throughout the time and therefore it is much easier for the newcomers to acclimatize.

In the progressive internet age, Czechs can reach other on social and other media and learn from each other. A personal blog made by Tanja should be mentioned, due to its useful comments and articles. It is called Czechmate Diary.⁴⁸ During Christmas time, she posts recipes of Rum balls, bear paws or Jezky cookies, during other times of year recipes for different Czech meals like quick and easy poppy seed turnovers, croquette potatoes, potatoes pancakes or Czech goulash are being posted. Other than posting recipes for Czech meals, Tanja informs the readers of her blog about current affairs and news happening in the United States to Czech immigrants. For example, a new Czech school is being established in Atlanta.⁴⁹ The cooperation of citizens' association Česká škola bez hranic (Czech school with no borders), Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Interior has already built four Czech schools in the United States. The schools are called T.G. Masaryk Czech School (in Chicago), Česká škola Los Angeles – Generální konzulát ČR, Czech school of California,

⁴⁶ Jaklová, Alena. *Interkulturalita na stránkách čechoamerických periodik v období od 60. let 19. století do 20. let 20. století*. České Budějovice: Filozofická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích.

⁴⁷ Jaklová, Alena. *Interkulturalita na stránkách čechoamerických periodik v období od 60. let 19. století do 20. let 20. století*. (České Budějovice: Filozofická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích).

⁴⁸ Czechmate diary blog

⁴⁹ Czechmate diary blog; "New Czech schools in Atlanta!!!" blog entry by Tanja, February 27, 2013. <http://czechmatediary.com/2013/02/27/new-czech-school-in-atlanta/>

Czech school San Diego, Česká škola West Coast. Czech school in Atlanta had just arranged a first meeting with the parents, where discussions took place. The school offers lessons of Czech language and Czech facts in addition to daily learning as Czech children would gain in foreign institutions. It is aimed to children between the 18 months to 15 years. The parents must nevertheless contribute financially.⁵⁰

Czechmate diary also introduces a list of Czech Restaurants and stores, where a reader can either order a meal, which will be prepared by a Czech cook or buy Czech and Slovak groceries. 173 Carlyle House in Norcross, or Summer Street Restaurant in Kennesaw are restaurants where famous Czech cook work, European Deli & Market is a place where to go shopping for Czech ingredients. Nevertheless, Czechs immigrants share ideas

Considering the Atlanta area, the author recommends readers to visit facebook pages called “Zabava v Atlante”. Immigrants from Atlanta area help each other through this webpage, recommend good restaurants or cultural events. They also organize gatherings, such as Czech and Slovak dance, St. Nicolas party...

The Czech immigrants are adapting differently. Some are visiting Czech web pages and reunite with other immigrants in order to stay in touch with Czech speaking immigrants, some are not. No one can force Czech immigrants to preserve Czech culture, language and traditions. It is always a choice of the immigrant whether he/she will transfer the customs onto the children or whether he/she will inform the Americans about the country of origin. Luckily, there are some immigrants, who do this voluntarily and publicly. Some of them are presented in the next paragraph. Their internet pages are usually found useful for the immigrants.

Other webpages include for example krajane.cz (Fellow countrymen, although more recent and upgraded version is on facebook page called “Cesi v USA”), afocr.org (American friends of the Czech Republic), czechevents.net/ (Czech events), czechsinamerica.blogspot.ca (Czechs in America) or www.atlanta-cz.com/. Immigrants can share their ideas, feelings, discuss current affairs, offer/search occupation and many more on these internet pages.

3.4. Results of the survey

A survey was conducted among people living in the United States with Czech origin. With 81 questionnaires filled in from immigrants living in Georgia, the main result was that people who live overseas are satisfied with their life and do not consider migrating back to the Czech Republic. Not even one fourth from the respondents mentioned that they would think about

⁵⁰ “Zakládá se česká škola v Atlantě” Česká škola bez hranic. Accessed April 19, 2013. <http://www.csbh.cz/novinky/zaklada-se-ceska-skola-v-atlante>

moving back when being older. One of the most important reasons stated at 59 questionnaires was the advantage of having a really stable and well paid job. Half of the answers included living among intelligent, independent people as the biggest advantage. Respondents also wish for their children to be able to approach excellent education, travel, to be able to gain a well paid job and therefore secure their own children.

As first question of the survey was the **age of respondents**, the author includes the results of the first question to other parts. Second question investigated the **birthplace of the respondents**. It was mainly focused on the fact, whether the respondents were born in the Czech Republic or in the United States and therefore became US citizens voluntarily. It nevertheless showed interesting results regarding the Czech regions and immigration. Most of the respondents come from Bohemia, the biggest part of the Czech Republic. Moravians are in the second place, Silesians with the smallest area in the Czech Republic are the third. Only three respondents claim they were born in the US and therefore are US citizens. The author regardless included their answers, because of the fact, that they were raised in families of immigrants.

AGE group	Place of birth*			
	Bohemia	Moravia	Silesia	US
16 - 29	6	4	1	2
30 - 45	11	11	3	1
46 - 60	20	13	5	0
61 - 69	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	40	29	9	3

Source: own research

* Where were you born? Please choose on answer, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, US.

The third question was asking about the **place the immigrants live at now**. Because of many different answers, the author only states the most frequent ones: Atlanta, with 28 respondents, Peachtree City with 8 respondents, Sharpsbury with 5 respondents, Milledgeville with 4 respondents.

The fourth question inquired the **reasons for emigration**. Respondents were given choices and were supposed to choose among political reasons, interest to learn English

language, exploring opportunities and family relations and love. Forth question is connected to fifth, which asks the respondents in what year did they emigrate from the Czech Republic.

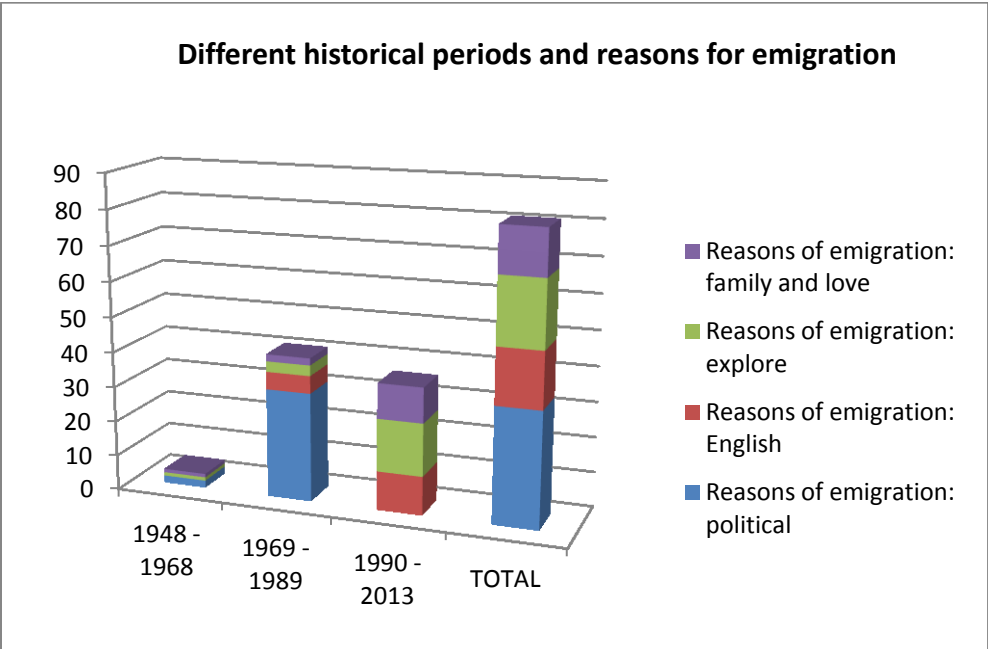
Period of emigration **	Reasons of emigration*			
	political	English	explore	family and love
1948 - 1968	2	0	1	1
1969 - 1989	31	5	3	2
1990 - 2013	0	11	15	10
TOTAL	33	16	19	13

Source: own research

* What were the reasons for your emigration from the Czech Republic? Please choose one answer: political reasons, interest in learning English language, exploring opportunities, following family and love.

** In what historical period did you emigrate from the Czech Republic? Please, choose one answer: 1948 – 1968, 1969 – 1989, 1990 – 2013.

From the graph shown on the next page (Different historical periods and reasons for emigration), it can be clearly seen that the number of respondents who migrated from the Czech Republic to United States due to political reasons was the highest between 1969 – 1989 highlighted with blue color. Other significant reason for emigration is to explore, which occurs from 1990 and is still present.



Source: own research

Question number six asked about **legal status of immigrants**. Respondents who immigrated in the United States before 1989 are all US citizens by now. From the total of 36

respondents who chose 1990 – 2013 as the emigrational period, 15 are already US citizens and 10 are permanent residents. The rest did not choose an answer, therefore it can be suggested they work and live illegally in the United States.

Seventh question was focused on the **observance of Czech traditions**. Respondents were asked to choose the traditions they celebrate. Options were St. Nicolas and the devils celebration, classical Czech Christmas dinner, unwrapping present on Christmas Eve, Easter eggs painting. Results were not surprising at all. Every respondent chose unwrapping Christmas presents on Christmas night, or unwrapping at least some of the presents, on Christmas night. Second highest, with 75 percent of positive replies was placed Christmas dinner, although many immigrants stated, that they eat different kind of fish instead of carp. Easter eggs painting and celebrating of St. Nicolas received similar number of positive replies, about 35. Respondents mentioned that St. Nicolas is celebrated in bigger communities. Therefore they have to sometimes travel to Chicago for example in order to take part in the celebration.

Eight question was directed on Czech newspapers, magazines or Czech made websites. Respondents were asked whether they read any **Czech periodical** or **visit any Czech websites** and the results are shown below in the chart. Respondents only needed to state positive or negative answers, but some of them also included the names of magazines or websites. Seznam.cz, Centrum.cz, idnes.cz and Lidove noviny were mentioned.

AGE group	Czech periodicals*		Czech made websites**	
	positive ans.	negative ans.	positive ans.	negative ans.
16 - 29	1	12	4	9
30 - 45	8	18	20	6
46 - 60	17	21	28	10
61 - 69	0	4	2	2

Source: own research

* Do you read any Czech periodicals? i.e. magazines, newspaper..

** Do you read any Czech websites?

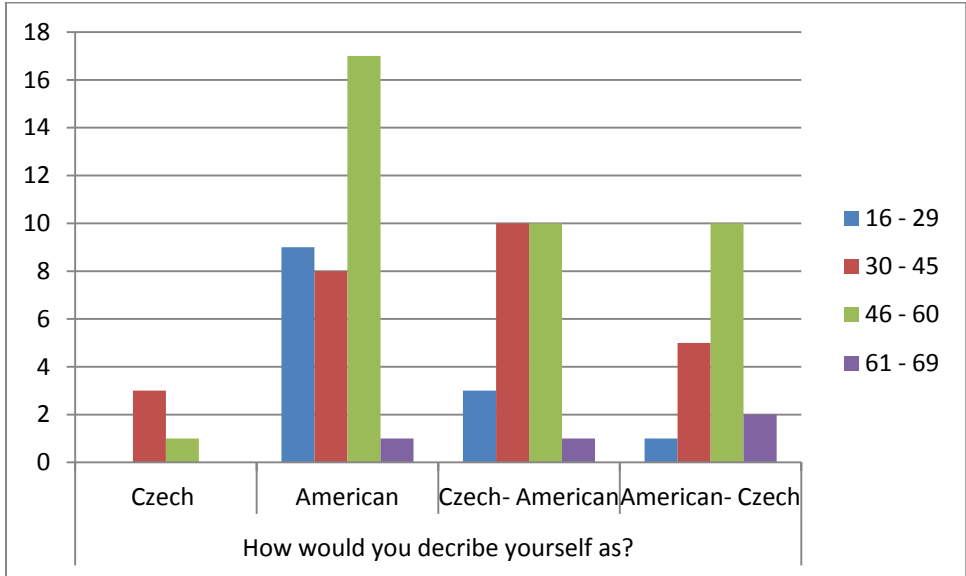
A connection between the results and the age of respondents is obvious in this inquiry. Younger generation is much more reluctant to Czech media than older generation. Age group 46 – 60 years old has the highest number of visitors of Czech websites, on the other hand 2 out of 4 immigrants from age group 61 – 69 visits Czech websites, giving this age group 50 percent positive answer.

Ninth question examined **who did the Czech immigrants living in the United States thought they were**. They were once again offered four choices from which one could have been chosen.

AGE group	How would you describe yourself as? *			
	Czech	American	Czech- American	American- Czech
16 - 29	0	9	3	1
30 - 45	3	8	10	5
46 - 60	1	17	10	10
61 - 69	0	1	1	2

Source: Own research

* How would you describe yourself as, please, choose from those options: Czech, American, Czech- American, American-Czech.



Source: own research

There is a connection between age groups and results in this question as well as there was in the previous question. The reader can observe, that immigrants only seldom think of themselves as of Czechs. They think they are Americans in most cases (35). Czech-Americans were chosen 24 times and an option American-Czech 18 times.

This result shows that there are still quite a lot of immigrants, who want to express their Czech origin by choosing the Czech- American option. Czech Americans are also most likely to preserve the language, traditions and culture and pass it on to their descendants.

Last but one inquiry was about **reaching the American Dream**. Respondents were asked whether the American Dream they had was fulfilled. As was seen from the results, the last question, with two parts, freely connected to reaching the American Dream. It asked the immigrants whether they are satisfied with their life and if they would consider moving back

to the Czech Republic. Respondents who participated in this research made a list of the greatest advantages they gained by living in the United States. This list of qualities of the life in US is following (in order of frequency):

- Access to stable and well paid jobs
- Live among intelligent and independent people
- Access to education for the children
- Independence
- Equality
- Ability to achieve success

While enjoying these advantages, Czech Americans confess that they are very satisfied with their lives. Most of them, three quarters, also confess that they would not even consider moving back to the Czech Republic. Their American Dream was achieved and they wish for their descendants the same.

From the results of the research it can be clearly seen, that Czech immigrants are concerned about preserving the Czech language, culture and traditions for their children and future generations, yet they like to observe events happening in the Czech Republic from the comfortable zone of their American homes. This research also led me to conclusion that Czech Americans' American Dream came true.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to introduce the contemporary life of Czech immigrants in the United States. Despite of the fact that Czech emigration to the United States is a rich topic, not many works have been published on the modern emigration. The lack of information and personal experience gained while living among the immigrants brought author to the idea of writing this thesis.

This work is divided into two parts, the first being theoretical, yet second practical. In the first theoretical part, the author states an overview of the emigrational waves which occurred in the history of Czech country. It is due to the fact that the Czech Republic is such a small state, that it was influenced and in many times of history under the rule of other countries, that citizens decided to emigrate from the country to seek freedom and independence. The first emigrational wave occurred during seventeenth century with Augustine Herman, a famous cartographer. He was follow by the Moravian Brethren in eighteen century, the religious followers of Jan Hus and Jan Amos Comenius, who needed to escape persecution and eventually made contributions to the development of US. Another emigrational wave occurred after the revolution in 1848, when the Czechs failed to achieve independency from Hapsburg Austrian Empire, emigrants were determined to leave the country. On account of the discovery of the situation in Czech country was very unfavorable during the World Wars; the emigrants had no intention to come back to their homeland. In 1948, the Communist party seized power and ruled until 1989. Many people emigrated to American during this era, because of the lack of independency, freedom, knowledge and the impossibility of potential personal growth. It was not easy to emigrate during the Communist regime, because anyone abandoning the state became an enemy of the state. Emigrants had to make a serious decision before leaving, because there was a high chance they would never be able to come back and see their families and friends. It was not until the Velvet Revolution in 1989, that people could finally freely travel abroad and political and religious emigrants could freely return. In addition, the emigrants were granted amnesty of political criminal acts. Until the year 2008, Czechs coming to America needed to have a visa issued at the Embassy of the United States, but the process got simplified and visitors who are planning a journey to the United States can travel in terms of Visa Waiver Program.

Last chapters of the theoretical part advise immigrants how to proceed in order to apply for an immigrant visa in the United States. The author states the exact application forms which must be used while applying for a working visa, green card and a citizenship. A

petition for a nonimmigrant worker is introduced in the obtaining working visa chapter as well as is Immigrant petition for Alien Worker. The necessity of having Employment Authorization Document for immigrants is explained - EAD basically stands for a work permit and proves that the holder has a legal right to work in US. Several ways of obtaining a green card are mentioned in the following chapter. A holder of a green card can legally live and work in the USA, as well as holds other privileges as citizens, except for a right to vote and to be elected. The easiest way of becoming a permanent resident of the United States is to marry a U.S. citizen. Family relations are generally the most common reasons for issuing the green card. Another way of applying for the permanent residency card is through job. The process, nevertheless, includes several steps for the applicant as well as for the employer. The employer must sometimes prove that no Americans are displaced by foreign workers and that there is not enough qualified or willing American workers in the area where the immigrant is to be employed. The applicant can petition for him/her self, if having extraordinary ability as well. Another option of gaining a green card is through a lottery, which takes place every year. 50000 annual winners are chosen randomly. Lastly, an immigrant can become a U. S. citizen. U.S. citizenship can be acquired either at birth or after birth. If a child is born to US citizens or if at least one of the parents in a US citizen, he/she therefore becomes a citizen as well. The place of birth also plays an important role. If a child is given birth to in the United States or certain territories, he/she can become a citizen. Process of naturalization takes place if a U.S. citizenship is acquired after birth. A permanent resident with the residency of at least 5 years can apply. Other conditions which need to be kept are mentioned in a obtaining a citizenship chapter.

Theoretical part of the thesis is based mainly on personal experience and interviews with the immigrants living in Georgia and current internet sources that are being used by the immigrants. A chapter called: How are Czech immigrants seen in the United States talks about American illiteracy in European geography, supported with the recent marathon bomb attack in Boston and the origin of the terrorists. Secondly, it points out the fact, that Czech Americans are being good citizens who work hard to achieve their dreams. Process of achieving the dreams of Czech immigrants subsequently continues in the chapter called the American Dream. A definition is stated as well as the contemporary process of change of the dream. Barack Obama, the president of the United States cannot be omitted in this chapter, because of the reforms of immigration politics he is intending to do.

History of adaptation process of Czech Americans is presented and as well as is the change in adaptation process in modern era. Because of internet, Czech Americans can

contact each other quickly and therefore offer help while adapting. They also post tips and tricks on where to find similar groceries to groceries made in the Czech Republic, post Czech or American recipes and simply try to help others to assimilate easier.

The last part of this thesis is based on the results of a survey, which was conducted among Czech Americans living in the state Georgia. Immigrants are called Czech Americans here, because this collocation was chosen by the most respondents. They were asked ten questions regarding their age, place of origin, current residency, reasons for emigration and year of emigration, observance of Czech traditions, their legal status in the U.S., their knowledge and reading of any Czech periodical or websites, achievement of the American Dream and satisfaction with their life.

The older respondents tend to preserve Czech culture, traditions and language more than the younger respondents. They visit more Czech website and read more Czech periodicals. The younger generation is much more Americanized, because they were usually raised and educated in the United States. Nevertheless, all the immigrants included in this survey claim, that they celebrate Christmas on the Christmas Eve, eat potatoes salad and fish, some also paint eggs on Easter or celebrate St. Nicolas and bring the devils.

After all, immigrants are satisfied with their lives. A stable and well paid job, living among intelligent and independent people, freedom and independency are some of the advantages immigrants pointed out about the United States. Their American Dream came true and they wish their children to achieve it as well, which is why the Czech Americans would not consider moving back to the Czech Republic. Not until they retire at least.

Résumé

Cílem bakalářské práce bylo představit život současných Českých emigrantů žijících ve Spojených státech amerických. Přestože problematika vystěhovalectví z Českých zemí je velmi rozsáhlé téma, poměrně málo prací a děl, týkající se současné emigrace, bylo doposud publikováno. Nedostatek informací spolu s osobní zkušeností získanou soužitím s českými imigranty žijícími v Georgii vedlo autorku k sepsání této práce.

Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí, první teoretické a následně druhé části praktické. Obecný přehled vystěhovaleckých období do Spojených států amerických je popsán v teoretické části bakalářské práce. Vzhledem k tomu, že Česká Republika je velmi malý stát v srdci Evropy, byla často ovlivňována a pod nadvládou jiných zemí. Právě proto se občané často rozhodli emigrovat ze země se záměrem hledání volnosti a nezávislosti. První vystěhovalcké období se uskutečnilo v sedmnáctém století v čele s Augustinem Heřmanem, slavným kartografem. Heřman byl v osmnáctém století následován členy Jednoty bratrské, kteří utíkali před persekucí a následně obohatili vývoj Spojených států amerických, především v kulturním odvětví. Dalším početným obdobím pro emigraci se stala revoluce v roce 1848. Při této revoluci se Čechům nepodařilo dosáhnout nezávislosti na Rakousko Uherské Říši, a proto se mnozí rozhodli opustit svou rodnou zem. Emigranti žijící ve Spojených státech amerických pochopitelně zvažovali možnost vrátit se zpět. Po válečném období a nástupu komunistů k moci ovšem často změnili názor. V porovnání s americkým děním byla situace v Československu neporovnatelně horší. Nedostatek peněz trápil československé občany, země byla zničená válkou a vládla jí spíše negativní nálada. Když nastal v únoru roku 1948 komunistický převrat, Československo před sebou mělo ekonomický úpadek, utlačování lidu a konec demokracie. Nadvláda komunistického režimu trvala s určitými ústupky a omezeními až do Sametové revoluce v roce 1989. Velká část vystěhovalců emigrovala právě v tomto časovém období. Nedostatek nezávislosti, volnosti, vědomostí a znemožnění osobního rozvoje donutilo Čechoslováky opustit svou rodnou zem. Pod komunistickou nadvládou nebylo snadné emigrovat, i vzhledem k tomu, že vystěhovalci byli po odjezdu odsouzeni jako zrádci státu a jejich majetek byl zabaven. Vystěhovalectví znamenalo pro rodinu velkou změnu v mnoha ohledech. Nikdo nevěděl, jak dlouho budou v Československu vládnout komunisté a proto ani emigranti nevěděli, zda se budou někdy moci vrátit za svými kamarády či rodinami.

Změna nastala až po Sametové revoluci v roce 1989. Od té doby mohli lidé volně cestovat do zahraničí a političtí či nábožensky utlačovaní emigranti se mohli vrátit do své

rodné země. Následně byli původně nepřátelé státu amnestováni. Do roku 2008 museli čeští občané, kteří se chtěli podívat do Spojených států žádat na americké ambasádě a víza. Od roku 2008 ovšem Česká Republika spadá pod bezvízový program (VWP) a každý, kdo se kvalifikuje, může cestovat do USA na méně než 90 dní po vyplnění formuláře a zaplacení minimálního poplatku. Poslední kapitoly teoretické práce poskytují návod, jak postupovat v procesu emigrace do Spojených států amerických. Autorka zde vysvětluje, které formuláře mají být vyplněny, když cizinec žádá a pracovní vízum, zelenou kartu nebo o americké občanství. Vzhledem k tomu, že názvy žádostí nemají překlad, neboť lze žádat pouze v anglickém jazyce, rozhodla se autorka ponechat text pouze v angličtině. Ve zkrácené podobě lze ovšem uvést, že chce-li cizinec pracovat ve Spojených státech, musí disponovat tzv. Employment Authorization Document, což je plastová karta vydávána na 1 rok, kterou musí cizinec nosit stále u sebe. EAD uděluje cizinci právo pracovat a oficiálně dokazuje, že má cizinec legální cestou zajištěné povolení k práci. V následující kapitole se autorka věnovala problematice udělování zelené karty. Majitel zelené karty získává právo na trvalý pobyt a ostatní práva, jaká mají občané USA, kromě práva volit a být volen. Nejsnazší způsob, jak získat zelenou kartu, je sňatkem s americkým občanem. Nejčastějším důvodem k udělování zelených karet jsou příbuzenské vztahy. Další způsob, jakým lze získat zelenou kartu je díky práci. Žádost podaná za tímto účelem je nicméně poměrně složitá a obsahuje mnoho kroků. Zaměstnavatel někdy musí doložit, že pracovníci z cizích zemí nevytlačují americké pracovníky, a že v oblasti, kde bude imigrant vykonávat práci, neexistuje dost kvalifikované pracovní síly, která by projevovala zájem o danou práci. V případě, že žadatel disponuje mimořádně výjimečnými schopnostmi, může požádat i sám za sebe. V ostatních případech se procesu nabývání zelené karty díky práci musí účastnit zaměstnavatel. Další z možností, jak získat zelenou kartu do USA je vyhrát ji v loterii. Loterie se koná každý rok a 50000 šťastlivců ze zemí s nízkou imigrací do USA získá povolení k trvalému pobytu. Americký imigrační úřad ovšem varuje před podvodníky, kteří inzerují možnost přihlásit se do loterie skrze jejich webové stránky. Ve většině případů podvodníci pouze získají peníze a zmizí.

Jako poslední možnost uvedla autorka nabývání amerického občanství, které je možné buď narozením, nebo po narození. V případě narození dítěte americkým občanům, či v případě, kdy alespoň jeden z rodičů je americký občan, nabývá dítě automaticky americké občanství po rodičích. Místo narození v procesu získávání amerického občanství hraje důležitou roli. Pokud je dítě porozeno na území Spojených států amerických či v určitých teritoriích, může se dítě stát občanem USA.

O udělení občanství, tzv. naturalization, může zažádat držitel zelené karty po pěti letech od vydání. Zároveň ale musí žadatel splnit jiné podmínky, například pobývat poslední 3 měsíce nepřetržitě v USA, doložit, že v posledních pěti letech byl fyzicky přítomen v USA alespoň 30 měsíců...

Teoretická část práce je založena hlavně na osobní zkušenosti a rozhovorech s imigranti žijícími v Georgii, stejně jako na současných internetových stránkách, které imigranti používají. V kapitole nazvané „Jak je pohlíženo na české emigranty v USA“ je zmíněna americká neznalost evropské geografie, podložená nedávných atentátem v Bostonu. Atentátníci sice pocházejí z Čechenska, nicméně internet obletěla zpráva o tom, že pocházejí z České Republiky. Dále je zde zmíněno, že Čechoameričané jsou dobrými občany, kteří tvrdě pracují, aby dosáhli svých cílů a snů. Postup k otázce splnění si snů následuje v kapitole nazvané „Americký sen“. V této kapitole je uvedena definice Amerického snu, stejně jako jsou naznačeny změny, které se ve vnímání Amerického snu dějí. Zmínka o Baracku Obamovi, americkému prezidentovi, nesmí chybět, vzhledem k jeho plánovaným reformám v oblasti imigrační politiky.

Následující kapitola se věnuje historii přizpůsobování se Čechoameričany. Změny odehrávající se v tomto procesu jsou zde uvedeny. Čechoameričané se v dnešní době mohou díky internetu snadno kontaktovat, sdílet své problémy a hledat východiska nejen v otázce přizpůsobování. Na sociální síť mohou imigranti psát, či vkládat své tipy a triky, jak lépe zapadnout, či kde sehnat potraviny, které chutnají stejně jako ty, vyrobené v České Republice.

Poslední kapitola práce je založena na výsledcích z ankety. Anketa byla provedena s pomocí Čechoameričanů žijících v Georgii. Už jen proto, že většina respondentů o sobě napsalo, že se cítí být Čechoameričany, spíše než Čechy nebo Američany, budou tak imigranti v této části nazýváni. Anketa se skládala z deseti otázek, kdy se otázky zaměřovaly na věk, místo původu, současné místo bydliště, důvody emigrace z ČR, rok emigrace z ČR, dodržování českých zvyklostí a tradic, legální status Čechoameričanů v USA, znalost a čtení českých periodik či českých webových stránek, splnění Amerického snu a na spokojenost v životě.

Výsledky ankety ukázaly, že starší respondenti mají větší tendence k zachování české kultury, českých tradic a českého jazyka, než mladší respondenti. Starší respondenti také častěji navštěvují české webové stránky, stejně jako čtou častěji česká periodika. Mladší generace je více poameričtělá, z důvodu vychovávání a vzdělávání ve Spojených státech amerických. Všichni respondenti nicméně uvádějí, že nadále slaví Vánoce na Štědrý večer,

k večeři jedí rybu a bramborový salát. Na Velikonoce někteří dokonce barví vajíčka a na sv. Mikuláše si zvou čerty.

Čechoameričané, kteří se zúčastnili ankety, jsou se svými životy spokojeni. Jako hlavní výhody života ve Spojených státech uvádějí stabilní a dobře placené práce, život mezi inteligentními a nezávislými lidmi, nebo svobodu a nezávislost. Stejně jako se jim naplnil Americký sen, tak by si přáli, aby se splnil i jejich potomkům, což je důvod, proč na otázku, zda zvažují návrat do České Republiky, uvedli, že ne. Alespoň ne do té doby, dokud nebudou v důchodu.

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Annotation

This thesis deals with contemporary life of Czech immigrants in the United States, with focus on Georgia, United States. It is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. In the first part, the author defined three basic terms used throughout the thesis – migration, emigration, immigration. She also described historical emigrational waves, as well as the current data available about Czech Americans living in the United States. Lastly, the theoretical part includes a description how to apply for working visa, permanent residency and a citizenship in the United States. The second part of the thesis inquiries the way Czech Americans are seen in the USA, outlines the fulfillment of their American Dream and presents results of the survey focused on contemporary life of the Czech immigrants in the United States.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá současným životem českých emigrantů, kteří žijí ve Spojených státech amerických, se zaměřením na stát Georgia. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí, teoretické a praktické. V první části definovala autorka migraci, emigraci a imigraci, tři základní slova používaná v celé práci. Zároveň také popsala historické emigrační vlny, stejně jako uvedla současná dostupná data týkající se Čechoameričanů ve Spojených státech. Poslední část teoretické části obsahuje návod, jak se ucházet a pracovní víza, zelenou kartu, případně americké občanství. Druhá část bakalářské práce zjišťuje, jak je pohlíženo na české emigranty v USA, nastiňuje problematiku splnění Amerického snu a předkládá výsledky ankety zaměřené na současný život českých emigrantů ve Spojených státech amerických.