Abstract

The integration of migrants and ensuring social cohesion have become one of the main social and political issues of EU countries in the 21st century, including the Czech Republic, where migrants already account for about 10 % of the Czech population in 2022, including Ukrainian refugees. The experience of countries with a long immigration history confirms that local governments play a crucial role in integration. This dissertation focuses on the description and analysis of the role of cities in the integration policy of the Czech Republic.

The theoretical part deals with the conceptualisation of social integration and policies towards migrants at the national and municipal level. It also documents the current level of knowledge in the field of local integration policies in EU countries with a long immigration history and finally analyses the setting of integration policy in the Czech Republic, in particular the context of the role of local governments.

The empirical part aims to describe and analyse the approaches of the selected six cities to the integration of foreigners both in the declarative and in the implementation level and at the same time to reflect the attitudes of the political and professional representation of the cities towards this target group. The thesis also focuses on the analysis of the conditions created for local integration by the state through legislative, fiscal and conceptual measures.

Methodologically, it is a qualitative explanatory multi-case study. Semi-structured interviews and secondary analysis of legislation, strategic and conceptual documents were used as data collection techniques. The results of the study identified a wide range of factors ranging from subjective attitudinal positions towards migrants and integration policies of political and professional representation of cities to structural local, national and transnational factors that influence the approach and possibilities of cities in the Czech Republic to implement their own integration policies.