

Multiculturalism and Its Influence on the Inclusion of the Roma in the Canadian Mosaic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how the Roma, who emigrated from the Czech Republic from the 1990s onwards, are included in the Canadian society and the extent to which this process was influenced by multiculturalism. This work specifically focused on the systems of education, health, welfare and the labour market. There have been numerous publications on this subject since the Roma arrived and attempted to settle down and acquire asylum/permanent residence/citizenship. But the current study was conducted on Roma immigrants from the Czech Republic several years later. It was argued that, upon arriving in Canada, the Roma could not handle the local systems; however, this situation has changed over time. Once several people had entered the system, information about their functioning continued to spread through micro social bonds. Such mutual support, in conjunction with Canadian multiculturalism, seems to be a solution to a problem that Europe is not yet able to tackle.

Key words: Roma; Canada; Inclusion; Multiculturalism; Managing the Canadian Systems.

Introduction

The aim of this study was to assess how multiculturalism affects the social inclusion of the Roma emigrating from the Czech Republic to Canada. It focused on whether multiculturalism is able to solve the problems this ethnic group was unable to cope with in Europe. Social inclusion was assessed in the areas of education, health, financial security and the labour market.

The research was conducted with people who described and perceived themselves as Roma. These participants emigrated from the Czech Republic, which was their homeland or long-term residence, and mastered the Czech language. All respondents had either gone through or were undergoing the asylum process, which is typical of Roma emigration to Canada (Vidra, 2013).

The Roma have emigrated from Europe, where they are subject to stereotyped prejudices and related problems such as social exclusion, unemployment, discrimination, political racism, or even racially motivated violence (Fónadová, 2014, p. 34; Castle-Kanerova, 2003; Vidra, 2013; Mareš, 2006, pp. 12 – 15; Nekorjak, Souralová & Vomastková, 2011; Bezouška, 2016). This work is a follow-up of previous research, which described the migration of the Roma to Canada as a process motivated by a mixed set of factors and is therefore considered to be a combination of refugee and labour migration (Vašečka & Vašečka, 2003; Kováts et al., 2002;

Vidra, 2013). The authors focused on various aspects of this migration, from push and pull factors, the reasons for migration, the migration process itself, including the asylum process, through to their establishment in a new country (Vidra 2013; Lee 2000; Sobotka 2003; Walsh, Este & Krieg 2008; Castle-Kaněrová 2003). The current study sought to determine the current level of Roma inclusion in Canada's cultural mosaic after 10 years. The term cultural mosaic (Brosseau & Dewing 2018) itself denotes the current form of Canadian multiculturalism, which, unlike the American melting pot model (Smith, 2012), offers minorities more opportunities to develop their national and cultural identity.

Methodology

The data were obtained from qualitative research supported by an ethnographic field research and analysis of secondary data sources such as books, government records, websites, statistics and science journals. The first part of this section provides a discussion of key terms. This also includes statistical data and historical facts that have had an impact on the current life of Roma immigrants.

The empirical section presents the results of two field studies conducted in Canada. The first research survey was conducted in April 2016 and aimed to map the existing situation of Roma settled in Toronto and Hamilton and to acquire contacts for further work. The second study took place throughout September 2017 in the same cities. In Toronto, the research was targeted at Lakeshore, Jane and Finch, and Scarborough, where the most of Roma who had emigrated from the Czech Republic had settled. An interview technique was used to elicit data from members of the Roma community. This was supplemented by information obtained from interviews with providers of education, medicine, migration, and social services. Vital data were also provided by CultureLink staff who specialise in helping newcomers to integrate into Canada and create voluntary community programmes.

Roma population in the Czech Republic

The Roma have never formed a united community. The largest number of Roma in the Czech Republic are those from Slovakia who represent approximately 75-80% of the total (Horváthová, 2002). These Roma left Slovakia to settle in the Czech borderlands and find a job after the Second World War. Significant waves of migration continued even after the Velvet Revolution and the split of Czechoslovakia (Sidiropulu Janků, 2015, p. 11; Uherek & Weinerová, 2005; Vašečka et al., 2003, p. 46). However, the common origin of Slovak Roma does not mean they are a united community. They are further divided according to their original locality, generation, or social, cultural and educational level (Horváthová, 2002, p. 63). The second largest group consists of Vlach Roma who constitute about 10-15% of Roma. They came to the Czech territory in the second half of the 19th century from a Romanian language area (Romanian Principality of Valachia) and formed a closed community in relation to those around them - Roma and non-Roma. From their point of view, other Roma, who are more closely integrated into the majority society, have deprived themselves of their Roma - *romipen*, and are therefore called *Romungere*. Czech Roma, the original Roma population, were almost exterminated during World War II and are currently estimated to constitute 5% of all Roma. Following the return of 583 Roma survivors from concentration camps, there is estimated to be 1,000 Roma in the territory of Bohemia and Moravia (Hlaváček, 2014, p. 5).

Social exclusion and inequality

The formal concept of social exclusion originated in France in the 1970s, when it emerged as a reaction to the erosion of the welfare state, downward economic shifts, and increasing population diversity (Ebersold, 1998). The meaning of the term became more serious when large sections of the population were excluded from the labour market, which in turn contributed to homelessness, dramatic increases in child poverty and increased family breakdown (Shields et al., 2006).

The “*Report on the Status of the Roma Minority*” for 2017 highlights the rate of Roma exclusion in the Czech Republic. It claims that half of the Roma live in an unfavourable situation that constitutes social exclusion. In the Czech Republic, a total of 616 socially excluded localities were identified, mostly inhabited by Roma (Úřad vlády České republiky, 2018).

Theoretical explanations of inequality in the field of sociology diverge in terms of how sociologists construe the causes of the reproduction of social status (Luhmann, 1996). Some sociologists see the causes as residing in the social system while others see them as residing in cultural or ethnic differences (Katrňák, 2004). From the perspective of political science, the first explanation can be classified as left-wing and the second right-wing (Ritzer, 1992). While a liberal approach tends to remove all responsibility from disadvantaged people, a conservative or culturalist position blames the actors themselves. In the case of poor people, scholars either blame them directly or blame their culture. In sociology, this dispute occurs between structuralists and culturologists (Fay, 2002; Barša, 1999; Giroux, 1983). Theories of reproduction can be divided into those which are social and those which are cultural (Katrňák, 2004; Brzostek, 2017, p.93-94). Theorists such as Giddens (1984), Archer (1988) or Bourdieu (1977, 1998) have attempted to link these theories. All believe that a liberal approach does not contradict a conservative one and vice versa. This view is referred to as duality of structure and agency. Transferred to social exclusion of the Roma in the Czech Republic, it is possible to claim that the state and its systems, and the Roma themselves, have contributed to their exclusion. State interventions that have had a negative impact on the lives of the Roma in the Czech Republic are described in more detail in the chapter "Roma and Systems". The link between social inequality and social exclusion has been demonstrated in several studies (Vermeersch, 2010; Filčák, Szilvasi & Škobla, 2017).

Stereotyping of Roma

Another reason for the social exclusion of the Roma in the Czech Republic is stigmatisation. This is based on typical anthropological features that make them an easy object of stereotyping, but also arises out of racial discrimination and racial violence (Weinerová, 2014).

Stereotypes are based on the belief that an individual carries certain traits and that it is because he or she is a member of a particular group that we attribute these traits as characteristic (Lippmann, 1997, p. 81; Geist, 1992, pp. 452-454). Like most ethnic stereotypes, Roma stereotypes have roots in the past and their variability over time is minimal because they are primarily transmitted between generations. Their origins can be traced to period texts. For instance, the beginnings of stereotypes in ethnographic literature can be

found in the second half of the 18th century in the German-written monograph "Zigeuner in Ungarn", which was created in 1775-1776. In this book, the evangelical priest describes Hungarian Gypsies as thieves and liars who are quarrelsome, noisy, disunited, and bickering (Augustini ab Hortis & Urbancová, 1995, pp. 38-40). These stereotypical characteristics of the "Gypsy" are repeated in the works of other scholars, adopted by period newspapers and magazines, and then disseminated further among the majority population (Weinerová, 2014).

Integration

The concept of integration is often characterised as difficult to grasp, ambiguous, and occurring at multiple levels. It is typically applied in the context of immigrant settlements in a new country, although its meaning is considerably broader and may encompass a wide range of dimensions such as economic integration in the labour market, or social integration into networks and spaces of civil society, all of which may differ in their range of formality (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 7).

The mode of integration and access for immigrants is influenced by the history of each state, its traditions, national self-definition, migration experience, current political direction, membership of transnational organisations, and the direction of internal reforms. Different methods of integration require the implementation of different policies and instruments that are either addressed to society as a whole or to migrants only (Tollarová, 2006).

One of the key differences in methods of integration concerns whether they are designed to incorporate newcomers into existing structures, which will generally remain unchanged, or whether some change is envisaged in both the immigrants and the majority society. Differences in societal attitudes towards immigrants can be formulated either in general terms or through existing national examples. Bauböck (1994) contrasts monolithic societies that emphasise the unilateral acceptance of a given social structure with pluralist societies that support the adaptation of both elements of society - the newcomers and the majority.

The integration of Roma into society in European countries is a priority for the European Union. Unfortunately, current studies show that despite the development of the key strategies, including proactive and reactive solutions at both the central and the local levels, the level of Roma integration has not significantly improved (Úřad vlády České republiky, 2019; FRA, 2018). In the Czech Republic, Roma and the Arabs experience the greatest amount of antipathy from the majority of society. For instance, in a survey by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 70% of respondents said that they were "rather" or "very unsympathetic" to them (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 2019).

Multiculturalism

The meaning of the word multiculturalism is extremely broad and, in some cases, defies definition. The term can refer to geographical facts describing the coexistence of nations from different ethno-cultural backgrounds in one society, the ideological desire for diversity, a summary of policies aimed at coordinating diversity or the practices that different ethnic and racial groups use to achieve their aspirations (Dewing & Leman, 2006).

In Canada, multiculturalism is typically perceived as a set of ideas and ideals celebrating the nation's cultural diversity. At a political level, it is considered to be the “management of diversity through initiatives. In 1971, the government accepted multiculturalism as an essential characteristic of Canadian society through the adoption of formal policies in federal provincial and municipal domains” (Dewing & Leman, 2006, p. 1). This step was welcomed by numerous ethnic-cultural groups, as well as the French and the British, who had made Canada their new home. It also supported Canada's values of equality and mutual respect for race, national or ethnic origin, culture, and religion (Kymlicka, 2010).

Multiculturalism in Canada can be established numerically as a sociological fact. The results of the census indicate the existence of more than 200 different ethnic origins. Most people claim to be Canadian (32.3%), followed by English (18.3%), Scottish (13.9%), French (13.5%) German (9.6%), Italian (4, 6), Chinese (5.1%), Indigenous (4.4%), and Indian (4%). Overall, 20.6% of the population was born outside Canada (Dewing, 2009; Government of Canada, 2017). By contrast, the Czech Republic appears to be a more homogeneous nationality. Unlike Canada, the census does not identify ethnic origin but nationality which means belonging to a nation or ethnic minority. In 2011, 64.3% of the population claimed to be Czechs, 1.4% Slovak, 0.5% Ukrainian, 0.4% Polish and 0.3% Vietnamese. A total of 5 135 people registered as having a Roma nationality, which was less than 1% of the population. Based on qualified estimates given by Government of the Czech Republic and Czech Statistical Office, 250,000 of these live in the Czech Republic, comprising 2.2% of the population. There may be several reasons for low self-declaration, such as a fear of stigmatisation, discrimination or the perception of a person as a member of a majority (Český statistický úřad, 2014; Úřad vlády České republiky, 2019).

Social capital and its influence on inclusion in society

The idea of linking social capital to the economic and social development of a country is strongly associated with the name of Robert Putnam. His globally renowned article *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (1995) opened a door to new reflections on the effects of social capital not only on the economy but also on social development. Also were explored the integration of immigrants, health, poverty, and social exclusion (Putnam, 2007; Putnam, 1995; Liu, Wei & Simon, 2017).

There are two types of capital that are commonly mentioned: bonding social capital is described as strong links within a homogeneous group which imply internal loyalty, and bridging social capital, which is based on weaker links between heterogeneous groups - religious, age, ethnicity and so on (Putnam, 1995). Both are important for new migrants (Li, 2004). Bridging capital allows immigrants to form a new links between themselves and the new society and help to understand this society. Bonding capital provides a sense of support and identity for newcomers. In an inclusive society, there must be a balance between these two types of capital otherwise there is a risk of social exclusion (Hyman et al., 2011).

The policy of multiculturalism can thus be understood as an effort to develop both bonding and bridging capital. In this regard, the Canadian Government is helping to fund ethnic and religious organisations whose focus is on assisting with the establishment of newcomers (Hyman, Meinhard & Shields, 2011).

Roma and Migration to Canada

Canada is one of the countries where people most often come to seek asylum. Asylum seekers are persons who ask for sanctuary in a foreign country and whose application has not yet been processed (Refugee Council, 2018).

The Roma have lived in Canada for over 100 years; however, in the 1990s their numbers increased so much that they triggered a response from the Canadian government (Levine-Rasky, 2016). The first country from which Roma began to emigrate to Canada at this time was Hungary, a process that continues to this day. The most frequent destination is Toronto and its surrounding areas. The reason for this is simple. Flights from Europe to Toronto are the most affordable way to get to Canada and also the fastest (Kováts, 2002).

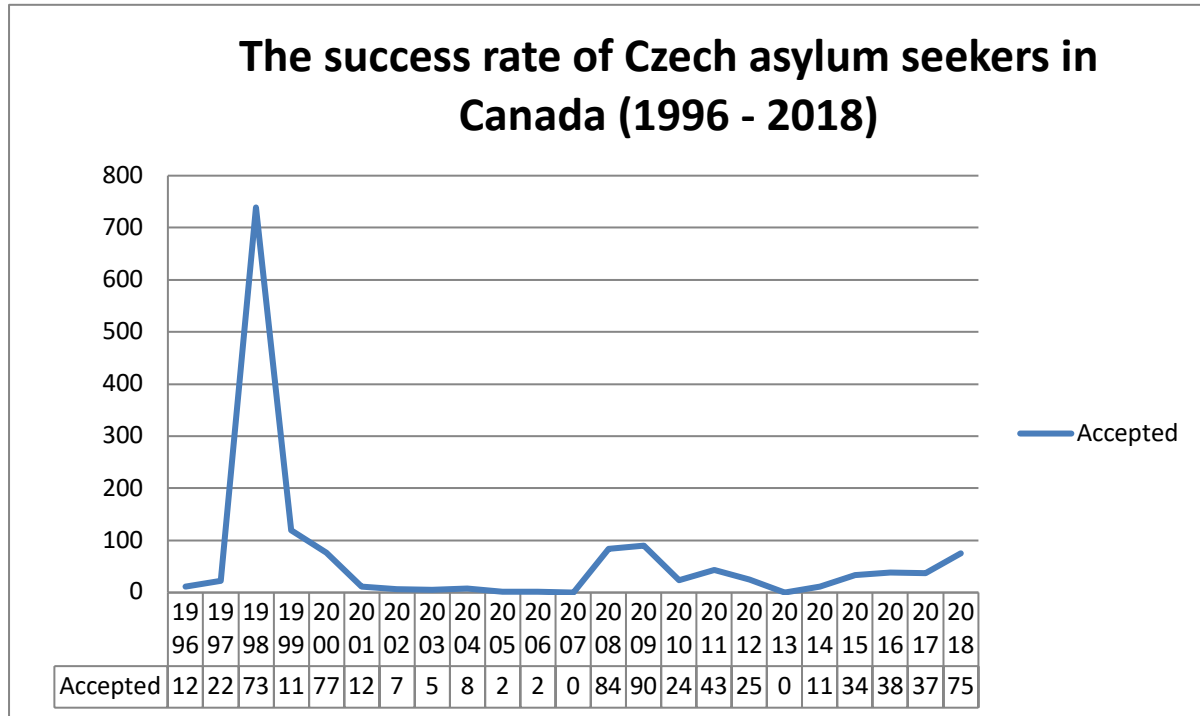
In the case of Roma from the Czech Republic, this method of migration was strongly supported in a report by private TV Nova in a program called “Na Vlastní Oči” (In Your Own Eyes). The report, which was broadcast on 6 August 1997 from the Toronto area, included interviews with several Czech-Romani refugee claimants who highlighted the carefree life of Roma asylum seekers. Because the report did not mention the difficulties faced by refugees, it created a misleading picture of the reality experienced by many Roma in the Czech Republic. After seeing this report, many Roma bought tickets to Canada and flew in the expectation that they would be welcomed with open arms (Lee, 2000; Sobotka, 2003).

The southern part of the Ontario region now has the largest number of Roma refugees. The city of Hamilton (527,930 inhabitants), about 40 miles southwest of Toronto, has the third highest proportion of foreigners (24%) in Canada and is the primary target for Roma refugees, estimated to number between 1,500 and 3,000 (Government of Canada 2017; Roheim, 2010). Their settlement in Hamilton was initiated by the Canadian government, whose aim was to space out refugees by placing them in smaller centres. However, no more refugees needed to be space out, as they automatically travelled to their relatives and acquaintances (Statistics Canada, 2003; Schellenberg, 2004). Another possible explanation for Hamilton's Roma settlements is the low living costs in this city. The respondents themselves gave this as a significant reason. For example, in 2016 the cost of a 1-bedroom apartment in Hamilton city centre was 925 CAD, while in Toronto city centre it was 1,423 CAD (Comparing the cost of living between Canadian cities 2016). A total of 950 Czech immigrants live in Hamilton, according to the 2016 census (Government of Canada, 2017). Unfortunately, it is not clear from the census how many of these are of Roma origin.

There are no historically accurate data on the number of Roma immigrants in Canada, as data capturing Roma ethnicity have never been collected (Lee, 2007). However, their number can be determined from the number of asylum applications filed in Canada. Among Czech citizens, it is the Roma who apply for asylum in Canada due to racial discrimination. A member of the majority society usually has no reason to apply for asylum and therefore proceeds with the acquisition of permanent residence. After 4 years of obtaining permanent residence and fulfilling the requisite conditions, people can apply for citizenship under the Citizenship Act (Dyškantová, 2018).

Figure 1: The success rate of Czech asylum seekers in Canada (1996 – 2018)

The success rate of the asylum process since 1996 is 25.27%, which means that every fourth



applicant from the Czech Republic has been able to obtain asylum. However, success has numerous variables that change over time and therefore fluctuate. The legitimacy of the reasons for asylum and the current asylum policy should therefore be highlighted.

Roma and systems

The Roma population in Canada has experienced a general problem in coping with systems (e.g., child and youth protection system, justice system, welfare system, education system, and so on) compared to other immigrants. For this reason, questions have been raised regarding the effectiveness of these systems and, in particular, how to effectively provide services to Roma (Walsh, Este & Krieg, 2008; Walsh & Krieg, 2007a, p. 170; Walsh & Krieg, 2007b, p. 7).

Their difficulty in adapting to systems may be due to bad experiences in the past. In the Czech Republic, several systems have been applied that have been mismanaged and discriminated against Roma. Víšek (2006) describes three state interventions after 1989 that significantly led to the exclusion of the Roma population.

- The end of the duty to work with the establishment of democracy
- Cancelling the function of social curators
- Implementation of Act No. 40/1993 regarding acquisition and loss of citizenship of the Czech Republic. The law ordered citizens born in Slovakia to claim Czech nationality within one year after the break-up of Czechoslovakia. At the end of the one-year tolerance period, people lost their entitlement to social benefits and legal employment due to a lack of citizenship.

An inappropriate housing policy also increased the social exclusion rate among Roma in the Czech Republic. Traditional types of housing – scattered poor Roma housing in city centres –

were the least problematic in terms of social exclusion. Through political interventions, the Roma were displaced to the periphery of cities, where peripheral slums or “microghettos” began to appear and further perpetuated social exclusion (Bařová, 2002).

In these cases, it is instructive to refer to the so-called cobra effect (Seibert, 2003). This is a designation of a situation in which, through artificial intervention in an effort to improve the situation, the situation deteriorates. The term is derived from an anecdote originating from the times of British India. This states that the British government wanted to cope with the high number of cobras in the streets of Delhi and therefore announced a reward for every dead cobra. This intervention encouraged the locals to grow cobras in large quantities. After finding out what happened, the British government stopped the project and breeders released the snakes. The population of cobras had thus increased (Seibert, 2003).

Not surprisingly, adapting to new systems is more complicated and takes longer because Roma lack confidence in their effectiveness. However, the publication *Roma migration in Central Europe* presents the notion of improving the personal skills and qualities of Roma migrants (Uherek, 2004). Uherek (2018) develops this idea further. According to his findings, not all attributes of human personality are easily transferable across national borders. Thus, there is space for change, adaptation, and potential for the adoption of new systems.

Findings

Education

One of the most important sources of social exclusion of the Roma is the absence of education and, conversely, social exclusion is also the cause of low education (Strobachová, 2013, p. 87; Kaleja, 2013). People living in socially excluded localities often have problems due to a saturation of lower needs and therefore there is no saturation of higher needs such as education. In practice, it seems students miss school because they lack clothes, do not have any snacks, and their parents have fallen asleep or must go to work (Kaleja, 2013). Another problem linked to social exclusion is the segregation of schools and classes as a result of which Roma pupils receive worse education than children from the majority society (Nekorjak, Souralová & Vomastková, 2011). Moreover, starting Roma children in their first classes is complicated by their mother tongue. A large proportion of Roma children, when they speak Czech, use a Roma accent. In schools, there is not enough space to teach them the language of the majority society and therefore they have lagged behind children who have spoken Czech since birth (Kaleja, 2011, p. 51).

Children between the ages of 6 and 12 are the fastest at adapting to a change of school after arriving in Canada. According to the respondents, the older children were worse at accepting change and adjusting. Those with a complicated relationship to Czech education often make contacts with Canadian children experiencing the same problem.

Almost every elementary school has a special class for children who are not yet proficient in English. They spend most of the day studying English and then move to a classroom for two to three hours, where they are permanently placed following this transitional period.

It took about a year or a year and a half for our children to realize that schools are working on a different principle and to get used to this. It is not comparable to the Czech Republic, because they like to go to school here. They play a lot of games, they have friends there and they look forward to it. Education is on a completely different level. It is much easier. (Female, 35 years, born in Prague, year of emigration 2008).

Adults are also obliged to go to school when they arrive in Canada. English courses are mandatory for all immigrants and are conditional on receiving financial support. However, they often stop attending school after obtaining a registration certificate. In some places the attendance is controlled, in other places is not. Hamilton Roma are likely to be controlled because they attended schools. In Toronto, by contrast, attendance rates are low.

When you find a job, you don't have to go to classes anymore, or you can only go in the evening. But usually people find some undeclared work, so they don't report it to social workers anyway. This is often done by newcomers and Canadians as well - social abuse. (Male, 53 years old, born in Sokolov, year of emigration 2011).

Same as the adults' attendance in English courses, children schooling is required for the families to claim unemployment benefits. To receive welfare funds, the authorities require a school registration certificate. If the child's parents fail to provide one, they lose their financial support.

Granddaughter and grandson go to school here. The teachers watch if the children go to school. And some are strict. Sometimes they call. If the child did not go to school, they could be transferred to a social welfare institution. That happened before. They took money from people for their children's low school attendance. The teacher called Children's aid and then it all went. It's not happening so much today. Today, children go to school on a regular basis and mainly enjoy it. (Female, 58 years old, born in Jablonec nad Nisou, year of emigration 2007).

One of the reasons why Roma children failed to attend school in the first years after arriving in Canada was lack of English language to interact with institutions and doctors. They improved its English much faster than their parents thanks to their better school attendance. The parents mainly attended English courses only sporadically. Today, this phenomenon is less evident.

The school attendance of Roma children may be influenced by seemingly minor factors that can seem almost incomprehensible in the eyes of the majority. During the research in the Czech Republic and Canada, there was often a problem with the purchase of snacks. Many Roma parents do not let their child go to school if they do not have a snack. This is because a lack of snacks means that the family do not have enough money and this will reduce their social status. In this regard, the Canadian education system helps the Roma (and others) by providing free snacks in primary schools. The informants praised the service without being directly asked about it.

Children like go to school there – they are given snacks. They have a special room at school where they choose what they want. A lot of cereals are offered to them and also fruit. (Female, 28 years, born in Prague, year of emigration 2008).

From a Roma perspective, Canadian school education is far better than Czech education in every way. The greatest benefit for them is the low intensity of basic education with minimal demands on home preparation. Because Roma children do not lag behind other students in the curriculum, they are much better integrated into the education system. Curiously, despite their satisfaction with the education system, Roma children usually end up with a primary school or vocational certificate only. None of the Roma children of the respondents studied at university, nor did they have such ambitions.

Health care

Canadian Healthcare is a relatively complicated system that has been funded since 1984 by revenue earned through federal, provincial, and territorial taxation (Government of Canada, 2011). Unlike the Czech Republic, people do not pay any health insurance and therefore there is no health insurance company responsible for payments to health institutions. The principle of universal health care (the same quality of care including the same waiting times for all) is identical to that in the Czech Republic. The implementation of this system has resulted in an increase in private clinics; however, these do not permit the performance of specialist medical interventions (Hadařová, 2013, p. 6).

It is clear that the Canadian health system has been a difficult obstacle for newly arrived Roma immigrants needing to receive health care. A lack of knowledge of the system as well as language and cultural barriers have made it complicated. The Roma are thus characterised by a neglect of health prevention, absence of vaccinations, the absence of medical records and a high number of urgent admissions needing treatment (Walsh, Este & Krieg, 2011).

Neglecting health prevention is closely related to the lack of general practitioners. This is because their earnings are significantly lower (sometimes up to a quarter) than the incomes of professionals working in hospitals and therefore there is also an outflow of general practitioners to the USA (Hadařová, 2013, p. 8). General practitioners in Canada are not obliged to accept a new patient. The Roma therefore visit hospitals and emergency rooms even in the event of trivial conditions such as a cold. Because doctors are not entitled to refuse a patient, the waiting times are often very long (reported as five hours on average by the Roma). The Roma expect Canadian health care to be of lower quality than the Czech health service.

In addition to a lack of preventive medical examinations, the high number of urgent admissions is compounded by a failure to adhere to the principles of a healthy lifestyle. Most notably, this is reflected in poor eating habits, inadequate nutritional composition of food, and smoking (Tóthová, 2015; Davidová, 2010). Becoming overweight is a very common problem that was obvious at first sight in most adult respondents.

In numerous cases, the Roma had to seek medical care immediately after they arrived in Canada. Many women arrived in Canada pregnant or became pregnant shortly afterwards. A child born in Canada automatically becomes a citizen and his / her parents are much more likely to be granted asylum.

To take my newborn daughter to a doctor, I had to get her medical card first. So I had to go back to the hospital. There they gave me her birth certificate, for which I had to pay and then take it back to the Public Health Office to finally get the card and take it to the doctor. I

couldn't do it without help. Fortunately, I have an aunt who has already gone through all this, so she gave me advice. (Female, 28 years, born in Prague, year of emigration 2008).

The Roma often overcame their poor language skills by inviting their children to physical examinations. This created a common problem with high rates of school absence. This problem still persists, albeit to a much lesser extent. Over time, the Roma have learned to understand English or have discovered the services of the IWCA, which provides free translation services to immigrants. Its services are currently used primarily by Roma who have never worked in Canada. The working environment is the only place where they acquire knowledge of English.

Vidra (2013, pp. 89 - 128) describes an example from his research that demonstrates the initial problems of adapting to Canadian healthcare. His informant, an asylum seeker, returned to the Czech Republic due to health problems and lost the opportunity to apply for asylum. The patient was reliant on Canadian healthcare, but finally decided to return to the country of her origin where she could be supported in the home family environment and was used to the doctors' behaviour.

In a general assessment of life in Canada, the Roma consider medical care and the health care system to be one of the greatest weaknesses. Compared to the Czech Republic, it is much worse. The interviewees show they no longer have a problem with understanding the health system, but with long waiting times and overall quality. Notably, the Roma people mention the discriminatory behaviour of medical personnel in the Czech Republic as a frequent reason for migration. In spite of this experience, they consider the level of Canadian health care to be of lower quality than that of Czech healthcare.

Labour market and welfare system

In the Czech Republic, social exclusion is often accompanied by long-term unemployment. People who are long-term unemployed are completely dependent on social support and social care benefits (Moravec, 2006). It is therefore no wonder that a certain degree of understanding of the welfare system is important for the Roma.

The Roma chose Toronto and the surrounding area as a destination, among other reasons, because they can find a job without difficulty. Common to the cities of Toronto and Hamilton is manual work for the Roma in construction and factories. Hamilton's location differs; majority of Roma there work in crop and livestock businesses. They usually wrap vegetables in bags before being cleared into sales chains. Some Roma have set up business in agriculture. They supply companies with labour and have a car to import workers into the workplace. They receive their salaries, which, after deducting an amount for this mediation activity, are distributed to them by the companies. There is also no shortage of work in the metallurgical industry in Hamilton. This port city is nicknamed the Steel Capital of Canada; therefore, it is common for the Roma to also work in local factories. Compared to life in the Czech Republic, their workload is not substantially different. Only former taxi drivers, who have not been able to obtain a taxi license in Canada, have found things to be different.

The Roma say they have to work in Canada because they would not be able to cover their living costs through social support alone.

When we didn't work, we registered on a social program and got 1700 CaD. That's all they gave us. A person living on social benefits cannot live on that level. We had to turn to a charity that works well here. (Male, 52 years old, born in České Budějovice, year of emigration 2009).

Undeclared work is not an exception. Roma find work for a few days a week and do not report it to the authorities; even though they know the consequences of not reporting.

The problem with the social program is that if you don't immediately report that you started working, it's a scam. Then there is a penalty and all the money you have received during the period of benefit must be paid back. But rarely does a social worker figure it out. Unofficially you can be usually employed in a construction that is well-paid. Employers benefit from this because they do not have to pay insurance or taxes on behalf of employees. They often press us to start our own business – to make a business registration (Male, 42 years old, born in Prague, year of emigration 2008).

Roma, who do not work because of health problems can obtain a disability pension in Canada – both partial and full which is the same as in the Czech Republic. It is valid for two years from the date of its acquisition and must then be renewed. A further financial benefit is the possibility of obtaining a state flat. If the Roma become members of the Ontario disability support programme (ODSP), their rent is fully paid and they receive money only for food.

Upon arrival in Canada we went to live with my sister and then we went to live to sublease for about 4 years. Then we got it here. At that time, we had not yet applied for a state apartment because we did not know about it. This state apartment in Hamilton costs around 300 CaD per month and is not difficult to get. You apply for it and they will offer you 3. In one year. You can choose. If you do not like offered apartments, then you can wait longer, maybe up to 2 years. (Female, 58 years old, born in Jablonec nad Nisou, year of emigration 2007).

Many respondents over forty years of age were inactive. It was often the case that similar types of answers to questions related to work were recorded during the research. The Roma responded that, in general terms, they worked in Canada. When they were asked what specific work they were doing, the answer was often: “I can't work, I'm sick”. The reasons they gave for receiving an invalidity pension were often repeating and controversial regarding their compatibility with work. Usually these were psychological problems related to previous racial discrimination in the Czech Republic, sleep disorders, and decreased hearing. The inactive person's partner typically acted as a caregiver and received caregiver benefits. It is not surprising that the Roma are trying to obtain sick notes at an older age because, as mentioned previously, their work tends to be physically strenuous. Incapacity for work among younger people was barely evident.

Canadians normally retire at the age of 65 and receive an old-age pension. From the age of 60 they may enter early retirement, which shortens the pension, or they may work longer, which implies an increase. The amount of pension depends on its length and the contributions made to the state budget (Government of Canada, 2015). The Roma are also acquainted with this institution.

My mother started early retirement right after she arrived in Canada in 2008, and now she is receiving 850 CaD, which is very little. Two years later, they'll pick it up, and then ten years again. (Female, 56 years, born in Prague, year of emigration 1997).

To communicate with all the official Canadian institutions mentioned in this study, Roma can receive help from non-profit organisations, most often IWCA (usually women, but they also support male clients). Organisations provide immigrants with both information support and translation. The Roma used their services in the early days when they did not speak English and did not know about the local institutional security upon their arrival. Communication in Canada, except for health care, only takes place electronically, by telephone or by mail. The Roma themselves point out that it is not possible to visit majority of these institutions in person. This represents a significant change for them and they do not perceive it as a positive one. They feel they have nowhere to go if the situation turns to their disadvantage.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism has had the greatest influence on the successful inclusion of Roma in Canadian society at all levels (Zychová, 2021). As a simple sociological fact, the Roma in Canada now form one small part of a colourful national mosaic (Government of Canada, 2017). Because of this national variety, they are no longer stigmatised for their typical anthropological features and the stereotypical prejudices associated with them. They are, in effect, hidden by cultural diversity (Zychová, 2021).

The policy of multiculturalism has, through formal initiatives to coordinate diversity, helped to shape an inclusive society and to create intercultural relations. In terms of social capital, it provides sustainable support for both bonding and bridging capital (Li, 2004). Providing a sense of belonging and mutual support among Roma who have emigrated from the Czech Republic to Canada is extremely important for inclusion and it is clear from the research results that this is in fact the case. The Roma help each other at the level of all systems examined (Zychová, 2021). Another help comes from the outside through government efforts to integrate foreigners. Language courses have almost no impact and financial support for the creation of organisations promoting the ethnic and cultural heritage of immigrants is generally not used by the Roma. Thus, ties arise at the level of families and ethnicity with regard to the country from which they emigrated. Before leaving for Canada, they had not formed such a united community (Moravec, 2006; Horváthová, 2002, p. 63). Therefore, migration has proved to be a space for change (Uherek, 2004; Uherek, 2018). However, it is important to note that some of these ties arise for profit. Some Roma, for instance, pay for mediating activity (most often for arranging work); (Zychová, 2021).

Aside from the general inclusion of the Roma in Canadian society, which can be described as successful in comparison with the situation in the Czech Republic, social inclusion can also be viewed separately within the framework of the systems examined. Understanding the Canadian education system was not very difficult for the Roma because it was similar to the Czech system. The initial problems of integration into education were caused by the social exclusion faced by Roma before they left for Canada (Zychová, 2021). Living in excluded locations carried with it a different value system in which education has a lower priority than that of the majority society (Kaleja, 2013, p. 40). As they arrived in Canada, they slowly moved away from this way of life and thus ceased to have a problem with the saturation of basic needs. Over time, they adapted to this new situation and were given space to meet their

higher needs - education. Another key point supporting the inclusion of children in schools is the significantly lower demands on basic education and the cosmopolitan composition of pupils.

Adaptation to the Canadian healthcare system can be described as problematic based on the evaluation of respondents and experts (Habádová, 2013; Vidra, 2013). In the first few years after arriving in Canada, the problem could be construed as a misunderstanding of the system or a language barrier – a mistake on the part of the actor. With the passage of time and the increasing rate of overall integration of the Roma into Canadian society, the problem increasingly seems to lie in the system-structure. In practice, both factors probably contribute to a bad situation. Although the system is not ideally set up, the Roma do not benefit their health by neglecting health prevention, omitting vaccinations or failing to have medical documentation. Such manifestations could also be deemed to be the result of a misconfigured system (e.g., poor communication between the health system and migrants). However, according to long-term Roma residents in Canada, this is unlikely. Research has shown that they are usually informed; the greatest problem is their lack of interest in health prevention and unhealthy lifestyles. It can therefore be concluded that both the structure and the actors are contributing to the situation (Zychová, 2021).

Multiculturalism is reflected in the inclusion of the Roma in the labour market and thus they are not discriminated against on the basis of prejudice. They are employed if they can get the job done. This is also aided by the links between Roma immigrants - the existence of bonding social capital. This has enabled them to mediate jobs for each other (sometimes for remuneration). The job description remains the same as in the Czech Republic. The Roma in Canada almost exclusively carry out manual labour for which no qualifications are required. If they had a qualification in their field before emigrating, Canada did not accept it. The most common cases are Czech taxi drivers who cannot carry out this job after emigration. Upgrading of qualifications is related to the issue of education, which was discussed in detail in this paper. Therefore, more professional jobs might be hopefully achieved by the younger generation in future; especially by those who were born in Canada. Regarding the social security system, the Roma also do not feel discriminated against. In this case, multiculturalism does not play such a considerable role, although one important requirement is to set up a system that minimises personal contact with officials (Zychová, 2021).

If we want to transfer the Canadian experience of Roma inclusion to the European environment, we must focus on two levels of Canadian multiculturalism, which are key for this purpose – political and sociological.

At the political level, it is about creating such rules (laws) that will bring to society the values of equality and mutual respect for race, national or ethnic origin, culture or religion. These laws would have to be formulated as basic characteristics of the whole society and their strict observance must be required. Although manifestations of racism are illegal in the European Union, they still occur (Nalejvačová, 2020). Therefore, it is clear that their anchoring or enforcement is failing.

At the sociological level, it is an increase in the diversity of the ethnic composition of European countries. Thanks to the wave of migration in recent years, this phenomenon has already occurred in part, however unevenly across Europe (Evropský parlament, 2020). For example, the Czech Republic is very opposed to refugees and remains almost untouched by the migration wave (Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, 2020). Although the social

exclusion of Roma in Europe is still an unresolved issue, it seems to be overshadowed by the problem of mass refugees, which has been going on since 2016. It would be interesting to conduct a media analysis across Europe to see if there is a correlation between on the refugee crisis and declining references to the Roma. Time will tell whether a more diverse ethnic composition of Europe will also bring greater tolerance towards the Roma.

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Figure

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