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People of the Road: the Role of Ethnic Origin in Migration Decisions. A Study of Slovak Roma Asylum-Seekers in the Czech Republic in 1998-2006

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the analyzing possible inter-dependence between ethnical origin and migration. Evidence suggests that ethnicity might impersonalize strong cultural and socio-demographical characteristics that should not be omitted when accessing migration or trying to explain migration flows (either on regional, national or international level).

In the empirical part of the paper the case-study of Slovak Roma asylum migrations to the Czech Republic in the 1998-2006 is used in order to test an impact of ethnical factor on migrations. The paper attempts to find out whether Slovak Roma asylum-seekers were drawn just by economic incentives, or whether there are some other “immeasurable” factors (such as ethnical origin) that were behind their decision-making. The conclusions advocate that economic differences between regions and countries do not provide sufficient grounds for explanation of migration and that ethnic origin in itself might be regarded as one of the powerful determinants of migration.

Keywords: migration, international migrations, Roma, ethnic origin

JEL: F22, J15, J82

1. Introduction

Migrations, either between regions or countries (i.e. on the regional, national and international level) are accounted for a wide spectrum of factors. Generally, we can distinguish economic, cultural and socio-demographic factors. Ethnicity might also be one of the strong determinants of migration. Trovato and Halli (1983) analyze three hypotheses of the existence of substantial ties between ethnicity and migration: i) the social characteristics hypothesis, ii) the ethnic effect hypothesis, and iii) the structural-insecurities hypothesis (Trovato and Halli, 1983).

The first hypothesis represents the main antidote to the hypothesis of migration influenced by the economic factors. When analyzing migration we are often left with some “unexplained” issues (those issues are called “influence of family or friends” or “social factors”). Having its roots in the demographic literature, the social characteristics hypothesis states that migration, a phenomenon being demographic in its nature, is affected by factors like gender, age, income, education, religion, etc. (Shaw, 1975; Bogue, 1959). For instance, education, age and income are showing significant determination of the migration volume. Some authors show that people in advanced social positions are more aware of the opportunities migration can bring (Lee, 1966).

The second hypothesis highlights ethnicity as a supplement to other social and cultural characteristics that may have an important effect on migration patterns. The literature describes in which ways ethnicity can affect migration: through reflecting sub-cultural norms which encourage or, on the contrary, discourage, members of specific

ethnic groups to migrate; through familistic orientation, social ties and feeling of belonging to community and friends which can also be characteristic for some ethnics (Ritchey, 1976; Mueller, 1973). Ethnicity and migration also have one more important issue: ability or inability to assimilate related to the command of languages. Historical effects (traditions of certain ethnic groups to settle in specific places – i.e. Vietnamese emigrants in the Czech Republic) should not also be forgotten (Korbrin and Goldscheider, 1978).

The third hypothesis considers the “pressure” of the larger society on minor ethnic groups: as an effect it leads both to the establishment of ghettos and to inducing migration (Lee, 1966). There is an insecurity an ethnic minority is experiencing within a larger and dominant nation. Migration is one of many channels to break this insecurity barrier.

While the majority of the research literature focuses on economic realms of migration, this paper is concerned with its ethnical aspects or ethnical factors. This outline is backed up by the empirical analysis based on the example of Slovak Roma asylum migrations to the Czech Republic in 1998-2006. Basically, we are interested in two main issues: (i) whether economic disparities between countries/regions can be accounted for migration flows alone; and (ii) whether there is an “immeasurable factor”, such as ethnical origin, that has substantial impact on emigration and/or migration potential. After the collapse of Communism Roma in the Central and Eastern European context were migrating to a number of wealthier countries: Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany and United Kingdom, just to name a few. Some cases (i.e. massive migration of Romanian Roma to Germany in the 1990 or Czech Roma migration to Canada in the late 1990s and early 2000s) were widely described in press and research literature and contributed to the creation of a negative image of Central and Eastern European countries in the Western media (in the case of the Czech Republic a humiliating introduction of entry tourist visas for Czech citizens wishing to travel to Canada and New Zealand followed soon after).

The case of Slovak Roma asylum migrations has been chosen due to the two main reasons: (i) Although Roma population lives in 24 EU Member States, substantially large Roma communities can be found in the new Member States of Central and Eastern

Europe (notably the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) (EUMC, 2005)) which makes it a more interesting and rich topic for the analysis; and (ii) Roma minority issues have become a well-known problem of the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC), and of all countries migrations of Roma from Slovakia to the Czech Republic have been popularized in mass media and used by politicians and the general public as a classical example of Roma nomad behaviour. It seems interesting to use the publicity and view this problem from slightly different angle, namely by seeing what factors were behind the decision of Slovak Roma to migrate to the Czech Republic using the asylum-seeking procedures.

2. Literature review: ethnicity and migration

Economic literature unanimously agrees that ethnical (or national) origin has an impact on both the economic performance and composition of emigrants in a given country (see for example Ritchey, 1976; Trovato and Halli, 1983; Borjas, 1994; Borjas, 1999). Running an analysis of different ethnic groups of emigrants Borjas came to a conclusion that: *“the decline in immigrant economic performance (in the U.S.) can be attributed to a single factor, the changing national mix of the immigrant population”* (Borjas, 1999).

Clearly, different ethnic groups tend to work, migrate and use (or abuse) the incentives a state provides to its citizens in different ways. Canadian government took that in mind when introducing the point-based system of immigration policy in 1961. As a result more skilled immigrants flow has been attracted into the country than in the case of U.S. (Baker and Benjamin, 1994).

Generally, in the absence of targeted immigration policy, the stream of immigrants will always follow the same rule: immigrant skilled workers will be from the countries where the returns to skills are low and immigrant unskilled persons will be from the countries where the returns to skills are high. An example from Borjas (1999) can be used as an explanation: imagine people who live in a country where the payoff to human capital is low, so that high-skilled workers do not earn much more than less-skilled workers. An example of such a country can be any EU Member State. Indeed, social

traditions in most European countries tend to equalize the incomes by taxing the high-skilled persons and subsidizing the surplus to the less-skilled. In this case the workers who profit from migrating to the countries with better economic opportunities are those with their skills above average.

On the other side of the spectrum there are countries where the payoff to human capital is quite high. Most developing and third-world countries can be used as an example. It is quite difficult to obtain a decent education and skills in such countries, that is why those qualities are highly-praised and their bearers enjoy wide social recognition and public respect, which also transfers to the economic side of life. Highly-skilled people in developing countries earn much more than unskilled which leads to uneven income distribution. The workers who profit from migration to the countries with better economic opportunities are those with their skills far below average.

Attributing this analysis to Roma migrations in the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) arises several major issues:

- i)* All Roma in the CEEC migrate between countries with more or less similar level of economic development and high payoff to human capital. Although some countries offer more economic incentives (Czech Republic, Hungary) and some less (Slovakia, Romania) all of them have been transition economies burdened by the communist heritage.
- ii)* Roma in CEEC usually accept the low-paid jobs and are generally unskilled, therefore their level of human capital is low. Unlike another persecuted social group – the Jews – Roma have always neglected the possibility to face the atrocities and misfortunes that can happen to their ethnic (pogroms, discrimination by majority, Holocaust) by investing in the education of their children.
- iii)* With regard to the two points above it can be concluded that Roma are likely to constitute the least skilled immigrant workers any country in CEEC can attract. As a result, Roma economic performance is likely to be very low.
- iv)* As follows from the above, Roma migrants will be earning less than the “majority” population. This fact is often attributed to the existence of

economic discrimination. However, it has to be considered that Roma earn less not because of discrimination but because they are less skilled.

Moreover, it has to be noted that the majority of Roma immigrants in the CEE are economic migrants: absence of wars or major natural catastrophes, stable political climate and moderate racial tensions seem to support this thesis. In addition, what has to be considered in the debate on Roma migrations are the costs of their emigration: such as transportation, settling down in a new place, searching for a job as well as bearing various social burdens of leaving familiar environment, family and friends. If we put aside people driven out by war conflicts, famines, diseases and natural catastrophes, emigration is a self-defining act equal to the process of self-selection. As a rule, people choose to emigrate by their own will. It might as well be that some people tend to choose emigration more often than the others.

Taking into consideration all of the above, it will be very unlikely that anyone in that conditions would prefer emigration to staying at home. Emigration to the country with similar economic conditions (low payoff to human capital) and facing the same economic discriminations seems to be illogical. However, in spite of all these Roma do migrate. Perhaps, the main reason for Roma migrations is an attempt to abuse the welfare state. However, would this be enough to undertake a long, exhausting trip, to face uncertainty and hardships in the country of immigration? Economic reasoning seems to speak against this assumption.

3. A short excursion to the history of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe

3.1. Destinies of Roma population in Central and Eastern Europe

Roma trace their origin to India where they first appeared about 3500 years ago as an ethnic called the Dom. After the conquest of India by the Indo-European tribes, the Dom became one of the lowest casts in the Indian hierarchy: their typical occupational domains were professions like sewage cleaners, fur and skin sellers, bear handlers and the like. Around the 11th century AD some small groups of Roma had started to move

through Persia and Syria to the Balkans, from where they were spreading all around modern Europe.

Although one of the first well-documented presence of Roma in Europe comes from the 14th-century (1362) Republic of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik in Croatia), it is apparent that they had been living there permanently for more than a century before that date (Petrovic, 1976). Traces of what is now identified as Roma population can be also found in Hungarian, Slovak and Moldavian-Wallachian records from the same period. Some of the Roma were captured and sold as slaves, although most of the Roma in Eastern and Central Europe were free and worked as musicians, soldiers and craftsmen (predominantly as smiths). Many Roma were joining the military forces of Hungarian kings and Lithuanian princes, although they had been always seen as strangers with and treated with a mixture of awe and disbelief. However, it was not until the growing threat of the Ottoman Empire and the upheavals of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century that the attitude towards Roma in Europe began to change dramatically. Growing hatred and suspicion (many regarded Roma as the Turk's "fifth column") caused restrictions to Roma lifestyle and trade. These had played a major role in Roma ethnic adopting a nomadic way of life as a means of survival which in its turn had caused a prejudiced attitude towards Roma minority in most of Europe. Roma started to be placed at the lowest social ranking in social hierarchy not only by the Christian population of Europe but also by the Turkish invaders: many Roma were bought and sold as the slaves (called "robi") and a series of restrictive laws regulations was issued to govern the Roma minority.

Although the destinies of Roma were following a somewhat slightly different path in various European countries – from the plight and mistreatment of Roma in Wallachia and Moldavia through harsh policies of the Habsburgs in the Czech lands to the relatively moderate treatment in Hungary and Slovakia – one trait always remained the same: a prejudiced attitude of the national "majority" to all Roma linked to the persecutions and disdain.

Throughout the centuries Roma minority in Europe had been vexed and restricted in their free lifestyle. Various bans pillorying Roma as "vagabonds" and "beggars" had existed with different degree of intensity until the WW II. Centuries of European history

of wars, conflicts and turmoil had always been marked by general mistreatment of the Roma minority: in the times of war or piece they were the ones that had been more often marked as a scapegoat. There had never been serious attempts to integrate this minority: partly due to the lack of interest of Roma themselves, partly due to the lack of interest of the ethnic “majority”. Roma remained a strange and inadaptable ethnic that was let to live its own life as soon as it did not contradict with the interests of the population “majority”. There had been attempts to include Roma into the social and political life in different periods of history in the 19th and early 20th century, however the major efforts can accredited to the Communist regimes in the CEECs and Russia: many programs and initiatives including forcible parting Roma children from their parents and obligatory placement of Roma into newly built housing blocks are among the few to mention. Nevertheless, none of them bore remarkable fruit and most of them did more harm than good.

Although notable Roma minorities are spread all over present Europe, nowhere is their concentration so high as in the Central and Eastern European countries: according to the 2001 census there were 535.000 Roma in Romania (INSSE, 2002), 190.000 in Hungary (Hungarian CSO, 2001), about 200.000 in the Czech Republic and 450.000-500.000 Roma in Slovak Republic (Czech Statistical Office and Slovak Statistics, 2006). Even though the official statistics on Roma population of most of the Central and European countries already seem quite high, they fail to reflect all actual Roma: many people do not identify themselves as Roma in the census, or, in many cases, a mother tongue is used as a criterion of nationality (many Roma do not use their language as the first language of communication). Taking into account these factors, the predictions of actual Roma population in CEECs might be much more higher: for example Romanian sources mention that it might be up to 2.3 million Roma in Romania instead of officially proclaimed figures that were much more moderate (Ionescu, 1992; Liebich, 1992).

With Central and Eastern European countries shifting towards democracy and market economy in the early 1990s Roma population found itself on the margin of the society. The problems and bad economic situation in the first years of transformation reflected on growing ethnical tensions and worsening situations of Roma minority. Once again ,like many times before, Roma were blamed for growing crime rates, abusing welfare systems

and creating disorder. This resulted in many Roma immigrating far and away, often to the wealthier countries of Western Europe and beyond (Finland, UK and Canada just to name a few).

3.2. Roots and destinies of the first Roma settlers in Czechoslovakia

The first record of Roma appearing in what is now Czech Republic and Slovakia dates back to the late Middle Ages. Emilia Horvathova, a Slovak gypsiologist, states that Roma first entered Bohemia via Hungary with the army of the king Andrew II (1205-1235) after he returned from the Crusade in the Holy Lands in 1217-1218 (Horvathova, 1962). When the Tatars invasion to Hungary came in 1241 and especially after the defeat of King Bela IV at Muhi, Roma fled to Bohemia to escape the butchery (Crowe, 1995). According to a prominent Czech gypsiologist, Eva Davidova, the first undisputed reference to Roma comes from 1399 at the Book of Executions of the Lord of Ruzomberok where a certain Gypsy is mentioned as a member of a robber band (Davidova, 1970).

First Roma settlers in what is now Czech Republic and Slovakia were musicians, metal workers and some even became warriors in the armies of Hungarian kings. They co-existed with the original population in quite and peaceful atmosphere, only sporadically facing some racial tensions caused by religious and cultural differences. It was not, however, until the Hungarian army defeat at Mohacs on the 28th of August 1526 that strong anti-Gypsy policies started to emerge. The general public was seeing Roma as “the spies of Tatars”, a sort of “fifth column preparing the grounds for invasion” and they were banned from traditional professions and limited in their travels. The anti-gypsy legislation was issued in Moravia in 1538 by king Ferdinand I Habsburg as a result of fear of Turkey military power and the destabilizing atmosphere brought by Protestant wars. This was the period when all Roma troubles had began: regarded as outlaws both by Christians and Muslims (Muslim Turks respected Christianity considering Christians and Jews to be “people of the book” while Roma were exterminated severely), driven out of big cities, suspected of espionage, crimes and theft they began to wear a label that is to remain on this ethnic for centuries.

3.3. Roma in the Habsburg monarchy and Austrian-Hungarian Empire

Austrian emperors Leopold I and Joseph I issued decrees proclaiming Roma to be outlaws (“vogelfrei”) and ordering mass hunts and killing of the ethnic. Maria Theresa first ordered all Roma to be driven out from the land (1749) and then outlawed the use of word “Rom” or “Cigan” and decreed them to be called “new citizens” or “new Hungarians” (Crowe, 1991). Her enlightening policies on Gypsies included the creation of Rom settlements, census taking and placing Rom children in foster homes, schools or jobs.

In 1780 there were 43609 Rom in Slovakia (without female, who were not included into counting) and Hungarian lands; this figure dropped to 38312 in 1781 but rose to 43778 in 1782 (Horvathova, 1962) as a result of Joseph’s II policies of emancipation and his Serfdom patent.

After the revolutions in Europe in 1848 and the creation of Austrian-Hungarian empire most of the Rom found themselves in Hungary and were exposed to magyarization and oppression, as well as Slovaks. The data on those remaining in the Czech lands remain scarce, however it is easy to assume that they had also been naturalized and attempted to turn to the “law-obeying citizens”.

3.4. Roma in the independent Czechoslovakia in the after-WWI period

After the WWI and the declaration of Czechoslovak independence in 1918 all Roma were given Czechoslovak nationality ipso facto according to the Constitution of the 1920 (alongside with other nations of the newly established Republic), the right to gain full economic and employment rights and the free use of any language, although the ethnic remained to linger in the conditions of utmost poverty and isolation (quite often in separated villages and “zemljankas”).

According the 1921 Czechoslovak census there were 61 Roma in the Czech lands and 7967 in Slovakia (Davidova, 1970). According to many specialists this figure was based on those who spoke “mother tongue”, because about the same time in 1924 another

statistics show that there were 18257 Roma in Kosice region and 11066 in Bratislava (Horvathova, 1962).

The mid-war period was marked by various reforms aimed to improve the life conditions of peasants in Slovakia, those including the Roma. Various nomad passes had been issued for them and notorious law nr. 117 took described special measures how to treat “nomadic Olašti Rom” and “people living in nomadic style” (for instance requiring them to ask permission to stay on the lands from the local mayors or prohibiting them from entering some territories, spa resorts in particular) (Davidova, 1970).

There were several attempts to organize schools for Roma children or commit them to sports (for instance the creation of a football club SK ROMA which gained some fame in those times), however the new Republic had many other problems to face.

3.5. Roma minority in Czechoslovakia during the WWII

After the Munich Treaty, occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany and the outbreak of the WWII the fate of Roma population divided again: those remaining in the Czech lands (now called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia) suffered the most, their fate mirroring that of the Jews, while those living in Slovakia (now the independent Slovak state) found themselves in more tolerant environment.

New labour camps especially for the Roma: Léty and Hodonín were created in the Protectorate in the 1941 and many Roma found their death there or in Auschwitz or Buchenwald. The Roma Holocaust (called Pořajmos) took away from 6.000 to 8.000 Rom from the Czech lands and few hundreds of their more fortunate Slovak compatriots. According to the Census in 1947 there were 84.438 Roma in Slovakia and 16.752 Roma in the Czech lands.

3.6. Attempts of Roma assimilation in the Communist Czechoslovakia

The following years of rebuilding the country after the war marked by the Communist takeover in the 1948 the interest to the Roma was weak while some nomadic Roma traveled the republic with horses, carts and tents. In 1950 Communist president Gottwald

called up a commission that was to find a solution of “so-called Gypsy question”. As a result, a report on Position of Individuals of Gypsy origin in the Work Process was published, however not a single major effort was taken until the 1958 when the Communist party published a declaration demanding “unconditional solution to the Gypsy question” and dividing all Roma into three categories: nomad, semi-nomads and completely sedentary. Those of nomadic and semi-nomadic nature were then subjected to the Law No.74, of 17th of October 1958 on Permanent Settlement of Nomadic People. Local officials were instructed how to define and how to deal with nomads. In addition to that, perhaps to avoid the charges of racism, Roma were given a special status of socio-ethnic group which only widened the gap between them and Czechs and Slovaks, who saw the Roma as a “special caste with all rights and no duties”. In 1965 the Communist party prepared a long-range assimilation plan crowned by the Ordinance No. 502 issued in June 1965 which prescribed full-employment of all able Gypsies, liquidation of Gypsy illegal settlements and dispersion of the Roma all around Czechoslovakia. The plan included voluntarily resettlement of Roma from Slovakia to the Czech lands supported by financial and other incentives. However, among 1.266 Roma settlements targeted for destruction just one-third was eliminated: among the factors leading to the failure of the program were growing resentment towards the Roma presence in the Czech lands, inadequate funding and the unwillingness of some Roma to live in Bohemia and Moravia.

As demographic literature suggests, Czechoslovakia on the brink of the Prague Spring had one of the largest Roma population in the socialist bloc. The data from the 1967 estimated 223.993 Roma in the country (with 164.526 in Slovakia and 59.467 in the Czech lands) (Ulč, 1990).

Interrupted by the Prague Spring and the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the campaign of Roma assimilation continued in the 1970s under the rule of the new Communist party leader, Gustav Husak. Only now it included more severe policies, including sterilization of Roma women for financial benefits offered by the local health workers and intended to reduce Gypsy birth (the average number of live birth for a Czechoslovak woman constituted 2.4, while the same characteristic for a Gypsy woman was 6.4) (Srb, 1985).

The national Roma population grew from 219.554 in 1970 to 288.440 in 1980, a 31.4 per cent increase, while the general population grew by only 6 per cent during the same

period. The Gypsy population in the Czech Republic grew by 47 per cent during 1970 and 1980, while the same for Slovakia was 25.5 per cent. Quite understandingly, some fears of over-population of Gypsies and creation of some sort of “Gypsy republic” were quite common within the general public which resulted in day-to-day discrimination and despise.

In the same time there started an increase in the Czech population of the Roma caused by the destruction of Roma housing in Slovakia and forced movement of Gypsies to the Czech lands and by voluntarily movements of Gypsies searching for better economic opportunities and higher standard of living. For instance, during the decade of 1970-1980, over 4.000 Roma dwellings had been destroyed in Slovakia.

Another part of the assimilation campaign led by the Communist government was forced education of Roma youngsters. In 1971 only 10 per cent of eligible Roma children in Czechoslovakia attended kindergarten, this figure rose to 58 per cent in 1980. During the same decade the number of Rom children who finished schools rose from 16 per cent to 25.6 per cent (Crowe, 1995). Apart from these gains, many Roma children were separated from their families and sent to orphanages and a lot of them were proclaimed “retarded” or “incapable” and sent to so-called “special schools”.

Generally, school drop-out rate was increasing with the grade and only a third of Gypsy children finished eights grade in 1983-1984, while merely 4 per cent went on to University (Ulč, 1990).

Gypsy employment during the period of assimilation policies was a mixture of failure and success: in 1981 there was a 87.7 per cent unemployment rate for male Roma (91.9 for the Czechoslovak population), the employment rate for female workers was quite low – 54.9 compared to 87.7 for Czechoslovak women. In addition, $\frac{3}{4}$ of all Gypsies were employed in low-paid, and low-skilled jobs (in agriculture, construction and industry).

Also, in spite of the official doctrine and the attempts to improve both life and social conditions of the Roma, a very unpleasant, suspicious climate was persisting for Czechoslovakia’s Roma population. According to mass media Gypsies were responsible for 20 per cent of all crimes committed in 1983 with a 24 per cent share of charges of parasitism, 50 per cent charges of robberies and 60 per cent charges of petty thefts (Crow,

1995). As a consequence, the Roma were seen by the majority of population as parasitic beneficiaries of state privileges, some “dirty”, “dishonest” and “inferior” individuals.

3.7. Roma in Czechoslovakia after the collapse of the Communist regime in the 1989

The Velvet Revolution on the 17th of November 1989 and the liberalization of economic, social and political life brought two different effects for the Roma minority: alongside with the opportunity for the Roma to form their own political and cultural organizations, a new atmosphere for open expression of the prejudice towards the Roma was created.

Right after the collapse of the Communist regime the government estimated that there were some 400.000 Roma in Czechoslovakia, a 36 per cent increase for over a decade. The fears of the population take-over by the Roma combined with traditional prejudice and despise fortified by the unsuccessful policy of the Communist party resulted in blaming the Roma for everything going wrong in the country. A sharp rise in crime level (by 52 per cent in the Czech Republic and 17 per cent in Slovakia) that engulfed Prague (by 181 per cent in Prague alone in 1990) and Bratislava, a thing unknown in the times of the police state maintained by the “iron hand” of the Communists, was attributed to Gypsies, especially those 18 years old and younger (Orbman, 1991). This resulted in skinhead attacks that were the main reason the Roma emigrating to Canada and the UK were declaring in the asylum forms.

Before the formal separation of Czechoslovakia in 1993, Slovakia had an estimated Gypsy population of 400.000, and the Czech lands had 150.000. In anticipation of a breakup of a federation a number of Slovak Roma began to move to the Czech lands because they felt the political and social atmosphere would be more tolerant there, and economic conditions better. This sudden move was a surprise for many Czechs who attributed a sharp increase in crime by 90 per cent as caused by these migrations.

After the separation of the Czechoslovak federation, many Roma were having troubles with obtaining the citizenship they wanted. Due to their inability to fulfill the criteria demanded for granting Czech citizenship, the majority of Roma living in the Czech Republic in 1993 in fact became Slovak citizens.

In general, Roma living standard in the Czech Republic can be regarded as those superior to the ones in Slovakia, especially in the eastern regions of the country. This, in combination with lower wages, social and racial segregation and chronic debts many Gypsy families have, led to the natural trend of inducing more or less substantial migrations of Slovak Roma to the Czech Republic.

As the report of International Organization for Migration (IOM) dealing with the emigration of Slovak Roma to the Czech Republic proclaims, those migration waves could have reached some 10.000 Slovak Roma in the 2000-2003 (IOM, 2003). However, openness of the borders and labor markets between Czech Republic and Slovakia for the whole period after the split-up of the Federation reinforced by the traditional Roma secrecy and lack of belief in authorities made it very difficult to obtain the real data on migrations.

3.8. The European dimension of the place of Roma minority in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Communist regimes.

The situation of Roma minority in other Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of Communist regimes was quite similar to the one in Czechoslovakia as presented above: Roma are viewed as the symbol of all gone awry in the new democracies of the Eastern Europe and, to a lesser degree in Russia (Crowe, 1995). These attitudes are often fueled by the fears of Roma population immense growth rates that usually outnumber those of the national “majority” as well as blaming the Roma for the threatening crime rates.

Roma minorities in different European countries were meeting with varying attitudes and treatment. For instance, the situation of Roma in Hungary can be used as an example of moderate tolerance and even attempts to let Roma participate on the political decision-making. The political climate in Hungary was moderate even in socialist times (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) and some form of Roma council (Ciganyszovetseg) had existed since 1974. Hungarian Roma were granted an ethnic group status in 1979 by the Council of Ministers’ resolution and there were attempts to create a purely Roma political organization in 1985 (Puxon, 1975). After the political reforms on 1990 several

political organizations consisting of local Roma were created: Roma Brotherhood, Democratic Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies, Hungarian Gypsy Party (HGP) and Hungarian Gypsy's Social Democratic party (HGSDP) with an astonishing membership of 15.000 in 1990 (Barany, 1992). Although these parties never gained enough votes to enter the parliament, they paved the way for other Roma political initiatives: in March 1990 Association of Free Democrats (AFD), the second most-important party in the country, allied with several Roma groups and promised Roma nationality status and government aid supporting Roma candidates for parliament (Bruszt and Stark, 1992). Roma attempts to get political voice and claim their social presence in Hungary caused some anti-Roma feelings and extremists' attacks (which were quite few), but politicians were working to strengthen the minority rights for all groups. In 1993 the Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (which specifically mentioned Roma) was passed by Hungarian parliament stating that outlawed any form of discrimination against minorities and guaranteed equal opportunity for all minorities (this was particularly significant in Hungary where different ethnic groups constitute over 30 per cent of the population) (Crowe, 1995).

On the contrary, the situation of Roma in Romania can be used as an example of constant oppression and devastation. Bearing a considerable Roma community (in fact, the largest in the country), Romania suffered greatly after the collapse of Ceausescu dictatorship in 1989: poor economic performance and constant protests (miners' marches on the capital city Bucharest) burdened the country's way into capitalism. Roma became the national scapegoat for Romania's immense problems. There were several riots in Bucharest (for instance Jiu Valley miners' riot in June 1990) that resulted in pogroms of Roma quarters and beating and abusing Roma on the streets. In addition to that many Roma were arrested by the police and blamed as the starters of the unrests (King, 1991). In 1991 the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and International Labor Organization (ILO) raised the topic of ethnic violence against Roma in Romania. These outbursts of violence of equally deprived Romanian "majority" population combined with Roma extreme poverty and discrimination lead to massive Roma emigration from Romania. The majority of Romanian Roma were choosing Germany as their target country (about 35.000 Roma that entered Germany among 130.000 Romanians in 1990

alone) (Ionescu, 1991). It is not accidentally that the image of an average Romanian many people in Western had adapted was the one Europe had created about Romanians was the one of a Roma. The problem of Roma orphans in Romania is also a very grim legacy of the Communist regime that no one knows how to solve. Following Ceausescu's decree of 1966 banning abortions for women under 45 many Roma children had been put away by their careless parents. In 1990 it was discovered that Romanian orphanages were filled with 100.000 children (Crowe, 1995). Romanian Roma are generally persecuted by the police, authorities and placed into the atmosphere of mistrust and alienation. This situation has been criticized by the European Union (EU) several times and many improvements have been made. However Romania that is to join the EU in January 2007 still has to deal with this unpleasant minority problem.

Overall, if we compare the problems of Roma community in several Central and Eastern European countries there are some similarities that can be pointed out:

1. Due to the low level of education Roma were the first to loose jobs when large socialist companies were downsizing at the beginning of economic transformation that followed the collapse of Communist regimes in 1989-1991. This contributed to high unemployment and growing social deprivation amidst Roma minority.
2. As a result of overall economic downfall and growing social unrest in the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Roma became a target for racially-motivated attacks as "the ones who are responsible for the troubles".
3. In spite of efforts to establish in politics, Roma representatives have never been capable of putting together a considerable political force. This might be explained by the lack political skills of Roma representatives as well as lack of general voters' support (both Roma and non-Roma).
4. As a result of systematic changes the majority of Roma found themselves at the margins of the society which led to further social deprivation, growth of users' networks and finally to choosing migration (usual migration or asylum migration) as the only possible solution to all problems.

4. Types and reasons of Roma migration from Slovakia to the Czech Republic after the split-up of Czechoslovakia

In the report of the Slovak Institute of Informatics and Statistics (Infostat) entitled “Projection of Roma population in Slovakia until 2025” Roma migration across the Slovak borders is considered “minimal” with “no significant changes expected in the future” (Infostat, 2002). Drawing possible scenarios of the position of Roma population in Slovakia external Roma migration is considered to be zero: authors support that assumption by noting that in the enlarged Europe the main type of migration is labour migration and Roma people do not have the tendency to migrate for labour (Infostat, 2002). Apart from that members of the Roma ethnic group are distinguished by the low level of education which makes their adaptability and their chances for perspective employment in Europe quite low.

Table 1

Top 10 asylum-seeking nations in the Czech Republic in the 2002

Country	Nr. of applications	%
Ukraine	1674	20
Vietnam	891	11
Slovakia	843	10
Moldavia	724	9
Georgia	678	8
Russia	628	7
China	511	6
Armenia	452	5
India	364	4
Belarus	311	4

Source: Ministry of Internal affairs of the Czech Republic, 2005

Prior to 2000 there were no major Roma migrations from Slovakia to the Czech Republic, or even if they were, no attention from mass media and the general public was expressed. In fact, Roma from former Czechoslovakia preferred asylum migrations to more “wealthier” countries, such as Canada or the United Kingdom. These migrations

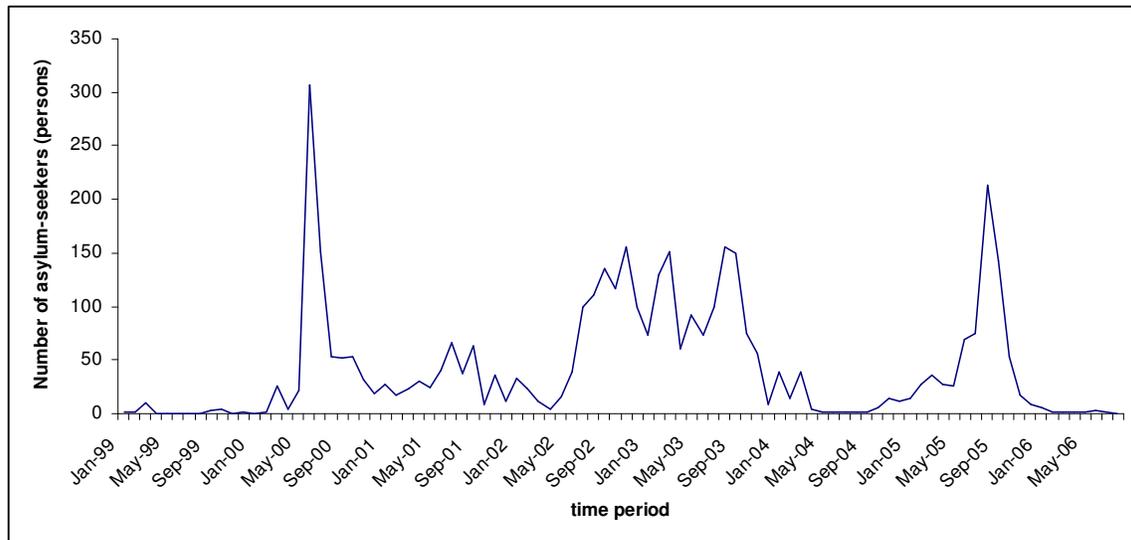
from former Czechoslovakia started much earlier and were allegedly caused by the Czech Citizenship Law (40/1993 of the Czech National Council) adapted in 1993 according to which people who previously had federal citizenship (and not the one of two federal states) and who were Slovak citizens in 1969 or were born in a family of such people were denied Czech citizenship – notwithstanding their permanent residence on Czech soil (O’Nions, 1999). This definition fitted many Roma whose parents came to the Czech Republic from Slovakia and as a result from four hundred Roma to 77.000 Roma were affected (Tolerance Foundation, 1994b). This put together with worsening employment opportunities for poorly-educated Roma and (to some extent) a raise of racially motivated attacks on Roma lead to predominantly economically-motivated migrations of Roma from former Czechoslovakia to the United Kingdom. In October 1997 the information appeared in British press that 3.000 Roma from former Czechoslovakia came to the UK. The UK Home Office minister, Mike O’Brien had to reduce the period of application for asylum-seekers from 28 days to 5 days as a measure of dealing with these migrants (CTK, 1997). Throughout the 1995-2002 thousands of Czech and Slovak Roma applied for asylum in the UK – for instance in 2000 alone it was 1200 cases (Migration Watch, 2005). Thousands were deported after their application of asylum had been rejected. Nevertheless, welfare benefits and free housing during the waiting period made the UK asylum migration a very attractive opportunity for many Roma. Czech and Slovak accession to the EU made the asylum-seeking legally impossible and brought a halt to these issue of controversial asylum migrations.

Many Czech and Slovak Roma did not hesitate to travel further for the asylum and resulting economic and welfare benefits – their target countries were Canada and New Zealand. The Helsinki Commission noted 1100 arrivals in September 1997 alone and by the end of August of 1997 the homeless shelters in Toronto were filled with Czech Roma asylum-seekers (Helsinki Commission, 1997). The Czech Republic was merely watching the process and had to agree with placing British immigration officers in Prague Ruzyne airport in order to filter out potential asylum-seekers. The media took the subject as an interesting issue and the reports on Roma emigrants were often broadcasted in the media. All that changed for the Czech Republic when it experienced its “own” Roma asylum immigration for the first time in 2000. The wave of Roma asylum-seekers did not fade in

the successive years. For instance, in 2002 alone Slovak Rom submitted 843 applications for asylum in the Czech Republic (Table 1), allotting Slovakia on the third place in the ranking according to the number of asylum-seekers (right after Ukraine and Vietnam). The statistics on the actual numbers of the Rom migrants in that times have never been collected (Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, 2002), although many Roma activists and NGOs at that time proclaimed that “thousands of Slovak Roma were on the move”, a number too far exaggerated.

Chart 1

Slovak (Roma) asylum-seekers in the Czech Republic in 1999-2006



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2005 and Ministry of Internal affairs of the Czech Republic, 2005.

Factors inducing Roma migrations from Slovakia into the Czech Republic can be split into push and pull factors. The IOM report on the emigration of Slovak Rom to the Czech Republic names a number of push factors in the domicile (Slovakia) and pull factors in the target country (Czech Republic). Among push factors such as the increase in the number of Roma settlements, high fertility of Roma women, decrease in social welfare (the maximum amount was decreased for 10.500 SKK for one family), increase in the number of usurers and the tolerance to usurers from the state. On the other hand, pull factors for Roma migrants are: networks of families and family ties, increase of the

segregated Roma ghettos, opportunities to increase personal income (those including illegal activities), food and shelter offered by NGOs and asylum facilities (IOM, 2003).

Stepping a bit further, all factors of Roma that determine migrations of Slovak Roma can be divided into three groups: apart from economic factors there are so-called “social” and “cultural” factors. The division can be described as the following:

A. “Social” factors:

a) *Decrease in welfare benefits for Roma:* starting from January 2003 the maximum amount any given family could obtain from social welfare was lowered to 10.500 SKK. This is, however, doubtful, as far as many Roma families could not obtain all possible welfare benefits (such as housing support) because just a small fraction of them actually own the housing they are living in. Besides, the majority of social welfare goes for repaying the debts to the users and thus do not affect the families’ income in any substantial way.

b) *Employment opportunities:* emigration and temporary migration in search for jobs from the Eastern Slovakia is not just the typical feature of Roma community. Many native Slovaks do that too, this factor cannot be attributed only to the Roma, but rather to all Eastern Slovakia population. Besides, the majority of Slovak Roma engages in illegal unemployment which brings the risks of not getting paid by the employer. This, of course, does not concern asylum-seekers who, on most of the occasions, cannot take a paid employment.

c) *Spatial segregation:* many Roma settlements in Slovakia are segregated from the Slovak population – there are schools with Roma children, ghettos where only representatives of Roma ethnic minority live, etc. In such environment crime, drugs and alcohol are vivid on the daily basis. This leads many more advanced Roma to attempting to break the “vicious circle” by emigrating.

d) ***Discrimination***: typical discrimination can be divided into racial and employment. Racial discrimination, as the IOM report states, is now on the decline but employment discrimination is quite common (a very common story told by many Roma that employment was offered to them in the phone conversation but the offer was withdrawn when the employer saw who he is about to employ had been verified by mass media many times in the past).

i) ***Conflict***: many Roma choose to escape the conflict situation, such as attacks from usurers by migrating. This fact is supported by the inability of the state to intervene in the illegal usurer's practices.

e) ***Deprivation***: deprivation and feeling useless are quite common features for many Slovak Roma. Locked in the claustrophobic environment of ghettos and settlements, many Roma feel deprived and quite often try to break the circle by leaving anywhere to the West.

B. "Cultural" factors:

a) ***Family networks***: Roma ethnic minority has always been known for supporting extended family ties and helping each other out. Although many gypsologists say that the traditional family ties are in decline right now, many Roma from Slovakia can always rely upon their relatives living in the Czech Republic. The help provided by the Czech branch of the Roma families might include provisional and long-term accommodation, food, help in finding employment, assistance in engaging in a marriage with a Czech Roma in order to obtain Czech citizenship, etc.

b) ***Usurer networks***: usurers (borrowing money with a high per cent) can be both a catalysis and a slowing factor of migrations: on the one hand usurers often induce Roma debtors to engage in employment abroad or apply for asylum in order to repay the money they have previously borrowed; on the other hand, even if some debtors wanted to leave or even escape the usurers through emigration, they are forced to stay in ghettos and

settlements with practically all the social welfare benefits going to the users as a part of the debt repay.

c) ***Roma status and social structure***: as it has been already said in this paper, Roma migration can be characterised as the migration of the lower middle strata. While the upper-class Roma do not need to improve their social status (they benefit from living in a society with a high return to human capital), lower-class Roma have nothing to lose and thus engage in migration of any kind.

C. Economic factors:

a) ***Social welfare benefits***: the amount of social welfare has not proved to be an important factor for Roma migrations. As mentioned before, most of the social welfare benefits end up in the hand of users, thus Slovak state cannot do anything to halt or reverse the emigration.

b) ***Paid medical care***: paid medical care in Slovakia, when a patient has to pay some symbolic amount for visiting the practitioner, is often mentioned by Slovak Roma as the major push factor. However, it is quite difficult to attribute emigration to that factor alone, especially when estimating such medical expenses for one family to be about 500-600 SKK.

c) ***Unemployment in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic***: the difference in the employment rate plus the language and geographical proximity make the Czech Republic to be a very perspective destination for many Roma (only those who migrate for labour, asylum migrants cannot be considered). Even though many Roma emigrate in order to make additional money, the labour migration from Slovakia is not their domain alone. Many Slovaks do the same with the only difference being in obtaining all papers for registering for legal employment. Roma low trust in the power of state and police often lead them to look for illegal unemployment with doubtful results at the payday.

Both social and cultural factors constitute an interesting framework for the analysis of determinants of Slovak Roma migrations. Alongside with economic factors that are

used most often in these types of the analyses, they might provide a starting point for further research. Issues like racially motivated attacks or welfare policy in the country of emigration and immigration might be analyzed in order to determine their impact on the volume of Roma migration, however their “immeasurableness” and purely qualitative nature make them difficult to be used for the approach envisaged in this paper. This provides a rationale to leave them behind and focus on the quantifiable determinants (represented by the economic factors only). Perhaps, to give a hint of the direction of future research would be utilizing the framework described for example in Gramlich et al. (1984); Friedberg and Hunt (1995); Borjas (1999) and Meyer (2000) which all analyze the impact of welfare on migration. Quite true, an issue whether welfare attracts potential immigrants and to what extent it is attractive is an interesting issue to consider. However, this analysis will therein limit itself to another, no less interesting aspect that includes ruling out economic determinants of Roma migrations.

When it comes to the types of migration of Slovak Roma, IOM report (IOM, 2003) distinguishes four basic types of immigration:

1. ***Unregistered immigrants***: those immigrants from Slovakia usually contain singles or deprived individuals (quite often teenagers and orphanage-leavers) who are not interested in supporting their families in Slovakia and thus do not try to look for employment. These individuals are looking for relatives and often use them as base and source of pocket money. These types of migrants often engage in petit crime: stealing, drug dealing and the like.

2. ***Temporary labour immigrants***: this type of immigration of Slovak Roma into the Czech Republic is the oldest. Open labour market for Slovak citizens, inexistence of the language barrier, similar environment and culture make employment in the Czech Republic to be very attractive opportunity to make. The vision of employment in the Czech Republic is so tempting that many Roma accept illegal employment. This type of migration is temporary: Roma workers come back home in short intervals and also send the majority of their income back to their families. In many cases, temporary labour immigration has seasonal nature.

3. *Asylum seekers*: this type of immigration is becoming very popular in the recent years. Although almost every asylum seeker is sure his or her application will be rejected by the Czech authorities, long processing of the application (considered to be a disadvantage for many) which can take up to two years, combined with free housing and accommodation (sometimes referred by the Slovak Rom as “holiday”) and, until recently, employment opportunities for asylum-seekers make the Czech Republic to be one of the favourite places for Slovak Rom. Even though the applications for asylum are rejected the individuals can return back and apply again every two years. I will thereafter concentrate on that type of migration in analysing the interdependence between ethnicity and migration in the Czech Republic: the data are readily available and, contrary to the other types of migration, are precise and thus can be used in the econometric analysis.

4. *Multiply immigrants*: this type of migration includes Roma migrating from Slovakia to the Czech Republic back and forth. Sometimes they are taking care of the elders or children, in many cases there are Roma born and raised in the Czech Republic but given Slovak citizenship after the split-up of the Czechoslovak federation. Quite numerous group is unsuccessful asylum-seekers who have just returned from the Western Europe or North America: with the shutdown of the social welfare benefits (usually for half a year for those who leave the country) and the inexistence any means for living, those Slovak Roma choose to emigrate to the Czech Republic and use the asylum procedure to obtain free housing and accommodation in order to gain time and get new ideas (there are lots of “professional” asylum-seekers among them).

5. Data

The data have been obtained from the Czech and Slovak Statistical Office and Statistics of the Ministry of Internal affairs of the Czech Republic. The data represents quarterly observations on the number of asylum-seekers in the Czech Republic as well as selected economic indicators from 1998 to 2006. Illegal migrations of Slovak Roma have not been considered in the analysis, as far as the precise data on Slovak Roma migrations

do not exist. Until recently keeping such statistics has been considered a demonstration of racism. Two main approximations were needed to be done in order to proceed with the analysis:

- i) All asylum-seekers from Slovakia in the Czech Republic were considered as those of Roma origin
- ii) Asylum migrations were considered to be the best obtainable approximation of the real migration flows (otherwise unquantifiable).

A number of supporting arguments can be used in order to defend both approximations:

Ad i) The main reason for the approximation is the nature of the asylum-seeking procedure itself. According to it, asylum-seekers are to stay inside special refugee camps where they are provided shelter, food and small money allowances. This special regime does not allow them to travel freely, neither engage in any forms of long-term paid employment (until the year 2005) and no employment at all (after the year 2005, due to the changes in the Law of Foreigners of the Czech Republic). Such a regime might be advantageous mainly for individuals who are unlikely to get a job in the target country of migration (i.e. the Roma). Another reason is that asylum migration as such (applying for political asylum) does not present a reasonable economic option for Slovak citizens of non-Roma origin. Since the split-up of the Czechoslovakia the customs union had existed, which enabled Slovaks to enter the Czech Republic without any obstacles and engage in any kind of employment without restrictions. The majority of Slovaks are accepting low-paid jobs (in gastronomy or services) no Czechs are willing to take. With regard to this, it can be noted that Roma have difficulties with getting even low-paid jobs (the issue of employment discrimination elaborated on earlier). That is why asylum has more sense for them in economic terms. Besides, it has been noted above (see IOM, 2003) that Slovak Roma are likely to engage in this kind of migration in order to make some cash and take a break from difficult social conditions at home (IOM, 2003).

Ad ii) Asylum migrations resemble regular migrations (people leave the source country for the target country, immigrant has to bear different costs and externalities of migration and benefits from immigrants' networks and social ties). In fact, it can be described as the

sub-section of “normal” migration, the flow is the same, just the means that are used are different.

As it has been mentioned previously, asylum was one of the channels of temporary migrations of Slovak Roma. The absence of legal (open borders, labor markets) and cultural (similarity between Slovak and Czech languages, heritage of former Czechoslovak federation) combined with social benefits made it very profitable for Slovak Roma citizens to apply for asylum in the Czech Republic. This solution was of especial relevance for those who did not have any family or relatives already living in the Czech Republic or could not count on them providing food and shelter: many Slovak Roma simply abused the asylum system for free food and accommodation reinforced by illegal unemployment and sometimes a chance to escape the “vicious circle” of debts, alcoholism and unemployment in Slovakia.

In addition to that, another interesting thing occurs when looking at the patterns of Slovak Roma asylum migrations (Chart1): it seems that Slovak Roma migrations have some “seasonal” nature: the main peaks of asylum migration are from May to September. It might be that this is due to the fact that many asylum-seekers perceive the whole process as some “paid holiday” and want to enjoy it full scale which can be better achieved during the summer months. Besides, there are more opportunities to find some form of illegal job in summer as a contribution to asylum benefits paid by the Czech state (around 15 CZK (0.5 EUR) per person per day): from constructions to farming, gardening and petty crimes. However, the impact of seasoning on migration deserves to be studied further, which, unfortunately, overrides the scope of this paper.

5.1. Summary statistics for the main group of asylum-seekers in the Czech Republic.

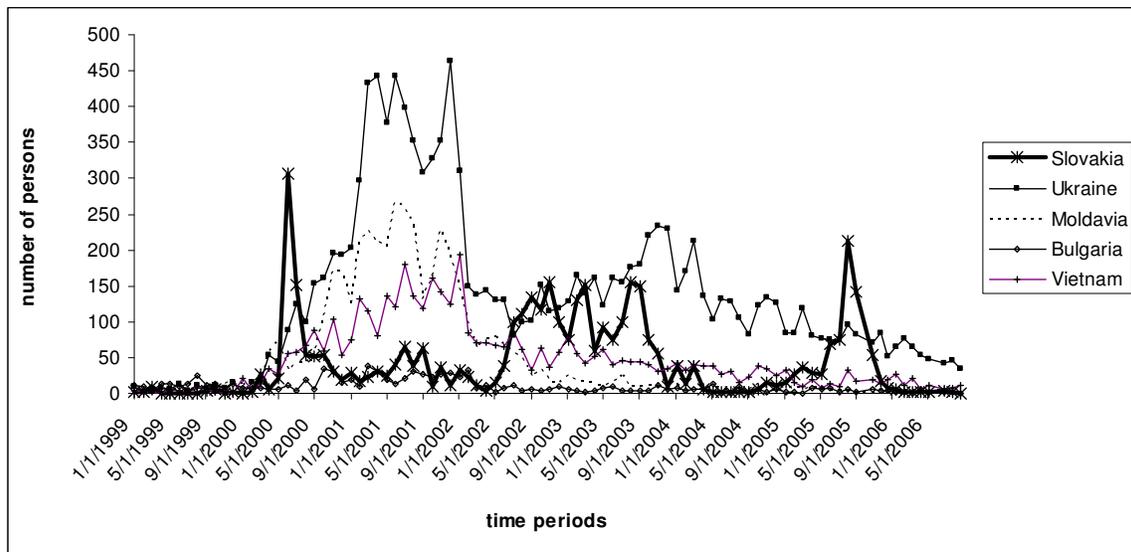
The Czech Republic appears to be quite an attractive destination for the asylum-seekers from both the neighboring countries and countries being more distant. Relatively high standard of living, health and social security together with the ubiquitous heritage of socialism and cheap goods, housing and labor (in comparison to the West) attract more and more immigrants every year.

Chart 2 below gives a graphical overview of the main seven target countries and their citizens applying for asylum in the Czech Republic in the period of 1999-2005.

In order to summarize the main findings on the asylum-seekers a basic summary statistics was generated on the most represented groups of immigrants. Table 2 below describes migration flows to the Czech Republic in the period of 1999 to 2005, showing mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum.

Chart 2

Asylum-seekers (by selected nations) in the Czech Republic (1999-2006)



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2005 and Ministry of Internal affairs of the Czech Republic, 2005

As far as we can see, in spite of Slovak asylum migrations (i.e. those by Slovak Roma) cannot be distinguished neither by the highest mean or standard deviation. Ukrainian, Moldavian and Vietnamese immigrants seem to have much more higher potentials for migration. However, Roma asylum-seekers rate on the fourth place – a very alarming issue with respect to Czech-Slovak relations. Unlike Ukrainians and Moldavians, who originate in countries devastated by transition and burdened with a Communist heritage, Czech Republic and Slovakia can boast EU and NATO membership and relatively high standards of living. High number of asylum-seekers shows that there

is likely something wrong in the process of leveling of economic and social conditions in both countries.

Table 2

Summary statistics for the asylum-seeking immigrants in the Czech Republic (1999-2006), no. of observations = 97.

Asylum-seekers by country	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Slovakia (Roma)	47.75309	57.28864	0	307
Ukraine	144.9877	115.7125	0	464
Moldavia	54.12346	74.09173	1	269
Yugoslavia	11.97531	24.99949	0	140
Bulgaria	10.58025	9.303043	0	39
Belarus	20.79012	12.69421	0	52
Vietnam	51.16049	44.5616	0	193

Source: Own estimations

6. Empirical model

In this section of the paper an econometric model estimating the dependence of Slovak Roma asylum migration on economic factors will be drawn.

Generally, when migration studies attempt to determine the main factors of migration, they equate the rate of migration (annually, quarterly or monthly) with various economic variables (such as GDP per capita or per capita real personal income) that serve for capturing the economic incentives for migration and socio-demographic variables (such as the size or the rate of change of population in the source or target country of migration) in order to capture the size and the dynamics of the labour markets (see for example Walsh, 1974; Helliwell, 1997; Strielkowski and O'Donoghue, 2006).

We will attempt to construct a similar model for estimation the impact of economic incentives on Slovak Roma asylum migrations to the Czech Republic in 1998-2006. The source country of migration is therefore Slovak Republic and the target country of migration is the Czech Republic.

The model can be presented in the following way:

$$AM_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Y_{cz} + \beta_2 Y_{sk} + \beta_3 POPUL_{sk} + \beta_4 U_{cz} + \beta_5 U_{sk} + u_i, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

where AM is the number of asylum-seekers of Slovak nationality in the Czech Republic measured quarterly, Y_{cz} is the GDP per capita in the Czech Republic, Y_{sk} is the GDP per capita in the Slovak Republic (measured in EUR), $POPUL_{sk}$ is the population in the Slovak Republic (source country of migration), U_{cz} is the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic and U_{sk} is the unemployment rate in the Slovak Republic. Here we estimate the dependence of migration on the difference in economic factors of the country of origin and target country as well as on push factors (worsening economic conditions at home).

The model has been estimated using STATA® software. The method of estimation is ordinary least squares (OLS) with robust standard errors (in order to control for heteroscedasticity). The results of the estimation are presented in the table 3 that follows. An interesting thing is the signs of the variables that capture economic incentives (GDP per capita in source and target country of migration). Generally, they show that the increase of economic well-being in the source country is likely to increase asylum migration, while the increase of economic well-being in the target country is likely to reduce it. The population variable behaves as expected: the larger is the population, the larger will be the outward asylum migration.

Table 3

Determinants of Slovak Roma asylum migrations to the Czech Republic (1998-2006), number of Slovak (Roma) asylum-seekers (AM)

	Coef.	Robust std. error	t	P>[t]	[95% Conf. Interval]	
GDP per capita (CZ)	- 790.6218	612.7115	- 1.29	0.207	- 2045.704	464.4608
GDP per capita (SK)	870.3804	615.5843	1.41	0.168	- 390.5868	2131.348
Population (SK)	.0059505	.0067918	0.88	0.388	- .0079619	.0198629
Unemployment (CZ)	- 4.181789	2.609709	-1.60	0.120	- 9.527535	1.163958
Unemployment (SK)	4.771554	2.471029	1.93	0.064	- .2901187	9.833227
Constant	- 31391.28	36519.59	- 0.86	0.397	- 106198.3	43415.69
R-squared	0.242					
N =	34					

Source: own estimations

A special attention should be paid are the coefficients and the significance of the variables measuring unemployment rate in the source and target countries. It appears that asylum migration tends to have some relationship with unemployment rates: when unemployment rises in the source country, asylum migrations are higher.

On the other hand, when unemployment is high in the target country, asylum migrations tend to be lower. The R-squared is quite low (0.24) which is not unusual in similar empirical studies (and in the linear regression models which use robust standard errors). In the econometric theory low adjusted coefficients of determinations (R-squared) would generally lead to the conclusion that a good deal of variance in the model still remains unexplained (Maddala, 2001). However, it does not prevent us from using the results of the model for studying the basic relationships between asylum migrations and factors than might or might not predetermine it. Although low, the R-squared can be used for determining the general direction of the significance of relationship, which might be regarded as positive.

However, even more than R-squared we account for the signs of the regression coefficients that are particularly useful for the predictions derived from the regression model. The overall results can be written in the following way:

$$AM_i = -31391.28 - 790.621Y_{cz} + 870.38Y_{sk} + 0.0059POPUL_{sk} - 4.181U_{cz} + 4.771U_{sk} + u_i$$

Would the results mean that the asylum migrations of Slovak Roma to the Czech Republic were pre-determined by the economic incentives, such as unemployment rates? To answer this question, we will estimate the model presented above using stepwise regression. The significance threshold we have chosen is 15% significance level. The results of the estimation are presented in table 4 below.

Just two variables appear to satisfy the threshold: unemployment rates in Czech Republic and Slovakia (both at the significance level of 1%). The R-squared is lower than in the previous case (0.17). Again, similar to the previous case, this fact can be attributed to the method of estimation (OLS with robust standard errors) and unexplained variances in the model. However, the trend that is expressed by the coefficient of determination remains the same as in the previous case.

Looking at the results it might seem that both unemployment in the source and the target countries of migration plays some (although not very determining, due to low prediction power of the model) role in inducing asylum migrations of Slovak Roma. However, taking into account the nature of Roma migrants (people who are permanently unemployed and are not attempting to look for any job) as well as the nature of asylum migrations (applying for asylum which is conditioned by permanent presence in asylum camp without a steady access to the target country labor market) both unemployment rate in Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic can be discarded as irrelevant and their impact insignificant. What really matters here is the seemingly significant irrelevance of economic incentives (represented by GDP per capita) in both countries.

Table 4

**Determinants of Slovak Roma asylum migrations to the Czech Republic (1998-2006)
using stepwise regression, number of Slovak (Roma) asylum-seekers (AM)**

	Coef.	Robust std. error	t	P>[t]	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Unemployment (CZ)	- 2.296783	1.305563	- 1.76	0.088	- 4.959497	.3659302
Unemployment (SK)	3.506014	1.137736	3.08	0.004	1.185587	5.826442
Constant	126.2201	65.24214	1.93	0.062	- 6.842124	259.2823
R-squared	0.172					
N =	34					

Source: own estimations

Therefore, we tend to think that Slovak Roma are not taking into account worsening or improving conditions at home (push factors), neither they consider the same characteristics for the target country (the Czech Republic).

This might mean that when considering emigration or applying for asylum, the Roma are likely to seek for something else than living in more favorable economic conditions. Perhaps, as it has been suggested earlier, it is social benefits and sometimes temporary stay to overlap the asylum-seeking waiting periods in other countries or just to have a “holiday” (“dovolenka”) that make them to emigrate. Another, more likely, explanation would be that there is another aspect (ethnicity) that makes them seek for asylum (economically motivated in this very case) in the economies with relatively similar life conditions (such as the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic).

7. Conclusions

There are substantial differences in attitude to migration that is attributed to different ethnic groups. It can be shown on the example of Slovak Roma asylum-seekers (representing original Roma migrants) in the Czech Republic that economic incentives account for just a small proportion of reasons for migration. It appears that there exist other “unexplained” factors of migration decisions with ethnical origin being one of them.

Notwithstanding, Roma propensity to migration is pre-determined by quite a large number of factors. First of all, Roma willingness to change the place of residence stems not only from their ethnic background or cultural specifics but rather from the historic necessity: in former Austrian-Hungarian empire and later Czechoslovakia Roma minority has always been persecuted and outlawed; changing the place of residence became an integral part of survival. Second, it might be that the Roma are tempted to solve all the problems merely by moving to another destination – this can provide an explanation of their “nomadic” behavior.

Roma migrations might have very different grounds: alongside with economic they can be social, cultural, etc. We also can distinguish long-term or short-term migrations. What is the common point in the Czechoslovak context is that in many cases no one can be sure that we are dealing with migrations: quite often changing the place of residence is merely a “visit” to the relatives or members of the allied clan which can vary from several months to several years. Roma networks and families that preserve contacts and help each other make any estimates quite difficult.

Calling the Roma nomads and attributing them uncontrolled migration should be studied from different angles. Roma migrations might represent a shift of potential low-skilled labor that is scarce in highly-specialized, technocrat economies of the European Union. It might as well be that Roma are able of bringing some cultural and social diversity to rigid and conservative societies. Although Roma seem to have higher propensity to migrate which is likely to be caused by their ethnical origin, it might be merely a feature of some survival mechanism inherited from their forefathers.

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