

Opening the city: cultural armature of city of Brno

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In my final paper I will sketch the case study of town of Brno through the concept of cultural armature as it was introduced in work of Jaworsky, Levitt, Cadge, Hejtmanek and Curran (2012).

Brno, as the whole of Czech Republic, is not an immigrant country from historical point of view. However former Czechoslovakia used to be a multicultural space until the Second World War. We can say that historically there has been an experience with otherness, though suppressed by 40 years of ethnical and national homogeneity, with few exceptions (Greek immigrant wave in late 40's). With opening the borders after 1989 the country is receiving more "people in move". The town of Brno has a growing number of immigrants from both, Western countries and the countries of the third world. According to Czech Statistical Bureau the number of foreigners in Brno tripled over last 10 years (from 9500 in 2001 to 38 000 in 2011). The municipality of Brno is trying to attract mostly the highly skilled workers to settle down in Brno as it was stated in many media appearances over the years. In my paper I would like to study how the city with not very strong immigrant history is coping with immigrants and how it is responding to their growing numbers with respect to highly skilled and low skilled ones. I believe my final paper could be a contribution to the field, although regarding its limited scope it will be more or less a sketch of a case study which would need an elaboration in wider research.

Hence, my key question will be: What is the cultural armature of Brno? Is there a difference between policy toward highly skilled immigrants and low skilled immigrants?

There is a vast number of literature on migration and urban studies. Although until the cultural turn in sociology, the main emphasis in this field was put on economic issues, leaving cultural aspects aside. Therefore my paper will use the cultural sociological perspective and the transnational lens. The main concept used in the final paper will be the concept of cultural armature which describe the city according to "(1) history and cultural geography, (2) urban self-presentation, (3) cultural responses to demography, and (4) prevailing ethos toward immigrants particularly evident in municipal responses" (Jaworsky, N. B. et al., 2012: 78). Due to scope of this paper I will not be able to interview the municipal representatives as it was done in the original study of Jaworski et al. to analyze the latter of the four, the primary source of my data will be the internet presentation of Brno municipalities concerning the immigrants.

I believe my paper will help to understand the intended transition of Brno from down scale to low scale or even up scale city (Glick Schiller N., Caglar, A., 2013) through the transnational and cultural perspective.