

# Immigration and Integration of Minorities in View of Czech Political Parties

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## 1. Background<sup>2</sup>

Czech asylum and immigration policies do not have a long history, especially given the political situation prior to 1989 that led to the former Czechoslovakia generating refugees rather than accepting them. In historical terms the Czechoslovakian socialist republic fell under the Eastern bloc and the Czech population is more or less homogeneous. The number of immigrants in the Czech Republic has been rising since 2000 and has reached 425 000 people for 10.6 million citizens in 2012. Immigrants comprise 4% of the Czech population – 1.3% being EU citizens and 2.7% citizens of third countries. There were 124 000 Ukrainians (29% of all immigrants), 72 000 Slovaks (17%), 60 000 Vietnamese (15%), and 32 000 Russians (8%) in the Czech Republic in 2010 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2012). The Czech Republic is primarily a target of economic migration, which is reflected in the average age of the immigrants (half of the immigrants are between the ages of 20 and 39, the percentage of children and seniors is insignificant). While only 25% of foreigners living in the Czech Republic in 2000 had a permanent residence permit, there were 45% (190 000) official permanent residents in 2011. An analysis by Newton Media from 2008 and 2009 showed that articles about immigrants in print media were neutral in 47% of cases, negative in 44%

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<sup>2</sup> The text is based on a background paper by Janda (2012)

of cases and positive only in 7% of cases (Newton Media 2009). Migration is thus generally perceived as having a negative connotation.

In March 2011 55% of Czech citizens responded that it is *right to employ foreigners in the Czech Republic*, similar to the data from 2001 and 2009. Thus the attitude of Czech citizens towards immigrants has not changed over the years, as it is the case in Western Europe. This fact could be explained by rather restrictive measures in immigration politics (Kušniráková, Čížinský 2011).

Despite the dynamic migration (the number of immigrants grew from 2% to 4.5% of the Czech population between 2000 and 2009) this topic is ignored both by media and politicians. Paradoxically, both Ukrainians (124 000) and Vietnamese (60 000) often do not obtain Czech citizenship, these large groups are thus politically underrepresented at the national level, as well as being barely represented in municipalities. Immigrants without citizenship also do not have the right to vote, and thus do not fall under any target groups of political subjects on the mainstream political scene. Immigration has not been a decisive topic in any elections since 1990.

## **2. Minorities in the Czech Republic and the Roma Card**

An example of a situation which has been politicized could be considered the presence of Roma minority in the Czech Republic. It can not be statistically specified how many members of the Roma minority the Czech population comprises; the estimates vary from 200 to 400 thousand out of the 10 million citizens. Especially in certain regions (North Bohemia, Břeclav) with highly populated Roma communities, more intensive involvement of the Roma card in local politics can be observed. Roma people generally do not have an immigrant status (as they mostly live in the Czech Republic permanently) and are citizens of the Czech Republic, thus have the right to vote. Although as equal citizens they are given all political rights, especially due to certain cultural specifics they are not represented on the political scene. It is the coexistence of the society with the Roma minority that has been growing as a political question since the 1990s. After 1989 the 5% threshold in order to receive mandate in the lower chamber of the Parliament was crossed twice (in 1992 and 1996) by an extreme-right Republican party

(Association for the Republic – Czechoslovakian Republican Party, SPR-RSČ) whose rhetoric was built on a criticism of the unconformity of Roma people (its chairman, Miroslav Sládek, is the only post-revolution Czech politician who used the term “Gypies” on a regular basis). Otherwise, none of the successor extreme-right parties with a program and rhetoric built on the Roma card has succeed in Parliamentary elections. *“The problematic position of Czech extreme-right parties is not caused only by its internal fragmentation but also by its outward appearance. It did not manage to address a broader voter groups in the long-term, which was due to its thought and strategic miserableness... the electoral success of SPR-RSČ in 1992 and 1996 was a result of the ability of republicans to radically differ from other political parties and the rest of the political spectrum”* (Mareš 2000)<sup>3</sup> It is the positioning of their rhetoric in criticising the establishment (specifically the topic of corruption, which the party explains as the result of the role of *political dinosaurs* – entrenched parties) that led a political party called Věci veřejné /Public Affairs/ to pass the 5% threshold and enter the lower chamber of the Parliament in 2010. But the core of this study are parties that handle the topics of immigration and minorities.

### **The introduction of examined political parties**

There were five subjects included in the examined political parties: three entrenched parties representing the mainstream subjects and two parties classified as extremist. From a comparative standpoint those parties (registered by the Ministry of the Interior) that played the most significant role on the Czech political scene between April 2009 and April 2012 were chosen. Two selected parties (ODS and ČSSD) have been in power since the beginning of 1990s, apart from two bureaucratic governments there has never been a prime minister of other political affiliation than the two aforementioned parties, and in the 2010 elections they placed first and second. The third selected party falling under the category of mainstream schema is TOP 09 which received the third largest amount of votes in the 2010 elections<sup>3</sup> and moreover is in the centre-right schema referred to as

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<sup>3</sup> Election results to the Chamber of Deputies in May 2010: ČSSD 22,08%, ODS 20,22%, TOP 09 16,7%, Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy 11,27%, Věci veřejné 10,88%. (data available at Czech Statistical Office website: <http://volby.cz/pls/ps2010/ps2?xjazyk=CZ> (8.5.2013))

a conservative right-wing party which stands between ODS and the extreme-right. As extremist parties (in this case the extreme-right) are considered Sovereignty – Jana Bobošíková’s Bloc (obtained 3.67% of votes in 2010 elections) and Workers’ party of Social Justice (obtained 1.14% of votes in 2010 elections), nevertheless they can be considered as legitimate extreme-right parties as they possess the legal status of a political party and generally better other parties on the extreme-right of the political spectrum.

### **2.1 Civic Democratic Party (ODS)**

The strongest right-wing party in the country was established in 1991 after the decay of the Civic Forum (OF) movement, which contained many opinion and political streams tied together by an aversion to the communist regime. The leader of the OF and a supporter of conservative-liberal right-wing politics, Václav Klaus established ODS, held the position of a prime minister between years 1992 and 1997 and served his presidential mandate between 2003 and 2013. ODS is generally the strongest subject on the Czech right-wing political scene<sup>4</sup> and thus should be the most relevant subject which will face the extreme-right bodies. The personnel and program weakening after the collapse of the coalition government in March 2009 during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union led to a growth of the rival conservative right-wing subject, TOP 09, which gained part of the ODS electorate (53% of all TOP 09 voters in 2010 voted for ODS in 2006 (SC&C a SPSS CR 2010)) and eventually in the elections to the lower chamber of the Parliament in May 2010 ODS received 20.22% and TOP 09 16.70% of votes. It can be noted that ODS had had a dominant role on the right wing of the Czech political scene ever since its establishment in 1991 up until the 2010 elections, when they were forced to alter their program and adapt their mindset to their partner with whom (along with one other subject) they formed the current coalition in 2010.

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<sup>4</sup> ODS election first-order results (in Czech environment to the lower chamber of the Parliament) 1992 – 2010: 1992: 29,73%, 1996: 29,6%, 1998: 27,74%, 2002: 24,47%, 2006: 35,8%, 2010: 20,22 (data by Czech Statistical Office website: <http://volby.cz> (8.5.2013))

## **2.2 Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD)**

The Czech Social Democratic Party has a long tradition: it was the first Czech political party, originally formed in 1878, yet in the modern sense was established in 1990, similar to ODS, as a successor subject of the left-wing and socially thinking stream in the revolutionary Civic Forum movement. Despite the strong leader of the left-wing Czech post-revolutionary Miloš Zeman (Prime Minister between 1998 and 2002) the party did not receive massive support of former voters of the communist party from the 1990s. It was mainly because of the liberal left-wing president Václav Havel, who did not favour ČSSD publicly or opinion-wise. ČSSD was at the apex of the political scene between 1998 and 2006, in which time they formed a government and their leader served as Prime Minister. The party has been in the opposition since 2006. It is also due to the existence of the Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia, which was not banned during the 1989 revolution, that ČSSD is not the only party on the left side of the Czech political scene. Although in the 2010 election ČSSD received the largest amount of votes, they did not manage to form a government because of their low coalition potential caused by the tense campaign of the party leader Jiří Paroubek. The key factor for the following study is the fact that all 14 regions of the Czech Republic (except the capital city of Prague – the traditional stronghold of the right-wing) have been continuously influenced by ČSSD governors since 2008. ČSSD uses the unpopularity of the reformist right-wing governments to win in local, second-order elections by using national issues in their local campaigns<sup>5</sup>. This gives the party an enormous opportunity to influence politics at the local level, while at the same time avoiding responsibility for the national government, which it uses when dealing with unpopular topics.

## **2.3 TOP 09 (Tradition Responsibility Prosperity)**

The party was established in 2009 from the initiative of the former chairman of the Christian-democratic Union (KDU-ČSL), Miroslav Kalousek, who took advantage of the decline of ODS and the political potential of the Green party minister of foreign affairs

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<sup>5</sup> In 2008 it was the '30 Crowns regulation fee,' put through by the right-wing government; it was a common frustration and disagreement with the central politics of the right-wing government which brought the left-wing success in regional elections in 2012.

Karel Schwarzenberg. TOP 09 signed a three-year (2009 – 2012) partnership agreement with a strong regional movement, Mayors. TOP 09 built their program on a conservative right-wing ideology, with a strong emphasis on budgetary responsibility and consolidation of public budgets, and used the positively-viewed figure Karel Schwarzenberg. Moreover, a modern campaign based on social networks with a target group of first-time voters and voters younger than 30 (68% of their voters), has led, according to estimates, to the final amount of votes composed of 57% former ODS voters (SC&C a SPSS CR 2010). The outcome was the third biggest electorate, a gain of 16.7% votes in 2010 elections and the position of the second strongest coalition party in the government. TOP 09 acquired the key departments for their ministers – finances, labour and social affairs, foreign affairs, health, and culture and put through a majority of their program agenda when forming the policy statement of the government. The party had to bear the main topics that were raised during the campaign, such as debt relief and the lowering of the state budget which voters considered the main topic of the May 2010 elections. The party is perceived as the main player in the realisation of the unpopular reforms which contain the consolidation of public finances, the reduction of the state budget deficit and especially the increase of various taxes and lowering state expenditures.

#### **2.4 Sovereignty – Jana Bobošíková’s Bloc**

A political party named Sovereignty, formed as a nationalist formation around formerly popular television host Jana Bobošíková, was registered in 2002. The party has never been represented in either the lower chamber of the Parliament or the Senate, and it was unsuccessful in the struggle for mandates in regional assemblies. Their primary target groups are seniors<sup>6</sup> and citizens from socially weakened regions (Northern Bohemia, where the party has been successful for a longer period of time). The party received 3.67% of votes in the 2000 elections and thus did not meet the 5% threshold necessary in order to receive any mandates in the lower chamber. Their program is considered to be populist, euro sceptic and built on nationalistic tendencies. Judging by

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<sup>6</sup> 59% of the party’s voters in 2010 elections were older than 45 (SC&C a SPSS CR 2010).

the partnership during elections (2008) with the Czech National Socialist party Sovereignty can be referred to as an extreme-right party. In the European Parliament election, the party received the largest amount of votes out of all non-parliamentary parties (4.26% votes, overall 100 514 votes). Their leader, Jana Bobošíková, was a Member of the European Parliament (2004 – 2009), a presidential candidate in the indirect elections in 2008 (nominated by the Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia) and is due to run for the presidency in January 2013. She has already fulfilled the requirements of collecting 50 000 signatures necessary for candidacy and therefore she became one of the nine candidates to become the President of the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, she ended up last in the first round of the elections. Concerning Bobošíková's success in media and the significant amount of space in media available for all official presidential candidates during the campaign (January 2013) a steady growth in popularity of her party can be expected. In the 2010 elections 32% of Sovereignty's votes came from former ČSSD voters, 19% from ODS and 15% came from voters that had not voted in the previous elections. Thus, the party had convinced them to come to the polls (SC&C a SPSS CR 2010).

## **2.5 Workers' Party of Social Justice (DSSS)**

DSSS is a non-parliamentary successor body of the Workers' Party that was banned by the Supreme Administrative Court in February 2010 for its, "imminent risk of danger to democracy due to its ideological connection to national socialism and neo-Nazism and the support of violence". DSSS was established under a different name in 2004. However, following the ban of DS, it adopted the role of successor body (Mareš 2012) a party similar in personnel to the Republican Party which was successful in the 1990s. Their ideology is based on National Socialism, and political scientists refer to it as a far-right extremist party (Fiala, Mareš 1998) and '*the protectors of common people*' (Mareš et al. 2011). There is information about a connection between DSSS (Mareš 2012) with the neo-nazist scene, especially in the north of Bohemia where social conflicts with Roma minority often take place. DSSS is taking up a pose of a conveyer of 'the truth about gypsy criminality'. In the parliamentary elections in 2010 the party achieved its best

result – 1.14% of votes, but still did not overcome the 5% threshold. In the long-term the party is unlikely to be successful in the Parliamentary or local elections to regional assemblies. As Miroslav Mareš (Mareš 2000) explains, “*the problematic position of Czech extreme-right parties is not caused only by its internal fragmentation but also by its outside appearance. It did not manage to address a broader voter groups in the long-term, which was due to its thought and strategic misery...*” and points out that the predecessor of DSSS – “*the success of SPR-RSČ in 1992 and 1996 elections was due to the ability of Republicans to differ from other political parties, or simply from the rest of the political party-system*”. The current (2013) situation favours DSSS (there is a strong frustration from the present right-wing government, whose public support remains around 10%). However, the inability of the party to take the lead in the protest movement against the government is helping the growth of other initiatives (platform STOP the Government, Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Holešov Proclamation, Public Affairs) which leads to the disintegration of the dissatisfied electorate between multiple players.

### **Methodological Note**

Our overall research question is asking *what is the position in the policy field of integration of immigrants (esp. Muslims) and minorities (esp. Roma) of the mainstream political parties in comparison with the far right parties?* The analysis will focus on the period from the last national election campaign until April 2012, which starts chronologically in April 2009. The following study will focus on three major mainstream political parties in the country’s party system and two most relevant far right parties. Positions of the parties will be analyzed on the bases of the following sources: party manifestos, election manifestos and articles in the major national printed newspaper (Mladá fronta DNES). In order to identify relevant statements the following keywords will be searched: citizenship, integration, migration, discrimination, Roma / Muslims. A homogenous coding scheme will be adopted - statements will be found using keywords, i.e., party/leader + citizenship/immigration/integration) and these statements will be

coded on a scale, from -2 to +2. In addition, it will be taken into account whether and how is each position justified (justification can be (i) pragmatic, (ii) identity-based or (iii) in moral-universal terms).<sup>7</sup>

### **3. Parties' Policy Stands**

**ODS** as a mainstream political party in the Czech Republic treats the issues of minorities and integration from the general societal point of view. In their official manifesto, the party does not call for an early naturalization of immigrants. However, a good knowledge of the Czech language, respect for cultural values and acceptance of local legal system is seen as necessary for the whole society to function. ODS does not build its political ideas on the concept of citizenship, but on the peaceful coexistence of the majority population with minorities. The latter are generally understood as a potential benefit for the Czech scene. That is why the Czech Republic, according to ODS, isn't open to everybody, but only to those who are willing to work and lead a mutually beneficial life. When it comes to immigration, ODS sees the priority in an effective national administrative system with no need for European unification. ODS has no respect for discrimination, in its negative, but also positive sense. Any kind of inequality, racism or extremism based on the citizenship of skin colour represents a threat for the Czech Republic itself. The official statements and manifestoes of ODS are mostly neutral, but based on a very pragmatic framework and universal values of respect, equality and shared values.

**ČSSD** finds the causes of the exclusion of the minorities from the society in the ineffective system of integration or in its absolute absence. The main obstacles are represented by nationalism and extremism, which don't allow the members of minorities to participate in the democratic functioning of the community. That is why the integration of immigrants into the society and its daily life is necessary. The country should welcome immigrants who are ready to work and not only enjoy the generous social system. ČSSD states in its manifesto that the creation of an effective control system should be a natural response to the entry of the Czech Republic into the

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<sup>7</sup> For more details on the methodology, refer to the Introduction.

Schengen system. That is why the country should prevent the illegal immigrants and the organized crime from causing additional issues on the territory of the Czech Republic. It also stresses the importance of prevention in the countries of origin. ČSSD builds its political ideas and values on the concept of equality, freedom and respect, which is why any kind of discrimination is sternly rejected. It means a great responsibility in domestic policy, but also zero respect for right-wing extremism. ČSSD focuses on the question of Roma in the Czech Republic and sees a possible improvement of this situation in an effective system of education. Mutual respect is seen as the key to peaceful coexistence between the majority and the minorities.

**TOP09** in its manifesto calls for an integration that includes the knowledge of the language, respect for the values and ideas and certain openness towards the culture of the majority. However, it also emphasizes the need for the awareness of the majority population that needs to be ready to accept minorities and their values as well. TOP09 believes that the current economic crisis has created a very good environment for extremism, and therefore the Czech Republic needs to put a lot more effort into the fight against these extremist opinions that represent a real threat to the whole society, not only to the minorities. TOP09 tries to solve the issues connected to Roma citizens before dealing with immigration, which is still very low compared to the other European countries. Its main priority is to prevent the growth of organized crime amongst minorities.

**Suvernita - Blok Jany Bobošíkové** builds its official manifesto on the notion of citizenship, nationality and sovereignty. Its priority is to protect national interests. The integration policy, according to Suvernita- Blok Jany Bobošíkové, needs to be very consistent and has to respect Christian values, cultural and historical legacy and the Czech legal system. Rampant immigration needs to be stopped; otherwise the Czech Republic will be facing a serious threat from multiculturalism and openness of the Schengen system. Any form of positive discrimination is understood as a fundamental obstacle to democracy. Islam represents a threat for the Czech Republic and its citizens and the wave of immigration from Islamic countries should therefore be stopped.

**DSSS** states that the issues of "inadaptable people" (meaning mainly Roma people) who show no respect for the shared values in the Czech Republic need to be solved at the national level because the partial solutions contribute to the fragmentation of the system and don't treat the issues effectively. DSSS calls for an open public discussion on the topic of immigration and integration, with no need for politically correct statements. Immigration is seen as an undesirable phenomenon and political asylum should only be given to those who are willing to respect national traditions and lead a decent life. People with high education and expertise are highly preferred. Immigration is not understood as an alternative solution to low birth rates. DSSS demands business owners to hire Czech citizens, and therefore stimulates a certain form of discrimination. However, in its official manifesto, DSSS calls for no respect for discrimination based on skin colour, nationality, age, gender, etc. Christian tradition is crucial and other cultures represent a threat to the roots of Czech values. A return to conservatism and moral principles ensures the protection of domestic interests.

**Table 1:** Summary of policy statements on selected issues

	<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Immigration</b>	<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Muslims / Islam</b>
<b>ODS</b>	No early naturalization . Respect for every ethnic group, but acceptance of Czech values and laws is necessary; peaceful coexistence of the majority population with the minorities is more important than the concept of citizenship	Support for better integration through an effective education system. It should lead to a tolerant coexistence of the majority with ethnic and national minorities; No need for early naturalization of immigrants. However, a good knowledge of the Czech language,	-	Need for equal opportunities for every ethnic group. It is necessary to eliminate any legal barriers that prevent discrimination from disappearing completely from the Czech environment.	Neutral position towards Roma minority; supports the process of integration leading to tolerant coexistence of majority population with Roma ethnic group.	-

		respect for cultural values and acceptance of local legal system are seen as necessary				
<b>ČSSD</b>	No early naturalization ; protection of all minorities in the Czech Republic; acceptance of the legislative principles is necessary	Criticizing the governing political parties and their ineffective policy towards the integration process. Attention to the fact that the current tools of integration can lead to escalation of tension between majority and minorities	The country should welcome the immigrants who are ready to work and not only enjoy the generous social system	Necessary to fight against „the inadaptable“ in the Czech Republic in order to resolve the issue of discrimination. The acceptance of the legislative principles by every member of the Czech society is necessary. ČSSD builds its political ideas and values on the concept of equality, freedom and respect and that is the reason why any kind of discrimination is sternly rejected	Protects every minority and Roma as well, but warned against the „war between the Czech citizens and the Roma ethnic group“ in 2011; fight against organized crime groups within Roma ethnic group; possible improvement of this situation is in an effective system of education	-
<b>TOP09</b>	Very moderate position; no early naturalization	It is essential to first dampen extremist ideas from both sides-from the majority and the minority. Integration is the second tool to be applied in the Czech Republic.  Integration should include knowledge of language, respect for the	-	Warns against the legitimization of the far right and extremist movements. Asks for the same rights and conditions for everybody, including minorities, but also professional groups.  The current economic crisis has created a	Party puts focus on equal chances of every social group, including Roma. It stresses out responsibility of all social groups towards society and fulfilling their obligations in case of	-

		values and ideas and openness towards the culture of majority.		very good environment for any kind of extremism and therefore the Czech Republic needs to put a lot more effort into the fight against these extremist opinions that represent a real threat for the whole society	social cohesion.	
<b>SBJB</b>	The interests of the Czech citizens are crucial and early naturalization is requested. Notion of citizenship, nationality and sovereignty. Its priority is to protect the national interests	Preservation of Christian traditions is necessary, and integration should follow this direction. The integration policy needs to be very consistent and has to respect Christian values, cultural and historical legacy and legal system of the Czech Republic.	Rampant immigration needs to be stopped, otherwise the Czech Republic will be facing a serious threat from multiculturalism and the openness of the Schengen system	Warns against the positive discrimination of minorities that harms the majority population in the Czech Republic.	Warns against the positive discrimination of Roma minority.	Czech Christian tradition is in conflict with Islam; Islam represents a threat to the Czech Republic and its citizens and the wave of immigration from Islamic countries should therefore be stopped
<b>DSSS</b>	Early naturalization requested, DSSS fights against the „inadaptable“ members of the society	Calls for the intolerance of minorities; problem of ghettos that needs to be resolved DSSS calls for an open public discussion on the topic of integration.	Warns the Czech nation against immigration and its consequences	Calls for the intolerance of minorities and stands up for the interests of the Czech citizens.  DSSS motivates business owners to preferably hire Czech citizens, therefore	Calls for the intolerance of the Roma minority; plans to move the Roma minority into bigger cities	Christian tradition is crucial and other cultures represent a threat to the roots of the Czech values.

		Immigration is seen as an undesirable phenomenon and political asylum should only be given to those who are willing to respect national traditions and lead a decent life. People with high education and expertise are highly preferred. Immigration is not understood as an alternative solution to low birth rates		stimulating a form of discrimination.		
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**Table 2:** Summary of policy statements on scale

Party statements	ODS	ČSSD	TOP09	S-BJB	DSSS
<b>Citizenship</b>	-	-	-	-0,8	-1,33
<b>Integration</b>	-0,17	0,2	0,25	0	-1,2
<b>Immigration</b>	0	0,14	-0,66	-1	-0,88
<b>Discrimination</b>	-0,14	0,8	1,3	-0,5	-1,11
<b>Minorities</b>	-0,25	0,38	-2	-1,66	-1,2
<b>(n)</b>	32	37	11	17	39
<b>Frames (%)</b>					
<b>Pragmatic</b>	53,84	43,75	44,44	18,75	16,66
<b>Identity- based</b>	38,46	43,75	0	62,5	43,33
<b>Moral-universal</b>	7,69	12,5	55,55	18,75	40
<b>(n)</b>	26	32	9	16	30

**Table 3:** Political justification

Party statements	ODS	ČSSD	TOP09	S-BJB	DSSS
<b>Rate of justification %</b>	81,25	86,48	81,81	94,11	76,92
<b>Statements (n)</b>	32	37	11	17	39
<b>Frames (n)</b>	26	32	9	16	30

## **4. Parties and selected issues**

### **4.1 Citizenship**

The issue of citizenship is treated very differently across the political scene in the Czech Republic, and its concept has been gaining more importance recently. The Czech Republic has an ethnicity-based model of citizenship, which is also known under the term of "*ius sanguinis*". Therefore, citizenship is granted to a person whose parents are Czech. Looking at the specific political parties and their public statements in the mainstream media, we see that this discrepancy between the political players on the Czech political scene when it comes to the citizenship is essential.

ODS, as a mainstream right-wing political party, doesn't build its political philosophy on the idea of citizenship or permanent residence. Its public statements on this topic are limited to situations when it is necessary to discuss a current issue connected to citizenship. Even in these cases, its public statements are more or less neutral.

Similarly, TOP09, a very young political party existing only since 2009, comments on the issues connected to the concept of citizenship very moderately. However, there have been several political scandals associated with the public statements of TOP09 members on the topic of citizenship, which were believed to harm the positive image of the Czech Republic.

On the other hand, ČSSD, the Czech social democracy, has put itself into the position of the political party protecting all of the minorities in the Czech Republic. In many cases, the poorest layer of the population is represented by the minorities and the non-citizens and therefore ČSSD has become the moderator of the public discussion on this topic, even though its public statements are also mostly neutral.

Suverenita-Blok Jany Bobošíkové defines itself as the only political party in the Czech Republic that defends the real interest of the Czech citizens. These interests are their first and only priority. Suverenita builds its ideas and concepts on the Christian tradition and believes that the sovereign state with its citizens is the main actor on the international scene.

DSSS believes that it is its duty to stand up for Czech citizens who very often have to face the “inadaptable“ members of the society. They mostly base their public statements on the concept of criminality caused by the Roma minority. Protecting the national interests and “decent“ Czech citizens is believed to be their priority.

## **4.2 Integration**

Integration of minorities is the issue that most divides the political spectrum in the Czech Republic, especially when it comes to the Roma minority. ODS believes that the integration of minorities is a necessary process and that a well structured education system is the most effective tool. They consider the lack of highly educated members of minorities in the Czech Republic, especially the Roma minority, to be the underlying cause of other issues connected to the integration. In the cases of Šluknov, Břeclav and other regions, ODS representatives have adopted the rhetoric of extremist parties and played the “nationalist card.“ However, according to the public statements of ODS members, the party supports the process of integration leading towards the tolerant coexistence of the majority population with ethnic and national minorities.

ČSSD stands in the position of the political party willing to protect the interests of every minority in the Czech Republic. Therefore, it has criticised the governing political parties because of their ineffective policy towards the integration process. ČSSD often draws attention to the fact that the current tools of integration adopted by ODS can lead to the escalation of tension between the majority population and minorities.

TOP09 has been commenting on the cases of 2011 that have divided the Czech society. TOP09 members believe that it is essential to first dampen extremist ideas from both sides – from the majority and the minority. Integration is the second tool to be applied. Suverenita- Blok Jany Bobošíkové sees itself as the only political party that defends the real interests of the Czech nation and the topic of integration of the minorities in the Czech Republic is centred around preservation of the Christian traditions. DSSS very often calls for the intolerance of the minorities, especially of the Roma minority. Their integration strategy includes the plans to move the Roma minority into the bigger cities.

DSSS focuses on the area of North Bohemia where the Roma minority creates its own “ghettos”, and the issues of integration are very often discussed.

### **4.3 Migration / Immigration**

The issue of immigration in the Czech Republic is discussed at the political level very little, as the Czech Republic is still, by European standards, ethnically fairly homogeneous. The only political party that has released public statements concerning this topic is DSSS. Its chairman, Tomáš Vandas, warned the Czech nation in 2011 against immigration and its consequences. The other members of DSSS subsequently criticized the immigration of the Vietnamese minority and the organized crime of this community.

### **4.4 Discrimination**

The concept of discrimination is mostly connected to gender and only occasionally to an ethnic group. However, this topic has gained importance recently, especially in accordance to the open borders and the potential openness of the job market for other ethnic groups. The mainstream political parties, such as ODS, constantly point to the need for equal opportunities for every ethnic group. ODS, in the position of the governing party, is supposed to eliminate any legal barriers that would prevent discrimination from disappearing completely from the Czech environment.

ČSSD stands in the position of the political party willing to protect the interests of every minority in the Czech Republic. However, according its members, it is necessary to fight against inadaptable people and groups in order to resolve the issue of discrimination. The acceptance of legislative principles by every member of the Czech society is the key strategy, in accordance with the political strategy of ČSSD.

TOP09 defines itself as a political party of equal opportunities. Therefore, its main goal is to not allow any form of discrimination (connected to gender, ethnic group, etc.). According to the public statements its members, the same rights and conditions for all the inhabitants of the Czech Republic are necessary. This concerns not only minorities, but also professional groups. TOP09 warns against the legitimization of the far right and extremist movements. On the other hand, Suverenita-Blok Jany Bobošíkové and DSSS

both warn against the positive discrimination of minorities, especially the Roma minority and claims that it leads to lower opportunities for members of the Czech nation and represent a danger to the national interests that need to be protected.

#### **4.5 Roma**

The issues connected to the topic of Roma citizens have provoked a major public debate for many years. They are also one of the main reasons for the competition between the mainstream political parties and the extreme right. ODS usually tries to keep its mainstream position and therefore stays politically correct. However, there have been several public statements when the members of ODS designated members of Roma ethnic groups as culprits of many all-societal problems, even though it is one of the main aims of this political party to support the process of integration leading towards the tolerant coexistence of the majority population with the Roma ethnic group.

Conversely, ČSSD, a political party willing to protect the interests of every minority in the country, has reacted very stridently to the events of 2011, when its members warned against the, “war between the Czech citizens and the Roma ethnic group. The main strategy of ČSSD connected to the issue of Roma citizens is centred around the fight against the organized crime within the Roma ethnic group. TOP09, especially its chairman, Karel Schwarzenberg, has been criticized for its public statement when he expressed the idea of possible creation of a Roma state.

DSSS very often uses the concept of fear that has been felt towards the Roma ethnic group by the majority population. The demonstrations organized by DSSS point to the increased criminal activities among the Roma ethnic group. They often use slogans such as “Roma terror on the majority population“. Generally, DSSS is the political party that mentions the issues of the Roma citizens the most. Their openly critical attitude towards this has brought a lot of attention not only from the public, but also from the mainstream political parties such as ODS or TOP09, which have trouble dealing with this issue effectively while still staying politically correct.

#### **4.6 Islam**

The only political party in the Czech Republic that openly deals with Islam is Suverenita-Blok Jany Bobošíkové. This political party claims to defend the real interest of the Czech citizens. These interests are their first and only priority. Suverenita- Blok Jany Bobošíkové builds its ideas and concepts on the Christian tradition, which is, without any doubt, in conflict with Islam. Jana Bobošíková, chairman of the party, often states that the Czech Republic is the territory of cathedrals and universities and not mosques. She believes that Islam represents a real threat for the Czech Republic. Although, the danger is not immediate, as a member state of the European Union the Czech Republic has to deal with immigration that includes Muslims. The Muslim community in the Czech Republic accuses Suverenita-Blok Jany Bobošíkové of "*Islamophobia*".

#### **5. Conclusion**

As the findings suggest, the most visible difference in political argumentation and its justification stands between Suverenita – Blok Jany Bobošíkové (S-BJB) and other parties. S-BJB dominates in justifying its arguments related to selected fields (issues) by identity-related frames. Another remark show that parties chosen as extremist (DSSS and S-BJB) do have tougher and more restrictive stands on selected issues in all covered areas than the three parties identified as mainstream (ODS, ČSSD, TOP 09), both found in party manifestos and media coverage.

We might also argue that DSSS, generally labelled as a typical far-right (extremist) party, receives more media coverage (see in tables – variable *n*) on selected issues than other established and non-extremist parties (ODS, ČSSD, TOP 09). What some call a ‚single-issue party‘ can be also explained as one party focusing on the issues in the majority of its media coverage. While interpreting findings based on media coverage, the relatively low number of identity-based arguments among mainstream and extremist parties remains an issue which would require more research in explaining such differences.

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