The terrifying politics of otherness is never far from any discussion of immigration

(Final paper)

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Introduction

"The terrifying politics of otherness is never far from any discussion of immigration,"[1] starts the article in The Guardian continuing the discussion on Roma migrants in the Great Britain. The world is on the move, people visit or move to other places. They do it voluntarily or they are just forced to do so. However, as Ulrich Beck states, "globality is an unavoidable condition of human intercourse at the close of the twentieth century" (Beck 2000:15). It enters every part of human life. Deep structural changes have occurred at each level. Globalization in its core means the denationalization, in other words the transformation of the nation state. Its erosion means the formation of a transnational form of the state (Beck 2000). Transnationalism is the result of the modern global development in the world, however, it is not its final stage. In lots of cases transnationalism and migration in general tend to reinforce the national practices. Migration is perceived as the agent eroding society´s homogenity. General rhetoric and the adopted measures carry the message of securitization, necessity of regulation and control. In ethnic environment of the Central Europe it has become a daily practice. In Slovakia and in Hungary the extremist parties claim for the general justice, while they do not hesitate to stress the ethnic aspect of this justice. Primordial vision of the core society[2] that is strong within the ethnically based states restrains the openness towards those they consider *the others* that has also been reflected in the policy adopted by the state.

Migration strenghtens metaphoric national bonds and it even leads to prevention against security threat caused by immigrants. It leads to the adoption of measures such is visa regime, quotas and so on. How is migration represented to be a threat? What role can play the media in case of discourse? What is the interconnectedness between securitization and integration? These are the questions going to be answered in this paper on the case of Roma migrants from Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Paper starts with the brief review of theoretical context of migration mainly from the point of view of the international relations theories. It discusses primarily the state-centric approach and the non state-centric approach to international migration. Next chapter refers to Roma migrants. It contents a short description of Roma community, percentage of Roma

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[1] 2013, November 17. Roma migration: Community action. *The Guardian*, from http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/17/roma-migration-sheffield-community.
[2] Jeffrey C. Alexander is discussing about the core and peripheral groups of society.

population in Central European countries, how is the community perceived in Slovakia and Czech Republic. Chapter also provides basic information on migration of Roma population. In the next part there is a discussion on Roma migration from these countries and on how can media be involved into the internal as well as the international politics. Later on I will discuss on how migration leads to the securitization and in the last part I will argue that securitization of migration and the integration are tightly interconnected.

International migration in theoretical context

Scientists from different disciplines have been researching on migration since 19th century. Not only sociological and economic aspects of migration are interesting for researchers, instead, it is undoubtedly interesting to analyze this phenomenon and its impacts on the relations within the international and national context. There are two lines of theories from the perspective of international relations that claim different approaches to the world organization and the world politics. *State-centric* theories see the world politics as a system of relations between sovereign states that are the only actors in the play. According to this approach, the world government keeping the order on international level does not exist as it in the case of nation states. If we want to explain and to understand the migration through this approach to international relations, we simply cannot apply it as it assumes the strict division between internal and foreign policy. International migration is a complex phenomenon which, obviously, has the impact on internal politics of single countries, whether those of origin or the host countries. It is also necessary to take into consideration that the national politics can trigger mass migration that would affect the international relations backwards (Koslowski 2000).

From the perspective of migration analysis it is more convenient to apply *non state-centric* international theories. The authors of these theories argue that the relations between states are very important factors, although not the only ones. A large number of processes occur out of the national space and though, national politics are not empowered to influence them or the influence is very limited. These approaches negate the dominant position of nation states. One of these paradigms stresses the importance of economic interdependency of states within the global world system and migration is one of the evidences of this interdependency.

There are numerous approaches defined by numbers of authors such as Miller, Massey, Castels, Hollifield and more other. There are migration theories based upon economic accepts, push and pull factors, motivations, realistic of liberal values. However, one of the most actual factors which have become the focus of the interest for last decades is the impact on the internal politics of host countries, mainly the factors influencing the internal migration policies such as the role of the domestic and international institutions. What is interesting about the national approach of internal politics to the migration is that in several countries the obsession with migration is much higher than the real economic impact it has on the internal economy or the real number of migrants present in the host country. Such a tendency is caused by a general discourse in the country and the public opinion spread within the population. This discourse is based upon the general imagine of a migrant being a threat to national security, economy, culture, religion. This is the ideal discourse in which the nationalism can rise on its force as there is a common belief that the homogenity of the society and the national state have been threatened (Hyusmans 2006).

The internal migration policies of host countries are influenced by several factors. One of the key factors is the approach to state´s sovereignty and the perspective of the national security that is tightly connected to the border control. Another factor is the possibility of acquiring the citizenship. This one represented much stronger motivation than the economic one for migrants in the post-war period mainly for people leaving countries of the former Soviet Union. Nowadays, the humanitarian aspect of migration has been very acute mainly in the case of refugees.

Today´s migration carries some different aspects comparing them to the past. The ideological precondition for the change in the migration trends was the adoption of multicultural perspective, positive attitude to the diversity and to different cultures and their mutual influence. According to the experts, these new aspects lie on the structural changes such as the feminization of migration or the institutionalization of migratory networks as well as on the migration dynamics within the globalized world (Koser – Lutz 1998). In my opinion, however, the acceptance of diversity clashes in lots of cases with nationalism, mainly in those where primordiality is a core perspective deciding on whether such diversity would be really accepted. In these cases it is difficult not only to accept the migrants from other countries it is even difficult to include to society the minorities living in these countries.

Roma on move

Roma community

Through the whole history the authors of documents on the history of Gypsies and nomads that were preserved were of other origins. Gypsies themselves did not leave any written or other documents telling stories, whether real or imagined, about their community (Liégeois 1997). The numbers of Gypsies migrating through the Europe have always been imprecise. Moreover, the criteria for the census of the member of these groups were influenced by political settings. Depending on who holds the power the definitions of *who is a Gypsy? Who is a nomad?* might vary through the time and space. It is necessary to take into consideration that in some states the data was based on legal aspects. On the other hand, in most countries the term representing the ethnicity has been replaced with the metaphor answering the political assimilatory tendencies. One of these examples is the former Czechoslovakia where the statistical numbers did not include ethnic minorities, however, they were focused on the problematic social groups that needed to be integrated. In Slovakia the rhetoric of the *maladjusted citizen* is very popular in present among public, media but also among political representatives. It means that in the period of Czechoslovak Republic only one part of the population was included into the census according to the definition.

Roma community is the biggest minority in Europe. Estimated number of members of this minority is 10-12 millions[3], while they live in each of the EU countries. Within the Visegrad countries the highest percentage of Roma population is in Slovakia where it represents 9,17 percent. The next comes Hungary with 8,32 percent. Third one is Czech Republic where the number of Roma population represents 1,96 percent. Last one from V4 countries is Poland where the percentage is only 1,01 percent[4]. Although the numbers of the community members are not so high in each of these countries governments often claim problems with this minority. According to the data of UNDP, about 90 percent of Roma surveyed in 2011 lived in households

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[3] Euro info. (2013). *Európska únia a Rómovia*. Citied on 25 December 2013. Available at: http://www.euroinfo.gov.sk/europska-unia-a-romovia/ .

[4] Hruška , M. (2013, June 11). *Pozrite si, koľko Rómov žije v Európe*. Available at: http://romovia.sme.sk/c/6824279/pozrite-si-kolko-romov-zije-v-europe.html.

below national poverty lines and about half of the Roma surveyed in the same year said that they experienced discrimination in the past year because they are Roma[5].

Roma migration

Only at the end of 18th century the linguists had discovered that the Romani language is the one of northwestern India. It was one of the dialects similar to Sanskrit. Migration from India had occurred in more waves during the period between 9th and 14th century. According to the analysis of the vocabulary and grammar structures of the Roma dialects from different countries it is possible to imagine the movement of groups which definitely migrated through the whole Europe. The reasons for migration could be different. During several periods there existed numbers of restrictions and measures for deportation as well as the physical sanctions or tortures (Liégeois 1997). There were also other reasons such as trade, visits of families. Travelling has its function within the Roma community, it allows the social organization of the group, it gives the space to adapt themselves´ flexibly and it also allows to do the profession. However, in some parts of the Europe Roma travelers were settled involuntarily by the law and there were forced to assimilate to the settled way of life. This happened for example in the Hungarian Empire during the Maria Theresa (Daniel 1994). In Czech part of Czechoslovak Republic the most of Roma population came from Eastern parts of Slovakia that were resided more or less by force as the possible work force into the regions where it was needed. It was also a part of the Roma dispersion policy in the 60´s.

Roma in the Central Europe

The image of Roma as the eternal nomads is an illusion mainly if we talk about those living in the Central Europe. Couple of generations have already been settled and living at the same places in urban or rural areas. One of the key moments why Roma people decided to move was the forced displacement of nomadic groups out of national societies emerging in the Europe. Inside the territories there were not eligible to own the land, they were not even included into the

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[5] United Nations Development Pr)ogramme. (2013). *Roma data*. Cited on 25 December 2013. Available at: http://www.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data.html.

public policies. The formation of nation states did not eliminate this approach, however, it has preserved it.

Roma people are not considered to be a nation in the Europe. They have never tried seriously to reach their ethnic sovereignty, instead, they were often a subject to different assimilative measures. It did not happen neither after the formation of nation states after the First World War. Succession nation states have confronted themselves with the so called *gypsy problem* since their independence. Solution of the situation of ethnic minorities in the former Czechoslovak Republic had always been a serious issue. The constitution equaled all citizens without any focus on the ethnical principle. However, Roma minority was not considered the ethnic minority at all. State institutions distinguished between those resided (working) and those travelling (without any work) (Lužica 2002). The efforts to rise the positive attitudes toward Roma population have always crashed down on the unwillingness and hatred of majority of working citizens who, on the one hand, had very negative relation to the decision makers and, on the other, they have always seen Roma and Jewish people as a foreign and unchristian element. In traditional views and prejudices people from rural areas have always assumed the ideas of nationalistic intelligence characteristic by stressing the idea of Roma as an *invaluable Gypsy population* (Lužica 2002).

Migration of Roma from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and media discourse

The first moves of Roma population out of the Central European countries goes to the year 1997, when approximately eight hundred Roma people from Czech Republic and Slovakia asked for the asylum in the Great Britain (Bútora & Ivantyšin 1998). After 1998 when other more than one thousand people claim the status in the UK it became a discussed political issue. Great Britain has also introduced visa requirements for Slovak citizens. Other numerous migratory waves have directed to Belgium, in 1999 to Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The answer to these numbers of Roma asylum seekers was again the adoption of visa requirements in most of these countries with the exception of Sweden. Next years were characteristic of continuous cancelling and introducing of the visa requirements depending on the numbers of asylum seekers.

As the migration policies have been changing during the years the Roma migration into these countries has become modified (Kovtanová & Szép 2002). It has not the form of mass movements, however, it has transformed into the waves of small groups of Roma people applying to asylum in some of these countries.

There were also other destination countries for Roma emigrants one of those Canada. After the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new democratic Central European states the refugees could not claim the political asylum, instead, they were coming to the country as the victims of ethnic persecution (Arhin 2013). Interesting is the case of Roma migrants from the Czech Republic to Canada. It is often interpreted as a clear evidence of the influence of media on the social processes and though on the migration as well. In August 1997 private television channel broadcasted the report on the idyllic life of Roma people from Czech Republic in Canada. This report has activated the mass migration of Roma to Canada in which more than 1500 migrants claimed the asylum status. In consequence of this mass movement the political problem has aroused immediately. On the one hand, from the side of Canada which was not prepared for such a mass immigration into the country, government and the institutions were not able to handle such a sudden and high number of asylum seekers. On the other, there was the Czech Republic that was forced to handle the introduction of visa requirements from the side of Canadian government (Janků 2007).

"The media frenzy generated images of a 'Gypsy invasion' using a number of value-loaded terms; their arrival was described as an "influx," a "flood," "tide," and Roma refugees were accused of being a "burden," "straining," "draining," to the system and the taxpayers; "severely taxing," "swamping," the Canadian economy or "taking advantage of" emergency housing, welfare, and other social services" (Ahrin, 2013:54). Two different approaches could be identified within the discourse in media about the emigration of Roma people. The debate in Slovak and Czech media has polarized and it has assumed two kinds of rhetoric. The first one is based on the discourse of ethno-tourism. It derives from the image of Roma emigrants as those who want to take advantage of the asylum policies in host countries and it sometimes connected with the ongoing stereotype of Roma having the travelling in their blood. The information were spread not only through tabloid media, but also through online channels of extremists´ groups or the readers´ links under the articles in serious media (Kovtanová & Szép 2002). Second approach is typical for the Roma representatives and it is based on the argument of discrimination from the

side of government, state service representatives, police, public and the extremist groups. The argument lies upon the general wide range discrimination on the labour market, in educational system or in health care which represents the main reason for the emigration of Roma population. It also corresponds to the findings reported in the *Report on the reasons for migration of Roma in Slovakia* in which discrimination represents the first place of reasons for migration. The second place belongs to socio-economic reasons such as high level of unemployment, low level of living standard, catastrophic conditions for living in Roma settlements, and at the third place there is a hidden discrimination in different areas (Červeňák 2000).

"In Slovakia, Roma interviewees referenced negative attitudes on the part of the majority society as an important incentive to wanting to leave. One could interpret this as "escaping the (interiorized) stigma," incidentally further burdened by the majority society blaming them for migrating and accusing them of misusing the welfare system in the destination country, thus, creating a bad image of the home country. Although the general approach of the majority is similar in all three countries – labeling Roma migration as a disloyal, treacherous deed that the home country is negatively stigmatized" (Vidra et al, 2013: 13).

Media discourse about Roma migration can be characterized as biased. It tends to be presented in simple way, it is often one sided, it is based upon the general stereotypes and what is worse the context of the issue is usually completely missing. This can lead to the wide range simplification, criminalization and ongoing securitization of migration and of Roma communities in general as well.

Migration as a security threat

The need for changes in the approach to the analysis of security emerges from the changes in the perception of threats. Migration influences the lives of migrants themselves as well as the receiving population. Migrants bring to the new society their own beliefs and values. Sometimes these can be very different from the practices of the members of host communities. Certain defense mechanism can be switched on among both sides. Such a mechanism aims to preserve traditional values and practices. While observing how immigration fits into the political construction of security problem, dynamics of the conservation process becomes an important factor. The aim of the whole securitization process is to provide the independent identity and the

autonomy of the community as a political unit (Huysmans, 2006: 48). In the securitization of migration the unity and sovereignty of the community are promoted. That is the reason why the immigrants and asylum seekers are perceived to be the groups threatening the receiving society´s collective way of living. The threat is, however, not the real one, furthermore, it does not threaten the peoples themselves or the state sovereignty. What is being threatened is the cultural homogeneity of the society (Huysmans 2006).

Restrictive migration policies have negative impact in several aspects[6]. The argument stressing the number of migrants in migration flows legitimizes the enforcement of border controls, the role of border police and the introduction of visa regimes as it occurred mainly in 90´s after several ways of Roma migration. Negative effect of the enforcement of border security measures is the rise in the number of smuggled people and the number of foreigners coming without documents. Another negative aspect of stressing the need for more restrictive controls is the stereotypization and the stigmatization of immigrants to be always illegal as well as the criminalization of migration (Aradau 2001). In this aspect media play an important role, mainly if they ignore the context of migration and its motivations or when it is simplified reproducing general stereotypes. Securitization of migration and asylum lead to the diffusion of fear and to the enforcement of alienation. The community needs to feel the insecurity to ensure its unity and the identity. According to Huysmans, the securitization of migration depends on the formation of credible claims holding the message of threat to the community and to the political unity. The arguments can touch also the cultural differences between foreigners and the host society. Such a clash can lead to the destabilization of the government´s legitimacy (Huysmans 2006).

The interdependence of securitization and integration

Why is so important to have a good and well prepared integration policy? We have mentioned several cases of Roma migration that had lead to the adoption of visa regimes also as the consequence of institutional unpreparedness of hosting countries. Now it is important to say *why* is the lack of the integration measures so dangerous for the society and how it is connected to securitization.

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[6]Within the negative consequences we can find the decrease of the transparency and the control over migration.

Migration is considered to be one of the factors weakening the national tradition and social homogeneity that result in the enforcement of control and regulation of migration flows and the rise of nationalistic tendencies. It is important then to analyze the relation between the perception of foreigners to be a direct or indirect threat and their integration into the receiving society. Integration presupposes the participation of groups in the majority society without leaving their own values, language or religion. Another premise is the will of immigrants to be integrated into the host society as well as the will of the majority to accept and to respect the diversity of these individuals/groups. In the discussion about the historical aspects of the national identity formation in case of Slovakia we can state that it is a nation state of Slovaks that had been constructed as a nation oppressed for thousands of years with the exclusive chance to defend their own culture and language through an independent state. Ethnic Slovaks perceive themselves as the ancestors of Slavs who had lived across the area of Slovak republic for centuries, and that is the reason why the state is in their property (Lajčáková 2009). This undoubtedly leads to the adoption of measures that are completely conformed to such a perception[7]. These measures are articulated in the context of nation-building that can, however, be problematic in the liberal approach to non-Slovaks. As the protection of national interest, stability and the protection of traditional values as well as the fear of potential security threats brought by immigrant communities have been stressed so intensively, these communities have been viewed as the danger threatening the national project of Slovaks (Lajčáková 2009). On the one hand, restrictive measures decrease the possibilities for participation of foreigners on the public life and what is even more serious, they lead to their complete isolation.

Social cohesion has become very popular issue in last decades. According to the European Council it is the ability of the society to provide well-being to all its members by decreasing inequalities and by preventing the marginalization. While talking about the value cohesion, it is connected to social solidarity that presupposes the fellowship towards the others and the readiness for behaving in terms of community´s interest (Council of Europe 2008). To be able to define the community as cohesive one, the conditions that the behavior and perception of the members are positive towards the group have to be satisfied (Friedkin 2004). Analogically, we can formulate an assumption that those who have not been incorporated into the society erode

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[7] One of the examples could be the legislative act stating the minimum years someone can claim for citizenship to 8 years of permanent residence.

the social cohesion, and so they threaten it. Among these are also the immigrants who have not been integrated. The negative effect of the loss of cohesive ability is the securitization of these groups. Securitization of migration is tightly connected to the integration of migrants into the society. Security approach motivates the state to exaggerate the ideas about the intervention of the mother state into its internal affairs through minority. So the state enforces the premise that the minority has not been loyal and that the widening of minority rights could threaten the state security (Lajčáková 2009). The argument we can meet quite often is the danger caused by the potential claims for territorial or cultural autonomy of these minorities. The immigrants, however, do not present such a threat (Brubaker 2008), moreover, in the case of Slovakia such claims have not been empirically proven not even from the side of Roma population which represents the biggest minority in the country.

We can conclude that the integration and securitization are tightly interconnected and they influence each other. Securitization of foreigners is not a new phenomenon. It is the dominance in the discourse in modern societies of nation states that has changed in last decades. More negative perspectives connected to foreigners in the political and public discourse will lead to the adoption of less integration measures and initiatives, and vice versa, less immigrants integrated into the host society will erode more seriously the social cohesion that will directly generate the increase of securitization. This phenomenon can be also the side effect of the incomplete integration of migrants. According to Thomas´ theorem the situation defined as real becomes real in its consequences (Thomas & Thomas 1928). The formation of inclusive environment is crucial for the integration of migrants into the society as well as for the strengthening of social cohesion.

Conclusion

Securitization in its basic definition says that it is a process in which any issue becomes an issue perceived as an existential threat requiring special measures. This threat is not the real one. It is a social construct emerged from perception and presentation of the topic being a certain danger. The key actors of securitization are the state representatives, policymakers and media. The security discourse of migration has reached the institutional dimension of migration policy in different countries emerging into the restriction of the entry, of visa regimes, enforcement of

border controls and many others. Bureaucratic activities connected to the surveillance and the control of borders are the central element of securitization of migration. It is not important what people believe in, it is important how are the information from politicians, professionals and media regarding migration formulated.

Nor Slovakia neither Czech Republic are homogeneous countries without diversity. Although there are more foreigners every year, comparing the number of migrants in Slovakia to other countries of the European Union, it is really low. It is, however interesting that also in the country such as Canada where 41 percent of population are first or second generation immigrants[8] the restrictive measures have been adopted after the more massive inflow of Roma immigrants in the 90´s. Nevertheless, policies should be ready to react to the actual situation. Public policies as well as the institutions should be flexible. The integration is a reciprocal process in which not only the migrants are involved, what is more important, the receiving society is a crucial element in the whole process.

Migration is considered to be one of the factors that weaken the national tradition and social homogeneity. It consequently leads to the adoption of strengthening control and restrictive measures as well as it raises the level of nationalism in countries. Within the society a negative effect has occurred – the erosion of social cohesion caused by the marginalization of migrants who have not been integrated into the wider society. The negative consequence of the loss of cohesive capacity is the securitization of this group of people. In some countries Roma people are even more vulnerable. National as well as European or international politics and people who are responsible for them should take into consideration the negative side effects caused by securitization and marginalization of migrant communities and they should also rethink further regulation and control over the borders and people coming or leaving the countries. Transnational practices that have come together with globalization are unavoidable as Ulrich Beck argued. Transnationalism is the result of the modern global development in the world and so it should not reinforce the nationalism, otherwise, it would cause a vicious circle in which deprivation and insecurity lead to securitization and marginalization creating negative discourse and strengthening control. Consequently, this impedes the integration of migrants´ communities which ends up again in deprivation and insecurity.

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[8] Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2009). Canada – Permanent residents by gender and category, 1984 to 2008. Facts and figures 2008 – Immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents. Available at: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/01.asp.

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