

Non-technical Summary

RRC-IX-17: Parental Strategies in Education of Children in the Czech Republic: models formed in families of different ethnic backgrounds

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The research set the following objectives: (1) to define the educational strategies of parents from the most populous communities of „new“ immigrants in the Czech Republic (Slovaks, Vietnamese, Russians, Ukrainians), and to compare them with those of the parents of the most populous ethnic groups of the Czech Republic (Czechs, Roma); (2) to define social and cultural determination of the educational strategies; (3) to show the prospects of future social stratification of „new“ immigrants in the Czech Republic taking into account the parents' strategies in career planning and education of their children.

The research was carried out via a detailed questionnaire including both close and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed in Czech and English languages. It was distributed to 441 respondents both in Prague, where there is a high city concentration of immigrants, and in small towns and communities in more rural areas with lower accessibility of secondary schools.

Results of our survey have revealed that the educational strategies of parents of Slovaks, Russians, Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Roma and Czechs differ in many respects. Cultural specifics determine these behaviors: (a) attitude to the level of desired education; (b) parental participation in children's education; (c) expected amount of knowledge in different fields; (e) attitude to school as an institution; and (d) direction in career of children.

Social and cultural aspects of the parental attitudes are also evidenced by similarities in the attitudes of two, historically close groups of parents: (a) Czechs and Slovaks; (b) Russians and Ukrainians. For the most part, the Vietnamese and Roma attitudes stand out as unique. In certain aspects, the long history of cohabitation makes the Roma strategies closer to the Czech mainstream society, and the experience of immigrant status make the Vietnamese parental behaviors similar to the other immigrant groups.

In the strategy of immigrant parents, the career focus of children depends on the social position the parents assumed in the Czech Republic. Parents of lower social status associated with their professional position deliberately direct their children to other professional areas (e.g., Vietnamese parents direct children in other areas than food/shoes/clothes sale).

The survey process showed that there is differences in the way parents from different ethnic groups filled out the questionnaire. This stems both from sociocultural ambitions and differential levels of mastering Czech/English language. It also proved effective for the researchers to be present when immigrants filled out the questionnaires in order to obtain more complete survey in relation to open-ended and scale type of questions.

The project generated data that contribute to the limited body of knowledge about the “new” immigrants’ perspective on their future in the Czech Republic and to prognosticating changes in social structure of their communities.

Key words: educational strategies; career focus; social status; cultural identity, parents-immigrants, Romové, Češi.