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“It's All Closer and More Personal to Me”: The Meaning of Closeness for Migration-Related Civic Engagement of Czech Adolescents

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3 **“It's All Closer and More Personal to Me”:** The Meaning of Closeness for Migration-
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5 **Related Civic Engagement of Czech Adolescents**
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7

8 **Abstract**
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10 The lack of trust in politics and poor civic engagement challenge new and established
11 democracies alike. In order to tackle this challenge, it is necessary to understand what motivates
12 new generations of citizens to become civically engaged. We contribute to discussions about
13 this issue by offering a qualitative, in-depth exploration of adolescents' motivations for
14 engagement, focusing specifically on the issue of migration. Drawing on data from four critical
15 focus groups conducted with adolescents (17-19 years old) in Czechia, we ask how their
16 perspectives on migration translate into motivation for migration-related civic engagement.
17 Utilizing the theoretical perspective and interpretative approach of cultural sociology, we look
18 for the meanings that sustain their personal motivation to become engaged. We find that *feelings*
19 *of closeness* to the issue of migration act as an important driver of adolescents' personal
20 motivation for engagement, making migration an issue of concern to them. We further
21 distinguish between *cultural closeness* and *closeness of contact* and identify distinct
22 mechanisms through which these forms of closeness translate into adolescents' concern about
23 the issue of migration. Our findings contribute to better conceptualization of motivations
24 stemming from personal issues or causes, and their role in civic engagement among youth.
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“It's All Closer and More Personal to Me”: The Meaning of Closeness for Migration-Related Civic Engagement of Czech Adolescents

Introduction

The ideals and legitimacy of participatory democracy cannot be sustained unless the norms, knowledge, and behavioral patterns of engaged citizenship are cultivated among new generations of citizens. While some scholars warn about declining levels of engagement among adolescents and youth¹ and characterize them as disengaged, alienated, and apathetic (Dahl et al., 2018; Henn et al., 2005), others argue that patterns of civic engagement have simply shifted (Binder et al., 2021; Raby et al., 2018), studying how youth justify specific forms of civic engagement (Alvis & Metzger, 2020; Metzger & Ferris, 2013). However, the reasons that motivate youth to become engaged in specific issues in the first place remain largely unexplored. We fill this gap by offering a qualitative, in-depth exploration of adolescents' motivations for civic engagement. We focus specifically on migration-related civic engagement, as migration has been one of the most heated public issues in Europe over the last decade and debates on migration are characterized by significant polarization of public opinion (Rea et al., 2019). We build on Ballard's (2014) pioneering research that offers a typology of motivations for youth civic engagement. In particular, we respond to her call to examine more deeply the motivations stemming from personal issues or causes. We do so by highlighting the importance of feelings of “closeness” to the issue of migration and elaborating the implications for adolescents' migration-related civic engagement.

We base our study in Czechia, a post-communist country in Central Europe that underwent a democratic transition in the early 1990s. Post-communist countries are often

¹ In this study, we primarily use the term “adolescents,” which most fittingly captures the age category of our research participants (17-19 years). When summarizing findings from other studies, we also occasionally use the term “youth,” often delineating a wider age category.

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3 characterized by a weak civil society, underpinned by widespread political apathy, lack of trust
4 in political elites and institutions, and poor civic engagement (Howard, 2003; Berglund et al.,
5 2014). These tendencies pertain also to youth, as the length of democratic tradition positively
6 affect the likelihood with which young people become interested in public issues and participate
7 in politics (Kitanova, 2020). Indeed, disinterest among 15-28-year-olds is high in Czechia, with
8 more than 50% reporting no interest in politics at all, compared with rates below 10% in Nordic
9 states and Germany (OECD, 2019). Studying civic engagement in societies with low interest in
10 public issues and politics is an essential step towards fostering a more active and participatory
11 citizenry, ensuring a vibrant democracy and addressing the consequences of political apathy.
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24 The case of Czechia is empirically compelling also with respect to the issue of
25 migration. A comparative study among youth aged 16-25 shows that the youth in Central and
26 Eastern Europe (CEE) tend to be more exclusionist towards migrants compared to youth in
27 Western Europe (Mieriņa & Koroļeva, 2015). Despite a relatively small percentage of foreign
28 nationals living in Czechia, migration remains high on political and public agendas. Since the
29 mid-2010s migration ‘crisis’², this issue has become heavily politicized and securitized (Kovář,
30 2022; Naxera & Krčál, 2018). Even though the Russian invasion of Ukraine brought a
31 noticeable change of migration discourse in Czechia, with the public and political
32 representatives expressing solidarity with migrants³ from Ukraine (Havlík & Kluknavská,
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46 ² Here we refer to the increased migration flows from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe that became
47 noticeable in the mid-2010s and culminated between 2015 and 2016. The quotation marks indicate the socially
48 constructed nature of the narrative of ‘crisis’ that characterized public debates on migration in this period.
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51 ³ In this paper, we use the term “migrant” as an inclusive category that refers to all individuals crossing borders
52 with the intention to settle in another country, whether permanently or temporarily, regardless of differences in
53 their motivations and legal statuses (Carling, 2017). Our use of this term includes asylum seekers, refugees, and
54 holders of the EU temporary protection for displaced persons. We only use the term “refugee” in the analytical
55 sections when we are interpreting the discourse of our research participants.
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3 2023), little is known about how such shifts have affected adolescents' perception of migration
4 and their motivation to become civically engaged in this issue. Therefore, we ask the following
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6 and their motivation to become civically engaged in this issue. Therefore, we ask the following
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8 research question: How do Czech adolescents' perspectives on migration translate into their
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10 personal motivation for migration-related civic engagement?
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12 To answer this question, we draw upon data from four focus groups (FGs) with Czech
13 adolescents (aged 17-19), conducted in autumn 2022 in Brno, the second largest city in Czechia.
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15 The research participants had diverse migration attitudes and previous experiences with
16 migration-related civic engagement, ranging from active participation in migration-related
17 discussions to volunteering, provision of humanitarian aid, and attending migration-related
18 demonstrations (for an overview, see Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix). We used the FGs to elicit
19 deep reflections on their perception of migration, looking for meanings that sustain their
20 personal motivation to get civically engaged in this issue. Our inductive analysis brings
21 attention to the feeling of *closeness* to the issue of migration. Applying the interpretative lens
22 of cultural sociology, and in particular the concepts of cultural repertoires (Lamont & Thévenot,
23 2000) and regimes of engagement (Thévenot 2007, 2014), we further distinguish between
24 *cultural closeness* and *closeness of contact*. We show how these two forms of closeness feed
25 into adolescents' personal concerns over the issue of migration and consequently motivate their
26 civic engagement. Based on our analysis, we argue that the feeling of closeness informs not
27 only adolescents' migration attitudes, making them more open to groups of migrants they
28 consider “close,” but also their personal motivation to get civically engaged in this issue, turning
29 migration from a distant issue with little direct relevance to their everyday life into a close issue,
30 with implications they consider more personal and are thus motivated to address.
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54 We next provide a review of the literature on youth civic engagement and migration
55 attitudes, followed by an introduction to our theoretical framework and research methods. The
56 analytical part opens with an overview of how Czech adolescents perceive the issue of
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3 migration, distinguishing between distant and close migration events. We then focus on two
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5 forms of closeness we identified—cultural closeness and the closeness of contact—and show how
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7 they feed into the personal motivation to become civically engaged in the issue of migration.
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10 **Youth civic engagement and migration attitudes**

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12 Civic engagement—sometimes also called civic participation or involvement—has long been
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14 seen as a constitutive element of democratic societies (Calhoun, 2011; Putnam, 2000). It has
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16 been praised for its capacity to counterbalance the oppressive powers of the state and the market
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18 and to ensure that the concerns of ordinary citizens are addressed. In this study, we follow Della
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20 Carpini's broad definition of civic engagement, conceptualized as “individual and collective
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22 actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern” (American Psychological
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24 Association, 2009). It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a
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26 community to solve a problem, or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. It
27
28 may take on different forms, from individual voluntary action to organizational involvement
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30 and electoral participation (Ibid.). Civic engagement can—but does not necessarily have to—
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32 be openly political, as the boundaries between the civic and the political are often blurry (Ekman
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34 & Amnå, 2012) and youth typically have fewer opportunities for direct political involvement
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36 (Flanagan, 2009). A broad definition of civic engagement thus also includes various forms of
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38 political participation, such as attending demonstrations, signing petitions, or joining a political
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40 party.
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47 The bulk of contemporary studies on youth civic engagement focuses on its shifting
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49 forms (Binder et al., 2021; Raby et al., 2018) and explores how youth make sense of specific
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51 forms of engagement (Alvis & Metzger, 2020). It shows that youth demonstrate a lower
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53 inclination to traditional forms of engagement, such as joining political parties or trade unions.
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55 Instead, they prefer engagement in non-hierarchical networks such as citizen movements
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57 (Binder et al., 2021) or volunteering (Collin, 2015). They also increasingly favor online forms
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3 of civic engagement (Wilf & Wray-Lake, 2021), building connections via social media (Loader
4 et al., 2014). Socio-economic background has been identified as one of the major factors
5 contributing to the “civic engagement gap,” with adolescents coming from better situated
6 families more likely to engage civically (Gaby, 2017). The level of youth civic engagement has
7 also been linked to the level of opportunities offered by the external environment, especially by
8 schools and teachers (Henderson et al., 2014; Jacobsen & Casalaspi, 2018).
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17 However, the reasons that motivate youth to become civically engaged in the first place
18 remain largely unexplored. One exception is Ballard's (2014) pioneering research that identifies
19 four main categories of motivations for youth civic engagement. The first, *personal issues or*
20 *causes*, captures civic issues or causes that youth are passionate about and interested in. As
21 another study confirms, “High identification with actors and perceived issue relevance
22 significantly increases the likelihood of participation” (Binder et al., 2021, p. 232). The second
23 category pertains to *beliefs* that engagement is civically important; it is more likely if youth feel
24 a real need to participate (Amnå & Ekman, 2014) or if the issue is perceived as their
25 responsibility (Scott & Šerek, 2015). The third category, *self-goals*, is motivation for the
26 purpose of personal development or self-enhancement. However, as a US study about university
27 students demonstrates, because of their studies and workload, students engage pragmatically to
28 use their time and sources efficiently (Winston, 2013), engaging in civic activities that have a
29 chance to succeed in their goals (Ibid.). The last category, *response to an invitation*, includes
30 motivation based on an invitation by individuals, groups, or institutions. While the last three
31 categories of motivations are clearly defined, the first category, *personal issues or causes*,
32 remains broad and could potentially entail many explanations of why a specific issue becomes
33 personally relevant to certain youth. As Ballard (2014) acknowledges, although this category
34 of motivations is likely crucial, the meanings that drive it require further examination.
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3 In this article, we explore adolescents' personal motivations to become civically
4 engaged in the issue of migration, an extremely salient and controversial topic in the Czech
5 public sphere. Existing research shows that youth in CEE are less tolerant toward migrants than
6 their counterparts in Western Europe (Mieriņa & Koroļeva, 2015). Economic insecurity, low
7 social and political trust, a legacy of ethnic nationalism, and little contact with people of
8 different nationalities are the main factors driving exclusionary attitudes in this region (Ibid.).
9 Recent studies on the Czech context affirm the influence of social and friendly contact with
10 minorities (Hasman & Divínová, 2020; Pavelková et al., 2020), and school climate (Kudrnáč,
11 2017), on the formation of migration attitudes among adolescents. Adolescents living in
12 localities with a higher representation of foreign state nationals declare higher tolerance towards
13 migrants and they also exhibit more positive attitudes toward migrants coming from countries
14 typically represented in Czechia, such as Slovakia, Vietnam, Ukraine, the US, or Germany, than
15 toward migrants coming from less represented countries, such as Syria or Nigeria (Hasman &
16 Divínová, 2020). Further, Czech adolescents are generally more supportive of equal rights than
17 of cultural rights, resulting in a preference for the assimilation of migrants into Czech society
18 and less tolerance for cultural otherness (Farkač et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2019).

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21 To summarize, while the literature on youth civic engagement emphasizes the need to
22 further examine the motivations stemming from *personal issues or causes*, the literature on
23 youth migration attitudes in Czechia signals that certain groups of migrants engender greater
24 support in society than others. Bridging the gap between these two bodies of scholarship, we
25 aim to understand the link between the adolescents' perception of migration and their personal
26 motivations for migration-related civic engagement. We next introduce the interpretative
27 framework of cultural sociology that helps us trace this link by paying attention to the meaning-
28 making that sustains research participants' perceptions of migration and migration-related civic
29 engagement.

Cultural embeddedness of migration-related civic engagement

To explore the motivations among Czech adolescents to engage civically in the issue of migration, we utilize the theoretical perspective of cultural sociology. Integral to this perspective is a “meaning first” epistemology (Alexander & Smith, 2018), which privileges the ways in which individuals make sense of intersubjectively shared meanings and looks for the implications of their meaning-making for social action (Alexander & Smith, 2003; Reed, 2011). This analytical orientation allows us to capture, reconstruct, and interpret the intended, as well as unintended, common-sense meanings together with the political, cultural, and social-historical context that makes meaning-making possible (Willig, 2014).

We further apply two conceptual layers that help us elucidate different aspects of meaning-making and their implications for research participants’ motivations to engage civically. The first conceptual layer comes from cross-national comparative studies that highlight the cultural embeddedness of meaning-making in available *cultural repertoires*: the “relatively stable schemas of evaluation that are used in varying proportions across national contexts” (Lamont & Thévenot 2000, p. 8). Hotchkiss (2010, p. 369) has observed that the notion of a shared national past is crucial for the formation of cultural repertoires; references to national events, historical figures, or foundational documents “tend to solidify the use of cultural repertoires by grounding them in a nation’s history.” Cultural repertoires can, however, form also around other types of collective experience that reflect the geography or demography of places where people live or even their collective exposure to specific media contents (Jaworsky et al., 2023; Rapoš Božič et al., 2023). Previous research has convincingly shown that cultural repertoires inform attitudes concerning a wide range of public issues, including migration (Lamont, 2000; Lamont & Thévenot, 2000; Božič et al., 2023), as well as patterns of civic engagement (Eliasoph & Clément, 2020; Luhtakallio, 2012).

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3 The second conceptual layer comes from French pragmatic sociology, which
4 distinguishes among different *regimes of engagement* through which individuals relate to their
5 environment (Thévenot, 2007, 2014). These entail *engagement in familiarity*, which builds on
6 close encounters in well-known places, *engagement in an individual plan*, akin to “normal
7 action” that is future-oriented, and *engagement in justification*, which places requirements on
8 individuals to translate their concerns into a publicly acceptable format by relating them to
9 publicly recognized conceptions of the common good (Thévenot, 2014). Although all regimes
10 of engagement are integral to human interaction with the environment and can become
11 prominent in different situations, their potential for collective mobilization and public
12 articulation of concerns differs vastly. Consequently, most studies on civic and political life
13 tend to neglect the role familiarity and closeness play as drivers of civic engagement, generally
14 associated with the private domain (for exceptions see Eliasoph, 1997; Gajdoš & Rapošová,
15 2018). As Thévenot (2020, p. 222) notes, “Close relationships that bind us to other persons,
16 living beings, things, and places,” namely, the products of engagement in familiarity, “are
17 usually excluded from the definition of politics,” and, instead, “ascribed to the private domain
18 of self-interest.” Therefore, it is crucial to examine how personal concerns are translated into
19 publicly justifiable formats, feeding into civic or political action (Thévenot, 2020).
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42 This combined theoretical framework allows us to conceptually frame Ballard’s (2014)
43 motivation of personal issues or causes as a feeling of closeness to a person, event, thing, or
44 place, mediated through intersubjective and culturally embedded meanings and personal
45 experiences. The intensity of closeness depends on the strength and captivating nature of
46 meaning and experience. In particular, we explore the meanings that sustain research
47 participants' personal motivation for migration-related civic engagement by paying attention to
48 their embeddedness in intersubjectively shared cultural repertoires circulating in Czechia, as
49 well as in research participants' interactions with migrants in well-known environments.
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Methodology

Our findings are part of a four-year-long (2019-2022) research project ANONYMIZED FOR PEER REVIEW. The aim is to find out how Czech adolescents' perspectives on migration translate into motivation for migration-related civic engagement. The analysis builds on four FGs conducted in October and November 2022, with a total of 23 grammar school students in Brno. In the Czech educational system, grammar schools represent university-track, secondary-school education, mostly attended by students with higher socio-economic backgrounds (Katrňák et al., 2013). Due to their emphasis on general education, we expect the level of opportunities for civic engagement to be richer in grammar schools than in other types of schools. Moreover, there is a tendency for grammar school students to exhibit higher levels of tolerance towards migrants, compared to students in other types of high schools (Hasman & Divínová, 2020). Our research thus targets a population of adolescents whose preconditions for migration-related civic engagement are likely to be among the highest in their age cohort.

We recruited the research participants in two steps. First, we contacted 13 grammar schools located in the vicinity of Brno with a request to share information about our research among their students. Our selection included both public and private schools, some of them specializing in specific disciplines (languages, sports, etc.). We used teachers of history and social science as gatekeepers, asking them to target students of the last two grades, aged 17-19. We limited our research to this age group because sociopolitical attitudes start crystalizing and stabilizing at around this age (Eckstein et al., 2012; Prior, 2010). Moreover, at this age, most research participants had already formally engaged in civic life through voting,⁴ or they were going to obtain this right soon. Finally, by narrowing down the age span in our sample, we also wanted to limit potential status imbalances in FGs. Besides general introduction of the research,

⁴ The legal voting age in Czechia is 18. One month before the first focus group, elections were held for municipal councils and the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

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3 the information for students included a link to an online questionnaire with questions about
4 sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, native language), migration attitudes, and
5 former experience with civic engagement.⁵ Students interested in research participation were
6 instructed to fill in the questionnaire and leave their contact details.
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12 Second, out of the 60 students who filled in the questionnaire, we selected 23 research
13 participants from 9 different schools and invited them to the FGs. Following the strategy of
14 purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), we strived to keep each FG diverse with respect to research
15 participants' gender, age, school, migration attitudes, and former experience with different
16 forms of civic engagement. The final sample consisted of 13 men, 9 women and 1 non-binary
17 person. All of the research participants were native Czechspeakers, while one research
18 participant was bilingual and additionally spoke Slovak. The age composition of our research
19 participants included 17-years-olds (N=8), 18-year-olds (N=10), and 19-year-olds (N=5). We
20 provide a summary description of research participants' migration attitudes and former
21 experience with civic engagement in the Appendix, in Tables 1 and 2.
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35 We conducted the FGs online via videoconference. Each of the FGs lasted
36 approximately 120 minutes and was video recorded and later transcribed. We obtained written
37 informed consent from each research participant, as mandated by the ethics approval committee
38 at ANONYMIZED FOR PEER REVIEW. The discussions were thematically organized into
39 three parts: 1. general views on migration, 2. migration as an issue of concern, and 3. migration-
40 related civic engagement. Following the approach of “critical focus groups” (Löfflmann &
41 Vaughan-Williams, 2018), our aim was to stimulate open discussion among research
42 participants that would allow us to explore their meaning-making. Rather than looking for
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55 ⁵ The questions about migration attitudes were adopted from or inspired by the battery of questions from European
56 Social Survey and the question about former experience with civic engagement was inspired by a survey question
57 developed by Amnå and Ekman (2014).
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3 individual predictors of civic engagement, we created a reflexive forum for investigating “how
4 knowledge, ideas, storytelling, self-presentation and linguistic exchanges operate within a given
5 cultural context” and shape research participants' perception of migration as well as their
6 motivations to become civically engaged in this issue (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 5).
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12 We analyzed the data using the qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, subjecting
13 them to several rounds of open, focused, and theoretical coding (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).
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15 The initial round of open (inductive) coding alerted us to the importance of the feeling of
16 “closeness,” which proved important for both research participants' perception of migration as
17 well as for their migration-related civic engagement. We further developed our analytical focus
18 on “closeness” by distinguishing between “cultural closeness” and the “closeness of contact,”
19 the two most prominent forms of closeness present in our data. Finally, we deepened our
20 analysis by connecting the inductively developed codes with a number of theoretical codes,
21 including “cultural repertoires” and “regimes of engagement.” This last step allowed us to better
22 conceptualize the two forms of closeness by linking them to existing social theories and
23 elucidate their implications for migration-related civic engagement.
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37 38 **Feeling “close” to the issue of migration**

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40 Czech adolescents participating in our research associated migration primarily with two events
41 that have stirred public debates in Czechia in recent years: the mid-2010s migration “crisis,”
42 characterized by an increased number of people from the Middle East and North Africa heading
43 to Europe, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in spring 2022, which forced a significant part
44 of the Ukrainian population to leave the country and seek refuge abroad. Both events received
45 considerable coverage in Czech media and were widely discussed by political representatives
46 and laypeople alike. While the Czech response to the mid-2010s migration “crisis” was largely
47 negative and characterized by a political reluctance to comply with the EU refugee relocation
48 scheme (Hrabálek & Đorđević, 2017; Jelínková, 2019), the worsening of public migration
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3 attitudes (Hanzlová, 2018), and a rapid increase in Islamophobia (Čada & Frantová, 2019), the
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5 response to the arrival of migrants from Ukraine after the Russian invasion was, at least initially,
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7 characterized by high levels of solidarity, openness, and support on the part of both political
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9 representatives (Havlík & Kluknavská, 2023) as well as the general public (Červenka, 2022).

12 Differences in the public response to these two migration events were discussed by
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14 research participants in all FGs, often accompanied by reflections about their own perceptions.⁶
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16 While most research participants perceived the mid-2010s migration “crisis” as a highly
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18 mediatized yet a relatively distant issue with little direct significance for their lives, the arrival
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20 of migrants from Ukraine represented for them a much closer issue, with consequences often
21
22 affecting them personally. This finding is well documented in the following exchange, in which
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24 research participants in FG1 elaborate their associations with the issue of migration.
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29 Jakub: I guess the first thing that automatically comes to my mind is the most
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31 mediatized migration crisis of Syrian refugees, Afghan refugees, from the
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33 years 2011, 2013. When... when the masses were coming in trains and buses,
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35 crossing the borders in Greece, in Turkey and so on [animated gesticulation].
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37 And there was a lot of discussion about it at the time.

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39 Moderator 1: Do you have any feelings connected to it?

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41 Jakub: Well, at the time, I felt like it was negative, but mostly because I was
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43 told so by others. But the feeling is definitely more negative, like some kind of
44
45 a threat.

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47 Moderator 1: What about the others? What comes to your mind?

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49 Jeroným: Similar to Jakub, I also immediately think of the earlier...of the
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51 Syrian refugee crisis – like the refugees coming from the Middle East rather
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53 than the current [crisis] concerning the Ukrainians. That's kind of weird,
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55 because there were so few of them [refugees from the Middle East] here in
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57 Czechia. There are few of them in general. But it's been much more mediatized,
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6 The extent to which the mid 2010's migration crisis resonated in FG discussions is somewhat surprising given that in the mid-2010s, the majority of research participants was just entering adolescence. We believe that their ability to recollect the details of the public response to this event and their willingness to discuss it reflect the long-lasting impact of this event on Czech public debate, representing a key theme in the 2017 parliamentary and 2018 presidential elections and largely polarizing the society (Jaworsky et al., 2023).

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3 how they are going to invade us and, and Islamize us. But I don't have a lot of
4 direct personal feelings about it because it didn't touch me in any personal way.
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6 Jitka: I guess, I'm more reminded of the current situation, with the refugees
7 from Ukraine.
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9 Moderator 1: Do you have any concrete association?
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11 Jitka: Well, because it's definitely all around us right now, so it's kind of
12 [hesitation] the most prominent, the freshest. And I guess also because I have
13 some... it feels closer to me than the refugee crisis with the Syrian refugees
14 [Jakub is nodding].
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17 As the excerpt reveals, both Jakub and Jeroným associate migration with the mid-2010's
18 migration crisis, or, more specifically, with its media portrayal. Jakub's feelings about this event
19 are mostly negative, evoking a threat. However, as he admits, his feelings mostly reflect what
20 he was “told by others” rather than his own personal experience. Jeroným agrees with Jakub
21 that the mention of migration also automatically makes him think of the “refugees coming from
22 the Middle East.” He then questions the prominence of this association, hinting at the fact that,
23 in the mid-2010s, Czechia experienced “a refugee crisis without refugees” (Jelínková, 2019).
24 Most migrants used Czechia only as a transit country during this period and, up until today, the
25 population of residents with Middle Eastern or North African origin remains generally low.⁷
26 Although Jeroným also felt exposed to the messages about “invasion” and “Islamization” that
27 circulated in the Czech media, he admits that this event did not touch him “in any personal
28 way.” This finding is consistent with the results of a recent qualitative study on public migration
29 attitudes in Czechia which finds that although Czech residents widely associate migration with
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50 ⁷ The share of foreign nationals in Czechia in 2021 was 6.2 per cent (CZSO, n.d.). Already at that time, Ukrainians
51 (196,875) were the largest foreign community in the Czech Republic, followed by Slovaks (114,630) and
52 Vietnamese (64,851). With the arrival of almost 400,000 Ukrainian refugees in 2022, the share of foreign nationals
53 in the total population is expected to rise to more than 10 per cent in 2023. The proportion of people from the
54 Middle East has long been low in the Czech Republic. In 2022, the most numerous groups were Turks (4,935),
55 Egyptians (1,654), and Syrians (1,569) (MVČR, n.d.).
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3 irregular border crossing and other media portrayals of the mid-2010s crisis, they perceive little
4 connection between this event and their daily lives (Jaworsky et al., 2023).
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8 In contrast to Jakub and Jeroným, Jitka offers a different perspective, associating
9 migration primarily with the arrival of “refugees from Ukraine.” Not only does she find this
10 event more current (“it’s definitely all around us”), but she also admits that it “feels closer to
11 me,” especially when compared to the “crisis with the Syrian refugees.” The mention of
12 closeness brings about a nod from Jakub, who seems to agree that, indeed, the arrival of
13 “refugees from Ukraine” feels somewhat “closer.” Such statements imply an intense emotional
14 investment, rather than mere spatial and temporal proximity. Yet what does it mean for our
15 research participants to feel “close” to the issue of migration? And what role does closeness
16 play in motivating their civic engagement? In the following two sections, we explore two types
17 of closeness that not only shaped research participants' migration attitudes, but also proved
18 crucial for their motivation to engage civically: cultural closeness and the closeness of contact.
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32 33 **Cultural closeness and collective responsibility for migrants**

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35 Feelings of cultural closeness to migrants from specific countries make it possible for our
36 research participants to perceive migration as a close personal issue worthy of their civic
37 engagement. When talking about cultural closeness, research participants would commonly
38 identify themselves as Czechs, and occasionally also as Slavs or Europeans. Such
39 identifications allow them to speak about closeness among different “imagined communities”
40 (Anderson, 2006) rather than among individuals and to emphasize the aspects of culture they
41 feel they share (or not) with certain groups of migrants. This notion of closeness is not
42 necessarily based on any personal contact with migrants. Instead, it is mediated by available
43 cultural repertoires circulating in Czechia. We illustrate this point by presenting several
44 excerpts from FG1, part of a longer discussion about the implications of migrants' cultural
45 background for public responses to migration. Despite starting with examples from abroad,
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3 research participants quickly shift the discussion to the arrival of Ukrainians after the Russian
4 invasion, mentioning several aspects of culture that, in their opinion, make Czechs feel close to
5 Ukrainians. They also discuss the implications of cultural closeness for their own perceptions
6 of and responses to migration.
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12 Jakub: I can't say for certain whether a different culture is purely positive or
13 negative, but what I can definitely perceive, for instance in Europe, is that
14 migrants with a similar culture for sure integrate themselves better. [...] It
15 works better in every possible way. I can see it, for example, in Spain, where
16 I'm currently on Erasmus and a lot of people from Latin America are
17 immigrating here - from Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and so on. And the local
18 Spaniards perceive these refugees or migrants much better than, let's say,
19 people from Morocco, Sub-Saharan Africa, and so on. Because they have the
20 same religion, the same culture, and the same roots, whereas, for example, with
21 the refugees from Africa they don't have that. And then it causes more unrest,
22 bad feelings and moods, and so on.
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26 Moderator 1: And how is it for you personally?
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28 Jakub: For me personally... Certainly it is more pleasant, more *comfortable*,
29 probably for each of us, when we meet someone with the same culture. Because
30 we know- we expect that we have plus-minus the same values and so on. Here,
31 we touch upon the question of xenophobia, the fear of the unknown, which, of
32 course, in case of someone from another culture is greater and more *justified*
33 than in case of people from a culture closer to us. (emphases in original)
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36 Jeroným: [...] Jakub is right that refugees with a similar culture certainly find
37 it easier to integrate and that society will perceive them better and get along
38 with them better. So... [hesitantly] we, as Slavs, have quite a bit in common
39 with Ukrainians, even if it doesn't seem like it to us. We will be much closer to
40 them than... than Germans or any other country where they might decide to
41 go. So, it puts some kind of responsibility on us, almost, because... if anyone,
42 the Slavs will be closer to them.
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45 In the opening paragraph of the excerpt, Jakub defines cultural closeness in ethnic terms,
46 mentioning shared religion, cultural practices, and common roots. Such closeness represents
47 for him not only a guarantee of the smoother integration of migrants and their more positive
48 perception by the locals, but also a source of personal "comfort." He can understand why people
49 fear the unknown; xenophobia towards culturally distant Others is "more justified." His
50 meaning-making is thus firmly embedded in the cultural repertoire of ethnic nationalism that
51 views nations primarily as ethnic communities held together by shared linguistic and cultural
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3 traits, particularly prominent in CEE, including Czechia (Brubaker, 1996). Jeroným agrees with
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5 Jakub and steers the discussion toward the arrival of Ukrainians. Alluding to the cultural
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7 repertoire of pan-Slavism that emphasizes common cultural and historical traits among Slavic
8
9 nations (Đorđević et al., 2023), he further proposes that Czechs, as Slavs, have “quite a bit of
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11 common with Ukrainians,” as opposed to non-Slavic nations such as Germans. He concludes
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13 by acknowledging the real-life implications of such closeness, “some kind of responsibility,”
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15 which, in his opinion, uniquely posits Czechs as people who should help Ukrainians.
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19 In the continuation of this exchange, Jakub and Jana bring up another aspect of cultural
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21 closeness that derives from a “common past.”
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24 Jakub: What certainly also plays a role here is our common past, that actually
25 both nations have experience with Eastern Europe and with the fact that we
26 were in the Eastern Bloc, under the sphere of Soviet influence, or directly in
27 the Soviet Union, like Ukraine. So, we perceive this whole thing [Russian
28 invasion] very differently and it is much closer for us than for people from the
29 West, who actually do not have that experience, do not carry the experience
30 with these regimes in their societies. Authoritarian regimes. Socialism.
31 Communism. A harsh dictatorship. [...]
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34 Jana: On account of sympathizing with Ukraine or accepting Ukrainians into
35 Czechia, I think that we in Czechia perceive it more personally because of a
36 shared history. But also because of the fact that if Russians were to occupy all
37 of Ukraine, then we are not so far away; it is only Poland and Slovakia that
38 separate us. [Jakub nods]
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41 For Jakub, the shared experience of once “living under the sphere of Soviet influence”
42
43 represents another important aspect of cultural closeness between Czechs and Ukrainians. He
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45 believes that based on this experience, Czechs have a different, much closer understanding of
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47 migrants from Ukraine and their situation, especially when compared to “people from the
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49 West.” Indeed, the cultural repertoire of East-West division remains alive in Czech society,
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51 more than thirty years after the Velvet Revolution. Under normal circumstances, this cultural
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53 repertoire does not secure migrants from “the East” a privileged position in Czech society and
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55 can even be a source of stigma (Klvaňová, 2017). However, as Jakub's statement documents,
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57 in the face of the Russian invasion, it generates enhanced solidarity based on shared historic
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3 trauma. Jana also agrees that “shared history” matters and makes the situation of Ukrainians
4 more personal for Czechs. Nevertheless, she reminds the others how cultural closeness has
5 geographical underpinnings; if the war was lost in Ukraine, people in Czechia would feel it.
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10 In the final part of the exchange, Jeroným and Jakub revisit the questions of collective
11 responsibility for Ukrainians and personal concern about their situation.
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15 Jeroným: I just want to emphasize that I didn't mean we would directly feel the
16 responsibility, just that it kind of falls on us. Because we are culturally closest
17 to them [Ukrainians], or like... of those countries that are doing well enough
18 economically and are geographically close enough to Ukraine to be able to
19 accept refugees. We are one of the culturally closest, so it partly falls on us.
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22 Jakub: I would then say that it fell even more on Poles, who accepted not three
23 hundred, four hundred thousand, but about three million refugees. So it was
24 probably quite a challenge for them. However, it is true that, for me personally,
25 it concerns me. I take the entire Russian invasion as a much more personal
26 conflict than any other. So, with Ukrainian refugees, I sympathize with them,
27 I have compassion for them. I can put myself in their shoes; it's all closer and
28 more personal to me.
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31 Afraid of being misunderstood, Jeroným returns to his earlier statement, emphasizing that not
32 all Czechs might feel direct responsibility for Ukrainians; the responsibility simply “falls on
33 them.” Jakub points out that if this was true, Poles would then carry even greater responsibility
34 than Czechs, since they provided refuge to many more Ukrainians. He then concludes by
35 bringing the discussion back to a personal level, making it clear that his sense of responsibility
36 is authentic and cultural closeness with Ukrainians certainly means something to him: it makes
37 the Russian invasion feel like “a much more personal conflict” to him and it also makes him
38 personally “concerned” about the situation of Ukrainians who sought refuge in Czechia.
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49 How a sense of collective responsibility toward a specific group of migrants and a
50 personal concern over their situation translates into migration-related civic engagement
51 becomes apparent later in the FG, once research participants start discussing their responses to
52 the arrival of migrants from Ukraine. While all those who joined the discussion about cultural
53 closeness have done something to engage civically—providing humanitarian aid (Jitka),
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3 offering Czech language tutoring (Jitka), or organizing free time activities for children (Jana
4 and Jeroným)—it is again Jakub who embraces his commitment to migration-related civic
5 engagement most strongly:
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10 When it all started, I felt the need [to do something]. I actually initiated the
11 [Ukrainian] flag raising at the school right away, even before we knew whether
12 it would be accepted by the society or not. So, I definitely had that need.
13

14 The feelings of cultural closeness toward migrants from Ukraine are expressed in all the FGs.
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16 Although the issue of perceived cultural closeness or distance to migrants from other countries
17 is not discussed in the same amount of detail, the comparison is often present implicitly; by
18 presenting the closeness with Ukrainians as something exceptional, research participants imply
19 that they felt greater distance toward migrants from other countries and were not equally
20 concerned about their situation.
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28 The analysis presented in this section elucidates the capacity of intersubjectively shared
29 meanings, available in the form of locally available cultural repertoires, to generate feelings of
30 closeness to migrants from specific countries, in this case, Ukraine. We have shown that such
31 feelings can give rise to a sense of collective responsibility toward migrants and become
32 internalized in the form of personal concern about their situation. We argue that both these
33 mechanisms play an important role in motivating research participants' migration-related civic
34 engagement. While personal concern about an issue is generally recognized as an important
35 precondition for civic engagement (Binder et al., 2021), a sense of collective responsibility
36 toward migrants can further motivate migration-related civic engagement, making it seem not
37 only personally relevant, but also socially desirable. This mechanism remains, however, highly
38 selective inasmuch as it only motivates civic engagement in relation to migrants from specific
39 countries. They are also not causal; not all research participants who spoke of cultural closeness
40 automatically believed all Czechs should feel the collective responsibility toward migrants from
41 Ukraine or internalized the concern about their situation in an equal manner. In this respect,
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3 although feelings of cultural closeness represent an important source of research participants'
4 personal motivation for migration-related civic engagement, they do not guarantee it. They
5 merely make the civic engagement appear like a morally worthier and publicly more desirable
6 option. In the next analytical section, we discuss the closeness of contact and show how close
7 contact with migrants can further strengthen the concern about migration by allowing the
8 research participants to become more familiar with migrants' situation and develop empathy.
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17 **Closeness of contact and empathy with migrants**

19 The second form of closeness with implications for perceptions of migration and personal
20 motivation for migration-related civic engagement is the closeness of contact. With respect to
21 migration attitudes, the importance of close contact is difficult to underestimate. Studies
22 drawing upon Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis have repeatedly confirmed that meaningful
23 contact with migrants reduces prejudice and leads to more positive perception of migration (see
24 also Kudrnáč, 2017; Mieriņa & Koroļeva, 2015). This relationship has been confirmed in the
25 Czech context; friendly contact with foreign-born classmates reduced anti-immigration
26 attitudes among high-school students (Pavelková et al., 2020). Yet how does close contact with
27 migrants impact adolescents' personal motivation for migration-related civic engagement?
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40 The opportunities for close contact with migrants (or the lack thereof) represents a
41 salient theme in all the FGs. The comparison between the mid-2010s migration crisis and the
42 Russian invasion of Ukraine again plays an important role, as the research participants often
43 compare their exposure to migrants arriving to Czechia in these two periods.⁸ As Ignác makes
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52 ⁸ Contact with other types of migrants, e.g. labour migrants or foreign students, has not been discussed much in
53 FGs. This could be explained by the extent to which laypeople in Czechia associate the label migrant with forced
54 or irregular migration, effectively blurring boundaries between "migrants" and "refugees," apparent also in some
55 FG excerpts. Migrants coming to Czechia voluntarily for the purpose of work or study are more commonly labeled
56 as "foreigners" (Rapoš Božič, Klvaňová & Jaworsky, 2023).
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3 clear in the following excerpt from FG2, during the mid-2010s migration crisis, Czechs mostly
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5 learned about migration through the media, because the opportunities for close contact with
6
7 people coming to Czechia from the Middle East and Africa were limited by their low numbers
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9 (see also Jaworsky et al., 2023; Pickel & Öztürk, 2018). He compares this situation with his
10
11 experience from Germany, where he was in fact able to establish close contact with migrants.
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15 Ignác: Now we are mostly dealing with refugees from the Ukrainian wave, but
16 my first meeting with refugees was during the 2015 wave, the emigration wave
17 from Syria, from Afghanistan, and so on. And I didn't meet them in Czechia,
18 because, of course, there weren't many of them in Czechia. But it was in
19 Germany, because I lived in Germany then. It was interesting, in Czechia, you
20 didn't basically know their opinion or their history...the only thing you knew
21 was what was on the internet - sure, it's possible to find some information in
22 foreign media but it's always just mediated. It was only when I met them in
23 person, I realized how extremely difficult it was for them and how many things
24 they had to suffer to get into the European Union, and what incredible stories
25 most of these migrants have behind them, hardly presented in the media here.
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28 For Ignác, close contact with migrants has changed his perspective on migration, since he has
29
30 had a chance to become more familiar with their situations and their stories. This experience
31
32 has increased his empathy; he “realized how extremely difficult it was for them and how many
33
34 things they had to suffer” on their way to Europe. However, for most other research participants
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36 an opportunity to establish close contact with migrants has come only recently, after the Russian
37
38 invasion. As of June 18, 2023, more than half a million Ukrainians had applied for temporary
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40 protection in Czechia, making Czechia a country with the highest number of war-displaced
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42 Ukrainians per capita in the EU (UNHCR, n.d.). In Brno, the number of registered foreign
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44 nationals has increased by almost 60% between January 2022 and January 2023,⁹ resulting in a
45
46 situation in which every fifth registered inhabitant now comes from a foreign country (Zvara,
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48 2023). As Robin reflects in FG3: “I've noticed that in Brno, since the war in Ukraine, there have
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50 been so many refugees. [...] Definitely far more than before.” Such an increase naturally
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60 ⁹ This number increased from 41,799 in January 2022 to 66,259 in January 2023.

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3 enhances research participants' opportunities for close contact with migrants, giving rise to a
4 sensation that migration “[i]s definitely all around us right now,” as articulated by Jitka in FG1.
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8 Another reason the arrival of war-displaced Ukrainians increased research participants’
9 opportunities for close contact with migrants concerns the demographic characteristics of this
10 population, in particular, the large number of children and adolescents who have begun to attend
11 Czech schools and participate in afterschool activities.¹⁰ Indeed, many research participants
12 report that they have new classmates from Ukraine. Close contact with migrants from Ukraine
13 helps them to contextualize and supplement the information they were receiving from Czech
14 media and to become more familiar with migrant situations. As Radek's experience shared in
15 FG3 illustrates, in this case, the opportunity to hear their stories gives rise to empathy.
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26 Radek: We actually had a Ukrainian girl in our class, who was describing to us
27 what was happening in Kiev. It was all in Russian, the lecture, so it was more
28 difficult for us to fully understand it, but it was being translated into English.
29 And she was describing to us... how... also how accurate the media [portrayal]
30 was. And to me it really helped to get an idea how it must feel – like in that
31 person's shoes.
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34 Besides school, research participants also recall encountering migrants from Ukraine in a
35 number of other everyday situations: on the street, in public transportation, in their part-time
36 jobs, or during leisure activities. Not all types of contact, however, engender feelings of
37 closeness to migrants, nor do they compel an equal amount of concern about their situation.
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39 This becomes apparent in the following exchange from FG4, in which research participants
40 discuss how the recent arrival of migrants from Ukrainian has affected them personally.
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48 Kryštof: It mostly affects me when I travel, because I meet a lot of migrants in
49 the [public] transportation, or in my part-time job in Albert [supermarket],
50 where they don't speak Czech, so we must communicate in another language.
51 But most often in transportation, since I often go by train to Slovakia. There,
52 often meet Ukrainians and the trains were crowded, so it affected me the most.
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57 ¹⁰ Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, nearly 60,000 Ukrainian children have been enrolled in Czech pre-
58 school, primary, and secondary education (MŠMT, 2022).
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3 Otherwise, I don't meet [them] much or at least I don't realize that it would
4 affect me.
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6 Kristýna: Well, like I said, in gymnastics, we had a lot of those [Ukrainian]
7 kids and we tried to like put them together so that they could talk to each other
8 in Ukrainian. Then, we actually gave them some Ukrainian books as a gift for
9 them and maybe for their parents. They [parents from Ukraine] also try to talk
10 to us in Czech and they ask how the kids are doing and they're just interested -
11 they try to communicate with us, which is great that they're not afraid. I've had
12 a good experience so far at least in that sport. [...]
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15 Kamila: Well, it honestly doesn't affect me much [...]. When the migration
16 started, like in the big stream, probably the biggest one, there were places like
17 the train station, and you could see it right in front of your eyes when you went
18 to the city center. But I honestly wasn't really affected by it. Because we don't
19 have any new Ukrainians in our class, so I didn't really encounter it so much.
20 [...]. So it didn't really concern me because I think I'm not that close to it.
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23 Even though migration is happening “right in front of [their] eyes,” neither Kryštof nor Kamila
24 feel particularly affected by it or “close to it,” as their contact with migrants from Ukraine is
25 mostly sporadic, if there is any contact at all. The situation is, however, different for Kristýna,
26 whose contact with Ukrainian children and their parents is much closer, due to their
27 participation in gymnastic classes, where she acts as a trainer. As her statement reveals, this
28 contact translates not only into her increased familiarity with their situation, but also into her
29 concern about their needs and motivation to address those needs, whether in the form of
30 restructuring the training or gifting Ukrainian books. As she further asserts later in the FG, the
31 opportunity of close contact with migrants from Ukraine not only makes the issue of migration
32 personally concerning to her, but it also drives her engagement in this issue.
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46 Kristýna: This topic really concerns me. [...] I find it quite remarkable that
47 those people came from a place where they were in danger and they are now
48 trying to become part of the collective. [...] That they have found courage to
49 move forward. I really look up to them because of that. And I really like being
50 engaged in this topic.
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53 Like cultural closeness, the closeness of contact also acts as a driver of research participants'
54 personal motivation to engage civically. The FGs reveal that close contact with migrants
55 translates into greater familiarity with their situation and empathy for their needs. It makes the
56 adolescents feel more personally affected by the issue of migration and, in this way, also more
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3 motivated to address this issue through their civic engagement. Compared to cultural closeness,
4 this mechanism is less dependent on migrants' country of origin or other personal
5 characteristics, as the closeness of contact can potentially facilitate familiarity with migrants of
6 different backgrounds. However, as our analysis shows, this type of closeness is also highly
7 context-dependent, reflecting country-specific migration patterns and integration policies. The
8 research participants again feel closest to migrants from Ukraine because, in the Czech context
9 in general, and after the Russian invasion in particular, they are far less likely to come in close
10 contact with migrants from Ukraine than with migrants from other countries.
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21 The two forms of closeness we have identified in our research can thus mutually
22 reinforce each other when motivating adolescents' migration-related civic engagement. While
23 perceived cultural closeness with migrants from specific countries can give rise to the sense of
24 collective responsibility toward these migrants and become internalized in the form of personal
25 concern over their situation, close contact with migrants can further strengthen this concern as
26 research participants become more familiar with their individual situations and develop
27 empathy. However, the two forms of closeness can also contradict each other. Some research
28 participants may perceive migration-related civic engagement as a socially desirable option but,
29 due to the absence of close contact with migrants, still feel relatively unaffected and lack the
30 necessary impetus to become engaged themselves. Such ambivalence is visible in the following
31 statement from FG4, in which Klára, on the one hand, admits that an absence of close contact
32 with migrants does not make her feel particularly affected by migration, while, on the other
33 hand, she commends the migration-related civic engagement of other people and presents her
34 own engagement as a future hypothetical option:
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54 Klára: Well, I don't really know what to say. It doesn't really affect me so much.
55 I don't really meet those people so much. [...] I feel interested, and I'd like to
56 be engaged, because I realize that I could potentially also be in their shoes and
57 I feel sorry [for them]. I see so many people around me who are like doing
58 good things and helping them out. But that it would affect me personally, I
59 guess not really.
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3 While both forms of closeness act as important drivers of adolescents' migration-related civic
4 engagement, their mutual relationship is not always straightforward.
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8 **Conclusion and discussion**

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10 In this study, we have drawn upon Ballard's (2014) pioneering research on youth civic
11 engagement and responded to her call to further explore motivations stemming from personal
12 issues or causes. Focusing specifically on migration-related civic engagement and locating our
13 study in Czechia, we have explored how Czech adolescents' perspectives on migration translate
14 into personal motivation for migration-related civic engagement. We find that feelings of
15 closeness to the issue of migration act as an important driver of adolescents' personal motivation
16 for engagement, making this issue personally concerning to them. Utilizing the interpretative
17 lens of cultural sociology, we have further distinguished between the *cultural closeness* and the
18 *closeness of contact*, demonstrating how the adolescents' meaning-making becomes
19 simultaneously informed by locally available cultural repertoires as well as by close personal
20 encounters with migrants in familiar environments. For each form of closeness, we have also
21 identified a mechanism through which it translates into adolescents' personal concern about the
22 issue of migration, showing the capacity of feelings of closeness to elicit a sense of collective
23 responsibility for migrants coming from specific countries and increased empathy with their
24 situations.
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45 Our findings further allow us to make two distinct contributions to Ballard's (2014)
46 conceptualization of motivations stemming from personal issues or causes. Despite being based
47 specifically on the analysis of migration-related civic engagement, we maintain that these
48 contributions have broader theoretical relevance and could also prove useful in understanding
49 motivations for engagement with other issues. First, we would like to bring attention to the
50 intersubjective dimension of meaning-making. From the analytical standpoint of cultural
51 sociology, meanings are never merely individual, they are always intersubjectively shared
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3 (Alexander & Smith, 2003). Our findings confirm this premise, highlighting the complex
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(Alexander & Smith, 2003). Our findings confirm this premise, highlighting the complex interplay between the broader cultural context of Czechia and adolescents' perspectives on migration and migration-related civic engagement. Even though adolescents make the decision to become engaged as individuals, their personal motivation for engagement also reflects intersubjectively shared cultural repertoires. In this respect, any thorough analysis of adolescents' personal motivation for civic engagement should not be conducted without proper consideration of its embeddedness in the broader cultural context of the place they inhabit.

Second, we would like to underline the tendency of adolescents to distinguish between distant and close issues, depending on the extent to which they feel personally affected by them. Our findings show that the research participants are more inclined to consider migration as an issue worthy of their concern and civic engagement if they perceive some connections between this issue and their own lives. In other words, instead of abstract principles of solidarity and equality, their concerns about migrants and their situation reflect their ability to relate to them through shared elements of culture or close encounters in familiar environments, such as school or leisure activities. This finding is consistent with Thévenot's (2020) insistence that we need to pay more attention to processes through which personal attachments to other persons, living beings, things, and places inform civic and political action. We believe that a more thorough consideration of closeness as a driver of youth civic engagement can help elucidate the reasons adolescents are more inclined to engage themselves in some issues and disregard others.

Our final remark concerns the limitations of our study. Our decision to focus primarily on motivations stemming from personal issues or causes led us to analytically bracket out the role of other categories of motivation potentially aiding Czech adolescents' migration-related civic engagement. In our data, we also notice traces of the other motivations discussed by Ballard (2014), as well as potential barriers. Some research participants, for instance, admit that their civic engagement has not been motivated solely by feelings of closeness toward migrants

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3 from Ukraine, but also by their willingness to gain new, potentially enriching experiences or by
4 their general belief that civic engagement is vital for democracy. Other research participants
5 complain that their willingness to become engaged was hindered by the lack of opportunities,
6 for instance, when they were disqualified from participating in formally organized civic
7 activities on account of their inability to speak Ukrainian or Russian. In other words, although
8 the personal motivation stemming from the feelings of closeness toward migrants features
9 prominently in our data, it does not represent neither a satisfactory nor a sufficient condition
10 for civic engagement and should not be understood in isolation from other potential
11 motivations. Further research could thus explore the complex interplay between different
12 motivations aiding youth civic engagement and potential barriers.
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Appendix

Table 1: Research participants' migration attitudes

In your opinion, do people who come to live in the Czech Republic from other countries make the Czech Republic a better or worse place to live? (1 = a worse place to live, 7 = a better place to live) N=23	
Total	4,3
To what extent are you personally interested in the topic of migration? (1 = completely uninterested, 7 = very interested) N=23	
Total	5,0
To what extent do you consider migration to be an important social issue? (1 = completely unimportant, 7 = very important) N=23	
Total	6,1

Table 2: Research participants' former experience with civic engagement in relation to migration

Have you done any of the following activities so far?	Total
I have been following news and current affairs related to migration.	91%
I have actively sought information about migration.	61%
I joined the discussion about migration at school	65%
I joined the discussion about migration in the family	78%
I joined a discussion about migration in my circle of friends	83%
I joined a discussion about migration on social media	22%
I wrote an article about migration for a magazine or online portal	9%
I attended an organized meeting on migration	0%
I joined an organization that deals with migration	0%
I have contributed financially or materially (clothing, cosmetics, etc.) to a collection to help migrants or refugees	65%
I have been involved in voluntary activities related to migration	31%
I wore a badge or T-shirt with a political message about migration	22%
I attended a public event or demonstration on migration	22%
I have signed the petition regarding migration	13%
I have contacted a politician or public official with a request about migration	0%
I joined a political party that deals with the issue of migration	4%
I have attended a concert, festival or other cultural event about migration	13%