CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Sciences

Department of International Relations

Master's Thesis

2024   **James David O'Blenis**

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Sciences

Department of International Relations

The Discursive Construction of Syrian and Ukrainian Asylum Seekers in Czechia and Migration Outcomes: Observed Covariations

Master's Thesis

Author: James David O'Blenis

Study Program: Master of International Relations

Supervisor: Jakub Tesar, Ph.D.

Year of Defence: 2024

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.

3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on the 29th of April 2024   James David O'Blenis

Length of the thesis: 179,188 characters. 26,083 words.

Keywords

Migration, Czech Migration Policy, Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Discourse Analysis, Syria, Ukraine, Czechia.

Title

The Impact of the Discursive Framing of Migrants on the Migration Outcomes of Syrian and Ukrainian Asylum Seekers in the Czech Republic.

Acknowledgement

Table of Contents

Abstract

Throughout modern history, Czechia, and formerly Czechoslovakia, have maintained a complex and often troubled relationship with international migration. Periods of German and Soviet occupation, the division of Czechoslovakia into two independent republics, and Czechia's modern EU accession and emergence as an increasingly globalized modern economy have contributed to massive demographic shifts that continue to inform Czechia's national political landscape, culture, and attitudes towards migration and the integration of foreigners into Czech society. The last decade has brought about the largest human migration events in Europe since the end of the Second World War, with the 2015 "European Migrant Crisis" (hereafter referred to as the Crisis) and the outflow of refugees from Ukraine following the Russian invasion of the country in February 2022 presenting significant stresses for Schengen Area States (European Commission, 2023; Pew Research Center 2016). While underlying challenges for European states to equitably and efficiently resettle migrants remained similar through both the 2015 and 2022 migration events, stark differences in the discursive construction of Middle-Eastern (most notably Syrian) and Eastern European migrants by policymakers and public figures in Czechia can be correlated with contrasting migration outcomes between the two people groups.

The primary goal of this thesis is to shed light on the covariation of changes in the discursive framing of Syrian and Ukrainian migrants in Czech political discourse and quantitative migration outcomes over time, focusing on contrasting discursive themes and migration outcomes between the two groups. In pursuit of this goal, this work employs a mixed-methods approach, featuring both a longitudinal Critical Discourse Analysis of Czech political discourse and a longitudinal Quantitative Analysis of the migration outcomes of Syrians and Ukrainians in the Czech context during specific time periods. Harnessing extensive media

coverage and institutional databases, the former method draws on and qualitatively analyzes statements regarding Syrian and Ukrainian migrants made by prominent Czech political figures. The latter method cross-references said statements with quantitative migration outcomes, employing publicly available information databases to observe covariation between utterances of migration-related discourse and overall Syrian and Ukrainian migration outcomes in Czechia.

Introduction & Literature Review

Throughout history, migration has played a critical role in shaping the cultural, economic, and political landscape of the European continent. Fueled by the rise and fall of empires, violent conflict, religious reformation, colonization, and globalization, the governance of migration within and into Europe has long been a source of political division. The last decade, however, has brought about increased levels of both migration and associated political controversy on European national and supranational levels, calling into question the effectiveness and sanctity of European migration policy and associated political unity (Juncker, 2015). This new era of European migration effectively began in 2015; driven to desperation by intensifying armed conflict in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, approximately 1.5 million migrants fled their homes and landed in Europe before the end of the year, with significant numbers continuing to arrive throughout 2016 (Stojanov, Bureš, & Duží, 2017). This massive influx of refugees placed significant strain on the national governments of receiving Southern European nations, triggered tensions within European Union institutions relating to cost-sharing, border control, and integration, and brought major security challenges associated with the Schengen Area's freedom of movement policies to light with unprecedented urgency (European Migration Network, 2015; Stojanov et al., 2017).

Though national ideological splits regarding migration, specifically migration originating from outside of Europe, have been apparent within the governance structures of the European Union since their inception, the Crisis brought these cleavages to the fore. In the context of the 2015 Crisis, divides could be partially explained on the basis of proximity to the migrants' point of origin, with Southern, more heavily-burdened states such as Italy taking on more anti-migration and pro-cost/burden sharing stances. Stark political contrasts could also be seen

between Western Europe's largest economies and the post-socialist economies of the Visegrad Four (Szalai, Csornai, & Garai, 2017). In 2015, Germany, France, Italy, and Sweden collectively issued 'first instance decisions' on over 447,000 asylum applications, with almost 250,000 issued by Germany alone. The Visegrad Four states, conversely, issued approximately 8300 total, with preferential treatment sometimes being given to Christian migrants, as was the case in Poland (Bachman, 2016; Eurostat, 2023a).

In Hungary, migrants were discursively framed by politicians as 'terrorists' and threats to Hungarian culture (Bocskor, 2018; Kov**a**ts, 2015). The government of Slovakia, meanwhile, declined to accept any Syrian refugees from Turkey (Amnesty International , 2017). Czechia, on which this work will focus, stood in staunch opposition to all European Union migrant relocation proposals which could compel it to accept refugees, a stance which surprised few ("Half of Czechs Oppose Taking in War Refugees: Survey, 2015).

Despite its moniker as the 'Heart of Europe', Czechia has never been considered an important destination for migrants or refugees, having earned a reputation similar to its Eastern neighbours for its relative ethnic homogeneity and restrictive migration policies (Szalai, Csornai, & Garai., 2017). The country and its people's general aversion to the acceptance of non-European migrants, embodied by former President Andrej Babiš' unapologetically conservative and often inflammatory anti-immigration rhetoric, stand in sharp contrast to the attitudes and policies of its larger neighbour, Germany, which boasts the European Union's largest foreign-born population (exceeding Czechia's total population) and which consistently receives the largest share of migrants entering the EU (Eurostat, 2023b). The unwillingness of Czechs to accept asylum seekers was made exceedingly clear during the aforementioned Crisis, which saw only a few hundred Syrians registering as refugees in the country. It may then have

come as a surprise to casual outside observers when the Czech government readily welcomed over 400,000 Ukrainian refugees into the country in 2022, far outstripping any other nation on a per-capita basis and placing the country as the fourth largest receiver of Ukrainian migrants in the world ('Cizinci Podle Státního Občanstvi a Pohlavï 31.12', 2015).

The almost polar-opposite responses by Czech politicians to the 'Migration Crisis' and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine were the impetus for this paper, which specifically addresses Syrian and Ukrainian migration into the Czech Republic between 2015 and 2022. The goal of this work is to draw attention to the covariation of Czech politicians' discursive constructions and framing of migrants and quantitative migration outcomes. This task will be accomplished through the implementation of a social constructivist ontological framework and an interpretivist epistemological approach. Significant pieces of discourse, relating to selected key events of the 'Crisis' and the 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine stemming from Czech and Western political figures will be compared with quantitative migration data to explore their covariation.

The definitions of key migration-related terms, for the purposes of this work, are as follows:

Refugee: "...people who have fled their countries to escape conflict, violence, or persecution and have sought safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024).

Migrant: "... a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (International Organization for Migration, 2024).

Regular Migration/Regular Migrant: "...Migration that occurs through recognized, authorized channels." A regular migrant is an individual who partakes in regular migration (International Organization for Migration, 2017).

Irregular Migrant: "...a person who, owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country" (Migration and Home Affairs, 2024b).

Economic Migrant: "A person who leaves their country of origin purely for economic reasons that are not in any way related to the refugee definition, in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood" (Migration and Home Affairs, 2024c).

Migration Outcomes: For the purposes of this work, migration outcomes include applications, grants, and denials of residence permits, asylum status, and subsidiary protection status, criminal convictions among foreigners, administrative expulsions among foreigners, detections of irregular entry and residence among foreigners, and gender based differences in these outcomes.

Literature Review

It is my understanding that no academic work has yet been published featuring an analysis of observed covariations of Czech migration-related discourse and Syrian and Ukrainian migration outcomes in the Czech context, but there are many quality contemporary works from which inspiration was drawn for this thesis, both in terms of method and subject matter. The following brief literature review explores the state of contemporary academic literature in the area of critical and comparative discourse analyses of migrants and refugees.

Katherine McCann, Megan Sienkiewicz, and Monette Zard's *The Role of Media Narratives in Shaping Public Opinion Toward Refugees* (2023)*,* written for the International Organization for Migration, is one of the most notable examples of the employment of mixed-methods comparative analysis in the study of migration-related discourse in Europe between 2015 and 2022. Through the effective coding and sub-coding of migrants as unique varieties of hazards and assets, as portrayed in popular media and perceived by the public, the authors were able to tap into the co-variation of public discourse, popular media, political discourse, and migration outcomes. They concluded that, despite limitations in generalizability and scope, their comparative analysis effectively revealed striking differences between the two discourses, clarifying differences in the migration environments encountered in 2015 and 2022 by Syrian and Ukrainian refugees respectively.

Further analysis highlighting media discourse as a tool for critical comparative analysis between the discursive construction of Syrian and Ukrainian migrants and refugees was conducted by Maximilian Weber, Gronow, Chen, and Eger, in *Social Solidarity with Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees in the Twitter Discourse* (2023). Through their analysis of over two million tweets, the authors were able to effectively track the covariation of tweets expressing solidarity and anti-solidarity with Syrian and Ukrainian refugees with politically significant migration-related events, noting the ways in which perceived cultural and circumstantial differences between the two people groups appeared to impact public sentiments toward them.

Placing particular emphasis on the role of these cultural differences in the construction of discursive frames, Amanda Palmgren, Akerlund, and Viklund's *Refugees Versus 'Refugees'* (2023) explores the ways in which Swedish right-wing media sources have contrastingly characterized Syrian and Ukrainian refugees since 2015. In this work, the authors emphasize the

importance of key words and phrases in the creation and maintenance of specific discursive frameworks, as well as the securitization and discursive disqualification of specific groups of refugees through the evocation of longstanding tropes and stereotypes. Their conclusions show that Swedish right-wing media disproportionately relies on stereotypes in their characterizations of Syrian refugees, reinforcing a quasi-ethnic 'us-and-them' discursive framework. The authors' observations align closely with discursive phenomena that I noted in my research for this thesis, and their successful comparative analysis of Syrian and Ukrainian-related discourses has been drawn upon for this work.

McCann, Sienkiewiecz, and Zard's above-mentioned article is an excellent example of the use of discourse analysis through the examination of media publications, as is Noor Ghazal Aswad's *Biased Neutrality* (2019). The selection of relevant sources of discourse in the latter article, whereby pieces of discourse were chosen that were not primarily concerned with refugees and migration, but which advanced the discourse through tangential mentions embedded in other political and societal discourses, played a role in shaping the selection process used in this thesis. Aswad's nuanced and critical examination and subsequent debunking of 'neutral' migration-related discourse was taken into consideration in the creation of this work, informing my choice to forgo the categorization of discourse examples as positive or negative and focusing on the prevalence of themes and keywords. Her conclusions that prominent sources of discourse, the New York Times in the case of her study, act as gatekeepers to the framing of popular migration-related discourse, and that the findings of such analyses should not necessarily aim to be generalizable, but instead transferable, to other similar discursive networks were influential in the creation of this work. I hope that this work's methodology could be applied and achieve similar results in studies of Central European states' migration discourse landscapes, or that the

results of this study can at least be informative in interpreting their responses to the 2015 and 2022 migration events under study.

Focusing specifically on Syrian migration-related discourse in public media, Z. Mustafa-Awad and M. Kirner-Ludwig's 2020 work *Syrian Refugees in Digital News Discourse* uncovered similar themes to those observed in this analysis, with securitization, war, Islam, and integration remaining at the forefront of the discourse. Rather than examining the discursive construction of two groups of asylum seekers in a single nation, Mustafa-Awat and Kirner-Ludwig chose to analyze Syrian migration-related discourse in German, American, and British public media. Contrasting the real and publicly perceived prevalence of specific discursive themes and keywords in media discourse among publications and respondents of different nationalities, the authors effectively probed the importance of the public in interpreting and re-creating discursive structures championed by media and state sources. While not measured in this work, the interpretation of prominent migration-political discourse by Czech government administrators and the public can be cautiously inferred through the co-variation of said discourse and quantitative migration outcomes. The direct analysis of these interpretations is outside of the scope of this work, but would be an excellent starting point for future studies of this topic.

Featuring in virtually all migration-related critical discourse analyses, themes and processes of securitization are critical to this work's comparative analysis as a key differentiating factor between the two people groups under study. Beatrix Futák-Campbell's *Facilitating Crisis* (2022), which delves into the securitization of migrants and refugees in Hungarian and Slovak political discourse, skillfully examines the ways in which narratives of national security and preservation are harnessed to push processes of securitization and achieve domestic political

goals. The author's characterization of securitization as both a result of migration-related discursive development as well as a political tool used to further shape it was influential in informing my examination of the development of Czech migration-related discursive frames.

Monika Kabata's *The Migrant 'Other' as a Security Threat* (2022) also guided this work's approach to securitization. Concluding that the discursive construction of Syrian migrants as security threats enabled specific policy actions to be undertaken by Poland's ruling PiS party in 2017, her effective use of the Copenhagen School's interpretation of securitization allowing her to effectively identify key themes, phrases, and terms critical to the securitization process. Her cross-referencing of the emergence and prevalence of specific securitizing themes in Polish migration-related political discourse with migration-related public opinion polls over time allowed her to make detailed observations of their positive co-variation. Like other works with similar methodologies, the establishment of definite co-constitutionality of discourse, public opinions, and policy outcomes is not possible, but her success in associating the variables under study is compelling and informative.

In the aftermath of the mid-2010s 'Migration Crisis', meaningful analytical work concerning the framing of Syrian and Middle-Eastern refugees in European society was carried out. Thouraya Zheni's *Cognitive Frames in Media Discourse* (2019) presents a detailed study of the cognitive framing of 'illegal' immigrants, focusing on Syrians, through the analysis of articles published in The Guardian newspaper. The author's demonstration of the processes by which migration-related keywords are classified and incorporated into semantic networks, reinforce stereotypical representation of refugees, and constitute discursive frames sheds important light on the cognitive and sociological aspects of discourse analysis.

Marína Urbánikova and Michal Tkaczyk's *Strangers Ante Portas* (2020) delivers similar insights, focusing on the framing of migrants and refugees in Czech news media in the context of the 2015 'Crisis' discussing the co-constitutional nature of migration-related discourse, public attitudes towards migration, public policy, and migration outcomes. They conclude that the discursive framing of Syrian migrants in Czechia as burdens in 2015, despite their relative physical absence in the country, can be attributed to a variety of historically and socio-politically contextualized factors. Their detailed examination of the context underlying Czech migration-related discursive frameworks inspired the substantial historical section of this paper, with their specific and fruitful probing of Czechia's ethnic homogeneity, communist past, and euroscepticism being given significant attention in this paper.

Czech Political and Migration History

Modern political discourse is inextricably tied to contemporary interpretations of history. Consequently, any analysis of the discursive construction of foreigners in Czech society must be conducted in the context of Czechia's long and complex political and migration-related history. To this end, this chapter presents a brief recounting of the emergence of Czech society from its origins to the present day, recounting the formation of Czech national political and ethnic identity, probing the most influential and analytically fruitful series of foreign (non-ethnic Czech) migration-related events in Czech history, and highlighting the role of targeted political discourse on migration outcomes over time.

Early Czech History

The history of settlement in the lands known today as Czechia can be traced back over one thousand years, with Czech political history beginning in earnest with the establishment of the first unified Central European Slavic political union, the seventh-century Empire of King Samo, and

the establishment of Great Moravia in the mid-9th century, the first prominent state to be founded and controlled by the West Slavs. Greater Moravia's late-9th century alignment with East Francia saw its transformation into the Duchy of Bohemia (Agnew, 2004; Kouřil, 2014).

As part of East Francia's sphere of influence, and later as an addition to the Holy Roman Empire, Czech (Greater Moravian) culture saw further Christianization, literary development, the consolidation of regional identity, and the emergence of folk heroes such as Jan Hus and Jan Žižka, with Protestantism becoming a source of unity and defiance against imperial rule (Hernandez, 2022; Revzin, Isaakovič, & Navrátil, 1954; Kouřil, 2014). Small-scale Czech

Protestantism was quietly tolerated under the rule of Emperors Rudolf II and Matthias, but the fervent Catholicism of the latter's heir, Ferdinand the II, triggered great anxiety among Protestant leaders, leading to the Bohemian Revolt of 1618 and the subsequent Thirty Years' War. Despite significant popular support, the movement was decisively crushed. This resulted in the dismantling of structures of Czech nobility, widespread forceful recatholization, and the effective Germanization of Bohemia.

Czech Society Through the Two World Wars

After decades of efforts to gain further autonomy under German Habsburg rule, the First World War presented an opportunity for the Czech people to gain complete political independence. Declaring their intention to create an independent unified state with their Slovak counterparts in 1915, the German defeat of 1918 saw the emergence of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Though nominally a union between the Czech and Slovak nations, the shadow of centuries of German influence and imperial domination loomed large, with over a quarter of the nascent state's population identifying as German in 1921 (Fialova & Šprocha, 2018). The share of Germans was even higher in the politically and economically vital Bohemian region, where ethnic Germans accounted for approximately one third of the population (Fialova & Šprocha, 2018). Understandably, the establishment of the new Republic was highly unpopular among ethnic Germans, whose political loyalties generally lay in Vienna. However, it is worth noting that, through the early years of the interwar period, much of the ethnic German political elite in Czechoslovakia sought to ensure their representation and cultural survival through legitimate and honest engagement in the state's political system (Rovny, 2020). It was primarily after the rise of the National Socialist Party and Germany's subsequent resurgence as a geopolitical power in

Europe that Czech Germans were presented with a more attractive option to ensure their ethnic survival (Rovny, 2020). Major Czech-political entities such as the Sudetendeutch Partei began receiving covert funding from the German National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), subsequently disengaging from Czechoslovak efforts at multi-ethnic cooperation and instead calling for the integration of German-majority territories into the Reich (Rovny, 2020). The Sudeten region's widespread disengagement from Czechoslovak domestic politics and alignment with Nazi Germany greatly hampered the First Republic's ability to govern in the Sudeten regions and contributed to the apparent legitimacy of German claims to the region.

Bohemian Germans' increasingly overt disengagement from greater Czechoslovak society, culture, and politics, occuring in tandem with the rapid militarization and aggressive foreign policy rhetoric of Germany under Nazi rule, created irreparable political intercultural rifts within the country that manifested themselves within Czechoslovak political discourse (Kopeček, 2019). By the late 1930s, this discourse had become central to the national political climate, setting the groundwork for what was quickly becoming Czechoslovakia's (and thereby Czechia's) first political crisis relating to the presence of foreigners on Czech soil.

Though Czechoslovakia's German population existed in the region before the state gained its independence and was therefore technically not made up of migrants, Czech-residing Germans' deep linkages and perceived loyalties to foreign governments made them functional aliens (Kopeček, 2019). Most importantly for the purposes of this work, late interwar, wartime, and early post-war Czech anti-German-resident political discourse provides the first modern examples of the mobilization of Czech political discourse to securitize the presence of non-Czechs residing in Czechia.

The Munich agreement, concluded in September 1938 between Germany, France, Great Britain, and Italy, saw Europe's then-Great Powers agree on the German annexation of the Czechoslovak Sudeten region. The Czech government was not party to the agreement, and the violation of their territorial integrity by Germany provided the final push facilitating the complete demonization of ethnic Germans in Czech social and political discourse. Over the following years, which saw the total annexation of Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak political leaders alongside other prominent personalities in exile in both the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union began appearing on radio broadcasts, praising the bravery and grit of the Czech people, while bolstering a narrative of collective German responsibility for Nazi aggression and decrying the collaboration of Sudeten Germans with Nazi occupiers (Harrison, 2018). As the war progressed, the newly established Czechoslovak government in exile in London further escalated its rhetoric against Czech-residing Germans, seeking to impress on the Czech people that Sudeten (and all) Germans were not only traitors to the Czechoslovak state, but that none could be distinguished from Nazis and they therefore deserved to be completely and permanently removed from Czech lands (Harrison, 2018).

27 December 1941: "There will be no more German villages in the Czech settlement, no more German isles in the Czech sea, no more German Svitacy, no more Germany Znojomo, and the German villages in the Vyskov area and the Jindrichuv Hradec area and everywhere they are in our living space will disappear with finality" - Vladimír Klecanda (Koutek, 2014. p.19).

While then powerless to implement its policies, President Beneš' Czechoslovak government in exile followed up its statements with motions legalizing the seizure of German

and Hungarian (The Kingdom of Hungary was a member of the Axis Powers) property as well as the permanent expulsion of Germans and Hunagrians from Czechoslovakia (Koutek, 2014). These laws, known as the Beneš decrees, would be retroactively ratified by the Interim National Assembly in March, 1946, with the Potsdam Conference having already legalized the commencement of the expulsion of Germans from Czechia for January, 1946 (Glassheim, 2000). By the time these agreements were concluded, a grass-roots expulsion campaign was well underway, unofficially beginning in May of 1945, which saw several months of violent and unregulated action against German residents at the hands of Czech military, civilian, and militia groups, (Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí).

Unofficial expulsion actions continued throughout the autumn of 1945, with Czechoslovak leaders fueling and fully endorsing surging nationalist and anti-German sentiment within the country. Czech leaders' continually intensifying discourse reached its peak in autumn of that year, with President Edvard Benes's call for a "...final solution to the German question…" (Maguire, 2015. p.80). Though he was calling for the deportation, not the wholesale murder, of ethnic Germans, his choice of words and continued vindictive rhetoric undoubtedly contributed to the intensity of grassroots anti-German action across Czechoslovakia, which led to the deaths of tens of thousands (Glassheim, 2000).

It is logical that the traumatizing events of the Second World War and the brutality of the occupying German regime were major motivators behind Czech citizens' actions in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. However, I propose that the discursive process of the securitization of specific foreign groups residing in or attempting to occupy Czech lands spearheaded by political and social leaders, followed by the wholehearted adoption and reproduction of said discourse by the wider population, merits consideration. Furthermore, it is

worth noting that the sociopolitical climate of post-War Czechoslovakia firmly entrenched connections between Czech ethnicity, nationalism, and societal integrity in the public consciousness.

Czechia and the Warsaw Pact

The lasting impacts of anti-German discourse and sentiment, as well as the covariation of political discourse and public action in the Czech context were further demonstrated throughout the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Over twenty years after the cessation of hostilities in the Second World War, on the eve of the Soviet-led invasion, leaders in Moscow chose not to involve the East German Military in the operation, fearing that the presence of occupying German forces would galvanize Czech resistance ("NVA Troops Stop at the Czechoslovakian Border"). Though many Czechs demonstrated against the invasion and anti-Soviet sentiment pervaded much of Czech society, Czech political leaders feared repercussions for denouncing the occupation and did not flee the country en masse to speak freely from positions of exile, depriving them of opportunities to effectively undertake the discursive construction of ethnic Russians as dangerous aliens ("Gustav Husak", 2024). Regardless, many were quickly replaced by moderate, Soviet-compliant leaders led by Gustav Husak ("Gustav Husak", 2024).

The 'Normalization' period following the 1968 invasion was largely characterized by irregular Westward emigration from Czechoslovakia and inward migration from other Socialist states, with matters of immigration and the integration of foreigners being regarded as administrative issues. This utilitarian outlook and lack of public interest in immigration is reflected in both the Czechoslovak government's strategies and the immigration outcomes of the

period. Following the end of the Second World War, Czechoslovakia had experienced significant labour shortages (Seidlová, 2018). Population decline stemming from wartime deaths, the expulsion of Czech Germans, and Westward emigration after the 1948 establishment of the communist Czechoslovak Socialist Republic had shrunk the labour pool significantly (Seidlová, 2018). This problem was exacerbated by highly inefficient employment practices established under Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) rule and had become critical by the Normalization period (Seidlová, 2018).

With no prospects of fulfilling the highly-industrialized Republic's labour needs domestically, Czechoslovak parliamentarians began promoting the temporary immigration of workers, technical experts, and apprentices from other Soviet satellite and communist states (Seidlová, 2018). While these initiatives were somewhat successful in reducing the severity of Czech industrial labour shortages, with workers from as far as Poland, Cuba, and North Korea lending their productivity to the Czechoslovak industrial complex, the impact of this migration on Czech migration discourse, demographics, and general civil society at the time was limited (Seidlová, 2018). The temporary nature of most foreigners' stays and their intentional segregation from Czechoslovak society in small factory districts, which saw many workers housed in dormitories near their places of work, contributed to minimal interaction between Czechs and immigrant workers (Seidlová, 2018). The full potential of these migrants to contribute to Czech society would only be realized after the collapse of communist rule in Czechoslovakia, when Ukrainian, Polish, and Vietnamese nationals integrated en masse, playing a key role in industrial and entrepreneurial sectors of Czechia's new market economy (Seidlová, 2018).

Post-Socialist & Modern Czechia

The success of the Velvet Revolution of 1989 represented a fundamental change in Czech migration history. For the first time in living memory, Czech society became one characterized not by emigration, but by immigration. Following decades of limited and restricted immigration dominated by temporary labourers from other socialist nations, the early 1990s saw Czech attitudes toward immigration take on a distinctly positive and "laissez-faire" character (Barsa, 2004. p. 2). Over the next twenty five years, patterns of immigration into Czechia, and the impact and politicization of immigration, varied significantly, and can be best explained through its division into distinct periods.

The first, beginning immediately following the collapse of socialism and ending with the breakup of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (CSFR) in 1992, was characterized primarily by the return of Czechs from Western Europe as well as a spike in Slovak settlement in modern-day Czechia. 1992 saw the CSFR introduce its first 'Aliens Act', but this piece of legislation did little to manage or shape migration flows, and instead functioned to manage the registration of foreigners and legalize their persecution in cases of law-breaking (Barsa, 2004). This act characterized the continued status of immigration as a strictly administrative matter in the short-lived Republic.

The second period, lasting from approximately 1993 to 1997, saw the migration of returning Czechs and Slovaks into the nascent Czech Republic taper off, with economic immigration from former socialist allied nations increasing significantly (Barsa, 2004; Seidlová, 2018). By 1994, almost 20 percent of all foreign nationals in the Czech Republic were Poles,

with Slovak and Ukrainian migrants also consolidating their positions in the Czech economy (Seidlová, 2018). Formal government strategies for the integration of these communities into wider Czech society did not yet exist, but immigration-related discourse did begin to gain salience in Czech parliament as the young state continued on its path to European Union accession (Barsa, 2004).

The third period of post-socialist immigration into Czechia, lasting from approximately 1997 to the end of the decade, saw immigration stabilize as Eastern European migrants, an increasing number of whom were obtaining permanent residence permits, continued to dominate immigration flows (Barsa, 2004; Seidlová, 2018). As Czechia's rapprochement with Western Europe continued, the modernization of its migration-related policy instruments continued to evolve at a rapid pace, with conditions for the granting of temporary and permanent visas tightening significantly. This tightening was undertaken primarily to harmonize Czech and EU migration standards. It was also catalyzed, however, by domestic concerns regarding the role of migrants in the Republic's rising unemployment rate, which peaked at almost 9% in 1999 (Seidlová, 2018).

The fourth period of Czech immigration began with the dawn of the new millennium, which saw the birth of Czechia's modern immigration policy framework. 'Catch-all' asylum and general migration policies were formalized and official strategies for the assimilation of migrants into Czech society, most notably the Strategy for the Integration of Foreigners, were introduced with the objective of "...bringing the status of legally and long-term settled foreigners as close as possible to the legal status of citizens" (Barša, 2004. p. 3). Throughout early and mid-2000s, "immigration and integration issues [were] still, to a large extent, an administrative matter, and the actual debates [took] place outside normal political discourse and procedure" (Barša, 2004. p.

7). Though the government had pledged to "contribute to the humanitarian crisis in the world" as part of its official migration strategy, released in 2003, the number of asylum applications remained very low, with approval rates being among Europe's lowest (Barša, 2004. p. 1).

The global economic crisis of 2008 marked the beginning of the fifth and final stage of pre-2015 Czech migration discourse and outcomes. Economic contractions led Czech leaders to suspend the issuance of working visas to nationals of countries known for their low-skilled labour migration to Czechia, most notably Ukraine and Vietnam, demonstrating their preference for Czech and, to a lesser extent, EU labour (Seidlová, 2018). As will be discussed in the following section focusing on Czech migration policy, these measures were rolled back as the country's economy and unemployment rates recovered. As Czechia entered the 2010s, migration policy remained a relatively uncontentious issue. Thanks in part to its location at the centre of the European continent and its proximity to Germany, a major target for migrants entering the EU, Czechia remained relatively isolated from most irregular migration flows, focusing on educational and economic migration to benefit its economy (Barsa, 2004; Seidlová, 2018). While Czechia's general isolation from material 'on-the-ground' impacts of migration would remain through the coming 'Crisis', the rapid emergence of strong Czech socio-political discourse surrounding the mass entry of non-European migrants into the Schengen area ensured that the 'Crisis' rapidly became one of most salient issues on the Czech political agenda.

Beginning in the early months of 2015, hundreds of thousands of Middle Eastern and North African people began making their way northward into Europe, primarily via dangerous illegal crossings of the Mediterranean Sea (Spindler, 2015). Driven by the rapidly degrading security situation in the Middle East, characterized by violent conflict in Syria and Afghanistan, as well as the closure of Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt to asylum seekers, these people sought

security, stability, economic opportunity, and democracy within the borders of the European

Union (Norman, 2023). Though both the European Union and Schengen Area border states had

implemented a variety of unilateral and cooperative measures to process asylum applications, the

sheer volume of irregular arrivals and applications, representing the largest European migration

since the Second World War, quickly overwhelmed both FRONTEX[1] and border countries'

underfunded and inflexible border control systems (Perkowski, 2015). The Dublin III regulation,

which stipulated that the country in which migrants first arrived was responsible for examining

their asylum or protection claims, quickly proved impossible to effectively implement in the face

of overwhelming numbers. This resulted in calls for the redistribution of asylum seekers

throughout the European Union as well as the German suspension of the implementation of the

regulation in light of its overwhelmed immigration apparatus and its status as the intended final

destination of a great number of migrants (Zaun & Servant, 2021).

Czech political and popular responses to the influx of migrants into the Schengen area

became increasingly divisive and heated, with the majority of Czechs being opposed to accepting

any immigrants from conflict zones (Reuters, 2015). Similar to Poland and Slovakia, the Czech

Republic's relatively homogenous society, general aversion to Islam, and its history of

domination by other cultures contributed to the government's rejection of EU actions to more

evenly distribute asylum seekers amongst EU states (Reuters, 2015). While then-Prime Minister

Sobotka attempted to maintain a balanced approach, acknowledging the failings of Czechia and

the European Union to promote stability in conflict zones and effectively invest in effective

Schengen border control, then-President Zeman took an anti-migrant approach, evoking imagery

of invasion, terrorism, and the degradation of Czech values (Safdar, 2015).

---

[1] FRONTEX is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, an agency of the European Union.

Throughout the 'Crisis', migration remained one of the most salient and contentious issues in Czech politics. President Zeman's extreme anti-immigrant rhetoric mirrored that of Hungarian leader Victor Orban, who saw approximately 174,000 asylum seekers lodge asylum applications in 2015 (Bocskor, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2016). However, unlike his outspoken anti-migration contemporaries to the South, Zeman's Czech Republic saw very few asylum seekers. Furthermore, surveys of migrants detained for irregular entry into Czechia indicated that few planned to settle in the country, and were instead heading to Western Europe, seeking a more diverse population, greater economic opportunities, and higher asylum claimant approval rates (Jurečková, 2016).

Zeman's reaction to the 'Crisis' was mirrored by several prominent Czech media outlets, notably MF Dnes, which ran fear-mongering headlines discussing a coming "wave" of hundreds of thousands of migrants who would soon "roll over" Czechia (Jurečková, 2016). The president's role in constructing and reproducing this rhetoric, as well as those of other (assenting and dissenting) politicians, corporate and media actors, and members of civil society, will be further discussed in the analysis section of this work, and the specific policy changes enacted throughout the 'Crisis' will be unpacked in the section below. For the purposes of this exploration of Czech migration history, the most critical facts are as follows:

1. The total number of individuals granted asylum and subsidiary protection in 2015 remained under 500. The total increase in the refugee population of the country was negligible (See Fig. 1) ("Speech on the Migration Situation", 2016).

2. The majority of individuals granted asylum and subsidiary protection were not of Syrian or Middle Eastern origin, (Seidlova, 2018)

3. Throughout the Crisis, Czechia was one of the least impacted, both financially and demographically, by the influx of migrants into the Schengen Area (Dullien, 2016).

4. Czech political discourse surrounding the 'Crisis' did stem from grass-roots concerns over migration, but were not proportional to the objective difficulties faced by the state (as discussed in this paper's analysis).

As the dust settled on the largest European migration event since the Second World War, Czechia had received only a few thousand total registered migrants ('Cizinci Podle Státního Občanstvi a Pohlavï 31.12', 2015). Contributing to these low numbers was the country's general unattractiveness to Middle-Eastern migrants due to the lack of existing Middle-Eastern communities in the country (particularly in comparison to Germany), strong anti-migrant and anti-Islam political rhetoric, and the tolerance and strengthening of grass-roots anti-Muslim organizations such as IvCRn ("We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic").

Moving into the late 2010s, the importance of immigration policy as an electoral issue began to wane. With Czechia having seemingly dodged any major consequences of the 'Crisis' and the country's immigration statistics remaining stable, Czech migration practice was re-centred on economic, touristic, and educational migration, facilitating stricter and more complete enforcement of existing migration regulations (European Commission, 2023). Opposition to the acceptance of refugees, specifically Muslims, among the public and politicians alike remained clear, however.

As noted in Dušan Drbohlav and Kristýna Janurová's 2019 article, "Migration and Integration in Czechia: Policy Advances and the Hand Brake of Populism", trends in Czech and Slovak public and political perceptions of migrants mirrored those of Schengen Area border

states such as the Baltics, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy in the aftermath of the 'Crisis'. What differentiated the two former states, however, was their negligible exposure to tangible effects of migration. As of 2018, 928 total individuals held asylum status in Czechia. Of these, only 52 of which were from Syria, with Burmese (145), Belarussian (108), Russian (107), and Ukrainian (101) making up approximately half of all registered refugees in the country ("Number of Persons Enjoying Asylum Status as of 31.12.2018.").

As indicated by the statistics above, the most significant region of origin for individuals granted asylum in Czechia remained Eastern Europe throughout the 2010s, as it has throughout the state's post-independence history. The influx of Eastern Europeans was accelerated in the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, with the total population of Ukrainians growing from approximately 110,000 in 2016 to over 130,000 in 2018, making up approximately a third of the total foreign population in Czechia (Seidlová, 2018). Unlike the small number of Middle Eastern migrants in the country, the vast majority of Ukrainians entering and residing in the country remained economic migrants, many of whom were highly educated and were more readily integrated into Czech society (Seidlová, 2018).

Prior to the 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine, discourse surrounding Ukrainian migrants centred around their contributions to the Czech economy and remained generally positive. However, the change in the status of these migrants from economic assets to veritable asylum seekers overnight would, when combined with the sheer volume of Ukrainian immigrants entering the European Union, contribute to fundamental changes in the way in which they were viewed by policymakers and the public alike. The commencement of the invasion of Ukraine also marked a sea change in Czech policymakers' discursive framing of refugees. It reaffirmed that, while both Syrian migrants in 2015 and Ukrainian migrants in 2022 had legitimate bases on

which to claim asylum, the latter was not discursively constructed as a significant cultural or security threat to Czechia or the European Union.

The difference in Czech stances is readily apparent after a cursory examination of the country's 2022 migrants statistics. By July of 2022, Czechia had accepted over 390,000 Ukrainian migrants, granting it the historically uncharacteristic title of being the European union member with the highest number of Ukrainian asylum seekers per capita ("The Situation of Refugees from Ukraine", 2022). Though the presence of a large existing Ukrainian community in Czechia, the two nations' shared Slavic identities, and their post-socialist histories certainly played a significant role in drastically increasing the number of Ukrainian migrants who targeted Czechia as a destination country and reducing the number who targeted Germany, it is also clear that previous statements by leaders such as Andrej Babiš did not refer to refugees or migrants in general, but specifically to Muslim non-European migrants. In the months following the initial arrivals of Ukrainian refugees, anti-migrant rhetoric has emerged within both Czech politics and civil society, impacting migration outcomes, but said rhetoric has not come close to the vitriolic, nationalist, and anti-Islamic discourse that emerged during and after the 'Crisis' of 2015.

The impacts that these differences in discourse have had on the migration outcomes of Syrians and Ukrainians in Czechia is the primary focus of this thesis. Harnessing the historical context of the Czech nation and its relationship with foreigners and migration is necessary for this analysis to be completed in a meaningful way. Naturally, the impacts of discourse, as an independent variable, can only be analyzed when other factors are controlled for. For this reason, as well as to provide additional context, a comprehensive historical examination of Czech migration policy is needed.

Czech Migration Policy

Czech migration discourse and policy instruments must each be historically explored for a meaningful exploration of the covariation of Czech migration-related discourse and the migration outcomes of Ukrainians and Syrian migrants and refugees in Czechia to be conducted. The previous section provided economic, governmental, and social context for various changes in Czech migration policy throughout its history. Harnessing this historical base, the following section will explore the development of Czech migration policy since the Republic gained its independence in 1993, through 2023, discussing key pieces of legislation as well as their perceived effectiveness in controlling migration outcomes. As Czech national migration policy is co-constituted by wider European Union migration policy, developments in European migration policy after Czech accession to the Union will also be discussed.

Immediately following the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (CFSR) in 1993, the primary instrument of Czech migration policy remained Act No. 123/1992 "On Foreigners' Stay and Residence in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic", which replaced Act No. 68/1965 "On the Residence of Foreigners on the Territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic" on October 8th, 1992 ("Demographic Aspects of the Foreigner's Life", 2014). As previously stated, this legislation did not constitute a comprehensive, strategic migration and integration strategy, but functioned simply to clarify and legalize the conditions and procedures for the entry, residence, and exit of foreigners into and out of the CFSR (excluding those who had applied for or had been granted refugee status) (Act No. 123/1992). Another early piece of Czech migration law can be found in the "Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms as

a Part of the Constitutional Order of the Czech Republic." (Act No. 2/1993). It is the first

post-independence Czech document to mention the granting of asylum, stating that the country

"...shall grant asylum to aliens who are being persecuted for the assertion of their political rights

and freedoms. Asylum may be denied to a person who has acted contrary to fundamental human

rights and freedoms" ("Resolution of the Presidium", 1998, p. 13). These early documents did

not discriminate between foreigners of different nationalities, contributing to the characterization

of 1990s Czechoslovak/Czech migration policy as 'laissez-faire' (Barsa, 2004). Despite the

relative ease of access to the country on a temporary basis enjoyed by foreigners during this

time, it is worth noting that streamlined pathways towards the granting of permanent residency

and citizenship did not yet exist, resulting in low numbers of citizenships being granted to

immigrants (Barsa, 2004).

The Czech government's hands-off approach changed abruptly upon the entry into force

of Act No. 326/1999, "On the Residence of Foreigners on the Territory of the Czech Republic"

('Aliens Act'), on January 1st, 2000. The Act saw the introduction of the first meaningful

restrictions on immigration into the Czech Republic, aimed primarily at aligning Czech

migration policy with the European Union's call for a 'comprehensive approach to migration'

(Stojanov, Bureš, & Duží, 2017., p.1). The end of the decade also saw the establishment of

Czechia's first formalized and modernized documents relating to the integration of migrants as

well as the conditions under which individuals could be granted asylum (Barsa, 2004). In 1998,

the Czech Ministry of the Interior established the Commission for the Integration of Foreigners

and Community Relations, which published the "Elaborated Principles of the Strategy for the

Integration of Foreigners" in 1999 and the "Strategy for the Integration of Foreigners" in 2000

(Barsa, 2004). The implementation of these strategies was emblematic of a gradual but

meaningful progression of the Czech government's attitude towards foreigners. With the stated goal of its integration policy being "...bringing the status of legally and long-term settled foreigners as close as possible to the legal status of citizens", Czech policymakers effectively acknowledged that foreigners can and should be able to contribute to and benefit from Czech society on the same level as citizens (Barsa, 2004, p.3). This shift was also evident in the Asylum Act of 1999 (Act No. 325/1999). Aside from laying out Czechia's first complete legal framework for the processing and granting of asylum status, the Act also established successful applicants' access to integration, housing, and healthcare programs (Act No. 325/1999).

The acts mentioned above brought Czechia's regular and irregular migration policies much closer to those of the European Union. Of particular salience for Czechia's accession were its policies relating to irregular migration. Under the Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force in May, 1999, matters of regular migration policy of European Union states remained under national control (Bill, 1997). However, irregular migration became a community matter, with the European Council stating its intention to create the 'Common European Asylum System', detailed in the Tampere Council Conclusions of 1999, and to harmonize external border controls (Tampere European Council, 1999). This system, while partially successful, would become a significant source of contention in both Czech and European politics in the context of significant future migration events, and will be discussed in detail in this paper's analysis of the 2015 'Migration Crisis'.

In January of 2003, as Czechia prepared for its 2004 accession to the European Union, the federal government approved its first comprehensive strategy for directing the state's present and future migration policy. Concisely summarized in the 'Czech Government's Migration Policy Principles' (2023), this strategy remains one of the central steering documents of

contemporary Czech migration policy. Emphasizing the importance of international cooperation, collaboration with local administrative and non-government organizations, and addressing humanitarian crises, the document is representative of Czech policymakers' acceptance of modern, proactive, Europe-facing migration approaches. The principles, as quoted directly from the Czech Ministry of the Interior website, are as follows:

1) With regard to international obligations which are to arise from the EU membership, the Czech Republic consistently fosters government control in the field of migration.

2) The country's migration policy is based on the coordinated approach of all state administration bodies and local governments and institutions and is promoted by other entities dealing with immigration.

3) The country's migration policy is aimed at eliminating all forms of illegal immigration and other illicit activities by means of measures taken on the basis of international cooperation as well as measures adopted at the national level.

4) The country's migration policy does not hinder legal migration and supports those forms of immigration that are beneficial to the country and society in the long term.

5) The implementation of the country's migration policy is conditional upon the mass involvement of non-governmental and other organizations of the civic society.

6) The Czech Republic is involved in global and European communities' efforts aimed at coping with migration-related consequences of humanitarian crises and eliminating the reasons for such phenomena. ("The Czech Government's Migration Policy Principles", 2023).

Through the mid 2000s, these policies remained relatively uncontroversial, with Czech policymakers continuing to focus on 'beneficial' immigration through the 'Selection of Qualified Workers' program, which offered accelerated permanent residence status to skilled workers. Czech EU accession also saw the Republic's first meaningful influx of Western Europeans (Seidlová, 2018). Attracted by falling unemployment rates, growing per-capita income, and the country's favourable tax situation, and relatively unobstructed after the Czech implementation of the Schengen Agreement in 2007, the number of registered foreigners on permanent or long-term stay visas increased from approximately 200,000 to 440,000 annually between 2000 and 2008 (Seidlová, 2018). Czechia's entry into the Schengen area constituted a fundamental alteration in its border policy, and while official border controls would be abolished, Czech policymakers sought to maintain data-gathering and risk-management capabilities. To meet these needs, the Analytical Centre for Protection of State Borders and Migration was created in September 2007 (European Migration Network, 2022). Coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, the Centre serves to monitor the flow of foreigners into Czech territory, evaluate security risks relating to migration and border protection, and to put forward strategic recommendations pertaining to border policy. While this Centre served to collect valuable data from its inception, its role in providing strategic recommendations would not develop fully until the 2010s.

As the Czech economy faced its first major slowdown since the turn of the century as a result of the 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis, the federal government took measures to reduce immigration volumes to protect the Czech labour market (Seidlová, 2018). As previously mentioned, Czech authorities specifically targeted citizens of states known for their low-skilled and low-wage roles in the Czech economy, suspending the issuance of working visas to Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Mongolian nationals. Furthermore, with the hope of reducing illegal

stays of foreigners who had lost their jobs and asylum seekers whose claims had been rejected, Czech authorities promoted the 'Voluntary Returns' programme, launched in December 2007 in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Seidlová, 2018). The programme offered financial and administrative assistance to facilitate immigrants' returns to their countries of origin. Overall, the programme was not particularly successful, with only approximately 2000 mostly Mongolian nationals taking advantage (Seidlová, 2018).

As the Financial Crisis waned and the total number of permanently-residing and long-term-visa-holding foreigners continued to steadily climb, Czech migration policy continued to evolve, modernize, and further integrate with that of the European Union as a whole. The Czech signing of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 represents the most significant action taken to this end. Under the treaty, matters of regular and irregular migration came under the EU's 'ordinary legislative procedure' with qualified majority voting on legal migration legislation ("Treaty of Lisbon", 2007). The European Court of Justice gained full jurisdiction over matters of migration and asylum, and the European Council gained the power to unilaterally adopt provisional measures to rapidly respond to migration crises ("Treaty of Lisbon", 2007). The Treaty recognized the shared responsibility of both EU institutions and member states in the governance and management of migration and emphasized the agency retained by states in determining the number of visas they choose to issue.

The Lisbon Treaty was soon followed by the EU's updated 'Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM)', which, upon its adoption in 2011, was dubbed the European Union's "overarching framework of…external migration policy" (Migration and Home Affairs, 2024a). Created with the goal of further embedding migration governance into the Union's legislative framework, GAMM sought primarily to strengthen the European Union's external

migration policy through the development of open dialogue and partnerships with both migrant origin states and transit states outside of the Schengen Area (Global Approach, 2024). Recognizing the critical role of third-country nationals in maintaining EU economic competitiveness, GAMM did not focus on achieving specific quantitative migration outcomes, but instead sought to modernize and humanize EU migration policy by encouraging increased collaboration with external partners and between EU states along the Schengen Area Border (Global Approach, 2024). It saw renewed attention placed on the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX) (now known as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency) as well as the nascent European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), both of which would play a central role in the coming 'Crisis'.

Immediately preceding the onset of the 'Crisis', Czech migration policy could be characterized as relatively stable, EU-compliant, and uncontentious. Criticized by some for its generally reactionary, trailing-edge nature and slow deployment of comprehensive, systematic approaches to migration, key pieces of Czech migration-related law continued to receive regular updates to respond to the demands of Czechia's and Europe's modern economy, the domestic labour market, and challenges relating to irregular migration. Notable strides in 2014 included an amendment of the Act on Czech Citizenship allowing for dual citizenship and an amendment to the Aliens Act introducing mandatory one-day adaptation and integration courses for newly arrived migrants, both of which were considered to be generally forward-thinking (Pathways to Citizenship, 2019).

Though, as previously discussed, the Czech Republic would be, compared to many larger and Southern European states, shielded from a material perspective from the looming 'Crisis', the discursive, legislative, and socio-political impacts it would have on Czech society

were disproportionately significant. A large number of substantive changes to the Czech government's migration practices would occur in rapid succession over the course of 2015, most of which were not introductions or amendments to critical pieces of migration legislation. The majority of changes consisted of stop-gap projects, procedures, teams, and initiatives aimed at curbing irregular migration flows, streamlining asylum and immigration procedures, and increasing the administrative and legal capabilities of the Ministry of the Interior and other concerned government bodies. However, substantive changes to Czechia's legal migration framework also occurred.

As the flow of migrants into the Schengen Area began to spike in early 2015, the Czech Analytical Centre for Protection of State Borders and Migration (ANACEN), originally established in 2007 as part of the Asylum and Migration Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior, began acting as the Czech migration apparatus' coordinating body, acting both as a central hub for interministerial information exchanges and as strategic, security, and operational advisory body (European Migration Network, 2022). The Centre's role contributed to the rapid creation of Czechia's new migration policy strategy document, officially adopted in July of 2015, which focused squarely on addressing the 'Crisis'. Covering standard matters of regular and irregular migration, asylum, integration, returns, and free movement within the European Union, the document identifies Czech national security as the "leading element" of the strategy (Seidlová, 2018).

One of the first ways in which this renewed security focus manifested was the initiation of enhanced screenings at the Austrian border in response to the state's high number of asylum seekers (Lazarová, 2015). Czech authorities stopped short of reintroducing border control, deeming the threat to internal security to be insufficient for such drastic action. As the year

progressed, concern for growth in the number of individuals attempting to enter the country with forged travel documents was noted. To address these attempted entries, which spiked by over 100% in 2015, the appropriately-named National Centre for Checking Documents was established in January of 2016 under the Directorate of Alien Police Service (European Migration Network, 2015).

Though the total number of migrants entering Czechia remained quite low, with the number intending to file asylum applications in the country being even lower, the number of foreigners detained in accordance with the EU's Dublin II Regulations had increased considerably (Stojanov, Bureš, & Duží, 2017). To address this, a new migrant detention facility was opened in the village of Drahonice and resources for the Czech International Protection Unit were increased (European Migration Network, 2015). To further facilitate the effective processing of asylum claimants as well as regular and irregular migrants in the rapidly evolving European migration climate, Czech policymakers passed amendments on both Act No 325/1999 on Asylum and Act No 326/1999 On Residence of Foreign Nationals in the Czech Republic (Aliens Act), which came into force in December of 2015 (European Migration Network, 2015).

Several changes introduced in these amendments were designed to reduce waiting times and streamline asylum application processing. Notable changes included the simplification of the international protection application form, the introduction of time limits on court decisions regarding appeals against Dublin Regulation transfer decisions, and the distribution of a new handbook regarding the treatment of minor applicants to front-line offices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (European Migration Network, 2015). Limitations on the suspensive effects of appeals and streamlined provisions regarding assisted voluntary returns were also introduced, further harmonizing Czech practices with evolving EU norms. The amendments saw

the implementation of new "Asylum Procedure" and "Reception Conditions" (European Migration Network, 2015).

Despite the polarizing and generally negative attitudes toward the victims of the 'Migration Crisis' in Czech political and public discourse in 2015, both pro- and anti-migration leaders generally agreed that resources should be dedicated to improving living conditions in migrant countries of origin, both as a humanitarian measure and as a means of reducing the flow of migrants into the European Union. The most significant measure taken to this end was the establishment of the Programme for Assistance to Refugees in Regions of Origin and for Prevention of Migration Flows, which utilized its 2015 budget of 100 million Czech crowns to fund both UNHCR programmes in Jordan and Iraq and European Regional Development Protection Programmes (RDPP) in Middle Eastern and North African countries of origin (European Migration Network, 2015). Further Czech contributions to humanitarian efforts included the contribution of experts to European Union Agency for Asylum (EASO) field teams and the continued implementation of the Programme of Humanitarian Evacuations of Inhabitants with Health Issues (MEDEVAC), originally established in 1993 (European Migration Network, 2015). The latter programme involved the evacuation of critically ill patients from third countries to Czechia and, beginning in 2015, the facilitation of educational stays of third country doctors in Czechia for training purposes (European Migration Network, 2015).

Broadly speaking, changes in Czech migration practice and policy in 2015 can be characterized as practical, if not somewhat conservative. Despite rampant anti-migrant rhetoric and reports of poor conditions in detention and reception facilities, Czech policymakers' and administrators' concrete actions to both address the 'Crisis' at an international level and improve processing times and outcomes domestically should be recognized (Stojanov et al., 2015).

Furthermore, it should be noted that Czech economic migration initiatives, specifically those

aimed at attracting Ukrainians and other Eastern European workers, continued relatively

unabated, with two programmes, aimed at attracting highly qualified and lesser qualified

Ukrainians, launched in November 2015 and August 2016 respectively (European Migration

Network, 2015). The duality of prevalent populist anti-migrant rhetoric in public and political

discourse, specifically the evocation of the 'economic refugee' by anti-refugee pundits and

ongoing efforts to attract skilled workers from Eastern European nations in conflict, is central to

this paper's analysis and will become clearer upon an examination of Ukrainian migration in

2022.

The years between the 'Crisis' of 2015 and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine

represented a period of consolidation in Czech migration practice and policy making. Domestic

Czech migration and security institutions were praised by populist leaders for their apparent

successes in preventing illegal stays in and transit through Czechia. Given the continued erosion

of Czech citizens' and politicians' faith in the European Union's ability to effectively safeguard

their nation's territorial and societal integrity, increased investment in Czech migration-related

policy infrastructure represented both an honest effort to influence migration outcomes and a

strategic political move aimed at placating a concerned populace.

A policy change characteristic of this period was the amendment of the 'Aliens Act' in

2017. The Amendment aims to restrict the presence of certain categories of non-EU foreign

workers in the Czech labour market by empowering the Interior Ministry to cease resident permit

processing in response to a wide variety of transgressions and barring businesses known to have

illegally hired foreign workers from hiring any foreign staff (European Commission, 2017). The

bill also included provisions to ease administrative burdens on certain approved workers by

increasing their length of stay to six months and saw the introduction of a new category of permit for business people whose "...activities represent a major investment in the country" (European Commission, 2017).

From 2015 to 2022, several Czech initiatives to further tailor the flow of workers into the country to the specific needs of the Czech labour market were introduced. At first glance, the mere existence of such programmes, particularly those aimed at relatively unspecialised non-EU workers, appears to contradict Czech populist and protectionist political discourses. The disparity between Czech political/societal discourse and practical policy implementation is in part the result of gaps between the popular and headline-friendly messages pushed by leaders and the actual needs of the state's economy (Stojanov et al., 2021). It also stems from the political and administrative strength of the Czech Ministry of the Interior as an institution, and its focus on long-term stability and security (Stojanov et al., 2021). Furthermore, it must be noted that while increasing funding and efforts were channeled into the provision and enhancement of integration programmes for permanent resident permit holders, several Czech labour attraction initiatives were introduced with the goal of attracting strictly temporary foreign workers, often for several short stays interrupted by periods of returns to the workers' home countries (Stojanov et al., 2021).

The prioritization of flexible, responsive, and non-permanent labour-focused migration in Czechia, specifically in the late 2010s, served to both keep permanent immigration numbers from non-EU countries at a manageable level and allow corporations to leverage 'circular migration' to efficiently and cost-effectively fill their labour requirements without being burdened by lengthy permanent resident application processes and hiring procedures. This type of migration saw Eastern European migrants, most notably Ukrainians, consolidate their unique

and important positions in the Czech labour market, taking advantage of comparatively high salaries to send remittances to their families in their countries of origin. After decreasing from almost 119,000 to 105,000 between 2011 and 2013, the number of Ukrainians residing in Czechia rose to over 131,000 in 2018. Though it is certain that increasing political instability and the Russian Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 pushed increasing numbers of Ukrainians to seek work abroad in the late 2010s, the role of Czech migration policy and the history of Ukrainian presence in Czechia should not be understated.

The February 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine effectively marked the beginning of the next "wave" of migration into the European Union. As fleeing Ukrainians streamed over Polish and Slovak borders into the European Union, Czech political leaders acted not with protectionist alarm, as they had in 2015, but with calls for solidarity and support for the Ukrainian people in their struggle against Russia. Within days of the Invasion's launch, Prime Minister Fiala's new government approved a temporary three-bill package, known as "Lex Ukraine", to bolster the state's ability to effectively admit and process incoming migrants. Entering into force on March 21, 2022 with an expiration date of August 31 of the same year, the package greatly eased the criteria for Ukraininans attempting to obtain "Temporary Protection" status and introduced the 'Special Long-Term Visa for Ukrainian Citizens" (hereafter referred to as the Special Visa), which, when granted on arrival, permitted Ukrainian citizens with no familial or business connections within Czechia to gain access to the Czech Republic on a long-term basis. Ukrainians with existing contacts were permitted 90-day visa-free stays, being instructed to file applications for the Special Visa. In addition to granting Ukrainians straightforward access to Czech territory, the Special Visa granted rapid access to the Czech labour market (upon approval of work permit following establishment of employment contract, giving access equivalent to that

of a permanent resident), social benefits relating to living costs, and health insurance (through automatic enrolment).

Though the Czech political and administrative machines immediately focused their might on the plight of Ukrainians at the war's onset, similarly to the 'Migration Crisis' of 2015, the administrative and humanitarian capacities of major target and transit countries for migrants were swamped within days. The capacity of Czechia to quickly and effectively process incoming migrants was hindered greatly by the weakening and discrediting of refugee and migration-oriented non-governmental organizations during the 2015 crisis. Despite this, the popular support for Ukrainian migrants at local and national levels, catalyzed by a shared history of subjugation at the hands of Moscow, as well as the presence of a large existing community of Ukrainians living in Czechia, lead to integration efforts and calls for improvements to government programmes, which resulted in Czechia's accommodation of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian migrants.

The earliest domestic administrative actions undertaken by Czech authorities in response to the anticipated arrival of Ukrainian war refugees predated slightly the onset of the Invasion itself. On the 23rd of Feburary, 2022, the Refugee Facility Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (RFA MOI) launched a campaign soliciting offers of temporary accommodation from Czech households. Other key actions undertaken by the RFA MOI in early Spring included the establishment of Regional Assistance Centres for Ukraine (RACFU) and significant expansions in the processing and accommodation capacities of a wide variety of MOI facilities. Throughout the early months of the War, Interior Minister Vít Rakušan emphasized the importance of distributing arriving refugees as evenly across the country as possible to maximize the provision of services to new arrivals and minimize disruptions in local communities. Despite his efforts,

large numbers of refugees unsurprisingly accumulated in border areas and in Prague, which saw

over 117,000 people visit its RACFU centre (Annual Report, 2023).

Given the scarcity of services and accommodation for new arrivals in regions most

heavily populated by refugees, specific policy action was undertaken to accommodate

particularly vulnerable sub-groups, most notably minors, who were granted priority access to

housing, social services, and education, as well as Ukrainian Roma. Czech Government

Resolution 284/2022 specifically allocated accommodation facilities at Vyšní Lhota and

Běla-Jezová for Ukrainian Roma refugees, whose large family structures, very low literacy rates,

points of origin in isolated locations, and vulnerability to discrimination by both Czechs and

Ukrainians contributed to their 'othering' among Czechia's rapidly growing refugee population.

Government action to dedicate services and spaces specifically to Roma refugees was further

necessitated by the hostility of certain high-profile Czech political leaders, most notably Miloš

Zeman, and the Czech general public toward them, which manifested in greatly reduced offers

for services and accommodation. In total, just under 5,000 Ukrainian Roma refugees were

assisted by the RFA MOI.

By autumn of 2022, facilities managed by the Ministry of the Interior had greatly

increased their capacities and expertise in processing and assisting large numbers of arrivals.

This refinement, combined with falling numbers of Ukrainian arrivals, permitted a shift in focus

from the registration and support of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing war, to the

addressing of unprecedented irregular migration flows into the country. As previously discussed,

total flows of irregular Syrian migrants into Czechia during the 2015 'Crisis' were minimal.

2022, however, saw the interception of Syians without visas or residency permits in the country

increase multiple times over, with over 1450 of approximately 2670 total detained foreigners in

2022 being Syrian nationals. The influx of detained foreigners into the care of the MOI's Facilities for the Detention of Foreigners was such that previously closed accommodation centres were reopened and remained at critical capacity levels until September 2022 when two new registration centres were established by Czech police in Břeclav and Holešov (Annual Report, 2023).

After its initial introduction, the 'Lex Ukraine' package underwent several amendments, which generally served to streamline and raise criteria for those seeking international protection as the new arrivals decreased and the prioritization of rapid registration and admittance gave way to a more measured, long-term oriented approach. The first amendment to the Bill saw the disqualification for international protection of individuals submitting similar applications in other EU countries, the introduction of stricter accommodation requirements, qualification conditions for humanitarian allowances for registered refugees, and the right of the government to deny visas and residence permits to individuals who endangered Czechia's "foreign policy interest". The latter policy change primarily impacted Russian and Belarussian citizens (European Commission, 2023). Subsequent amendments to 'Lex Ukraine' continued to tighten requirements for refugee access to emergency benefits and government-funded housing, but also provided streamlined registration and funding services to private citizens providing accommodation to persons with temporary protection status. They allowed for the extension of temporary protection status for qualifying Ukrainians (currently until March, 2025), continued to streamline highly-skilled Ukrainians' access to the Czech labour market, and improved their access to emergency healthcare services (European Commission, 2023). The most recent amendment at the time of writing, signed by President Pavel in December 2023, has introduced a scheme to provide one-time financial assistance to Ukrainians with less than 90 days of remaining

temporary protection who intend to return to Ukraine (European Commission, 2023). This latest

amendment represents the current status quo in Czech migration policy, and for the purposes of

this work, the final stage of Czech migration policy in relation to both the 'Crisis' of 2015 and

the 2022 to present Ukrainian migration surge into Czechia.

Methodology

This work employs a mixed methods approach, featuring both a critical longitudinal discourse analysis of Czech political discourse and a longitudinal quantitative analysis of migration outcomes. The following section intends to both provide a rationale for this methodology and give a detailed explanation of its execution. In the words of T. Van Dijk (2001), one of the most notable contributors to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the approach allows for the effective study of "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (p. 352). The general focus of works employing CDA to interpret social and political phenomena, as well as the frequent pairing of the approach with other analytical approaches in multidisciplinary studies, makes it an optimal approach for this analysis. For the purposes of this work, the following key assumptions of CDA must be taken into account.

- The effective critical analysis of discourse is highly context-sensitive and must build upon a robust understanding of historical sociopolitical factors at play. "All discourses are historical and can therefore only be understood with reference to their context" (Bushra Ni Ma, 2013; Meyer, 2001., p. 2).

- CDA is an interpretive or hermeneutic process, and is not well-equipped to provide causal explanations for the phenomena under study (Meyer, 2001).

- CDA is well suited to interdisciplinary approaches and mixed methods studies which allow for the investigation, interpretation, and description of the texts and phenomena under study from a variety of disciplinary angles (Meyer, 2001).

The specific analytical strengths of Critical Discourse Analysis have been harnessed to great effect for the purposes of this analysis. Firstly, CDA is useful for highlighting the ways in which individuals in powerful social groups obtain and maintain relatively exclusive access to and control over certain types of discourse, as well as their control over if, when, and in what context specific topics are discussed. This perspective can allow for clear explorations of the ways in which individuals can employ discursive strategies to forward specific interests (Van Dijk, 2001). Secondly, CDA approaches privilege ideology as critical for the establishment and maintenance of hierarchic relations. This element of the approach is particularly useful for the analysis of political discourses, shedding contextual light on the differing approaches, perspectives, and produced speech acts of prominent sources of discourse across the Czech political spectrum (Wodak, 2001).

Though I believe that CDA, combined with this work's multi-faceted approach, is an optimal choice for the subjects at hand, critical analyses are not without drawbacks which must be discussed and mitigated. The first and most readily apparent drawback of operationalizing critical approaches is that they are not well-suited to providing causal or empirical linkages between observed phenomena, limiting the conclusions of critical works to researchers' methodology-based interpretations of the subject matter. For the purposes of this work, this characteristic of CDA does not constitute a significant issue, as finding and proving a definite causal link between the speech acts of Czech politicians and quantitative migration outcomes is not feasible with any approach. The second drawback presented by CDA is that its employment is, to a certain degree, subjective. Variations in the interpretation of discourse among researchers are inescapable, ultimately being influenced by the biases and perspectives of the specific researcher. Though this severely limits the replicability of Critical Discourse Analyses, it does

not impact the fulfillment of their primary purpose: contextualize and critically dissect the creation, maintenance, and control of discursive structures and their relationships with political and civil society.

In this work, I have sought to mitigate the subjectivity inherent in CDA analyses through the process by which the discourse samples under study have been selected and preliminarily coded. For each longitudinal period of study, standard Google searches of the terms "Syrians", "Syřané", "Ukrainians", and "Ukrajinci" have been conducted with Google's location services enabled. All searches were conducted from Prague. The headlines and opening paragraphs of search results have been reviewed to eliminate irrelevant sources. Those containing direct quotations of migration-related political discourse stemming from interviews (and summaries of interviews) with Czech politicians, political and ministerial press releases, transcriptions of official government proceedings, and political campaign media have been retained for inclusion in the study.

The body of discourse gathered through this method has then been mapped through the identification of specific coded themes stemming from key terms and phrases. In an effort to further mitigate subjectivity in the initial coding process, OpenAI's ChatGPT program has been harnessed to identify said themes before manual review, being specifically asked to "Identify migration-related keywords and phrases in this text". The effectiveness of ChatGPT in identifying general keywords and basic discursive themes has been shown in recent papers such as Niall Curry, Paul Baker, and Gavin Brookes' work *Generative AI For Corpus Approaches to Discourse Studies* (2024). While the authors note that discursive categories identified by ChatGPT can be somewhat generic, with human verification and engagement with the data remaining necessary, they note that it generally performs well in delivering coherent and

contextually relevant keywords. Yaxin Fan, Feng Jiang, Peifeng Li, and Haizhou Li's *Uncovering the Potential of ChatGPT for Discourse Analysis in Dialogue* (2024) shares similar findings. Noting the limitations of ChatGPT in the identification of topics in detailed domain-specific discourse, the authors nonetheless note that the AI was proficient in identifying topics in general discourse (Fan, Jeng, & Li., 2024). For the purposes of this study, ChatGPT has been successful in identifying dominant migration-related themes in the body of discourse provided, drawing attention to macro-level trends in the data and guiding later manual reviews of the source material.

The data-gathering process for this work was concluded once the inclusion of additional data did not yield new themes or keywords as identified by ChatGPT or through manual review, or in the case of specific longitudinal periods where less relevant discourse samples exist, no more relevant data could be uncovered using the search technique described above. While it is certain that this method does not allow for a comprehensive analysis of migration-related Czech political discourse, such analyses are simply not feasible, and the consistency of the application of the method across the longitudinal periods under study will allow for consistency within this work.

In the analysis portion of this work, alongside the application of CDA, the Copenhagen School's interpretation of processes of securitization is employed. As defined by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, securitization is a speech act "...through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat (Buzan & Wæver, 2003., p.491). As described by Holger Stritzel in *Towards a Theory of Securitization*, the Copenhagen School's conceptualization of securitization relies on two

primary concepts. The first is the existence of three primary objects of analysis: the speech act itself, the securitizing actor, and the audience. The second is the existence of conditions that influence the success of the securitization process (Stritzel, 2007). In the context of this analysis, the Copenhagen School's approach is employed as a lens through which the construction of intersubjective understandings of particular subjects and processes as threats by speech acts can be analyzed. Furthermore, is harnessed to draw attention to the differentiated roles of speech acts, securitizing actors, and audiences.

Quantitative Analysis

As previously defined, for the purposes of this work, migration outcomes include applications, grants, and denials of residence permits, asylum status, and subsidiary protection status, criminal convictions among foreigners, administrative expulsions among foreigners, detections of irregular entry and residence among foreigners, and gender based differences in these outcomes. Though these metrics are by no means a comprehensive measure of the successes, failures, challenges, and makeup of the the people groups under study in the context of their stays and attempted stays in Czechia, their measurement and analysis over specific longitudinal periods can provide meaningful insights into macro-level trends in their arrival, departure, presence, and acceptance in Czech society. Preliminary research for this paper indicated that the above-mentioned migration-related metrics are commonly used to measure states' migration policy outcomes by the International Organization for Migration, the Czech Statistical Office, and various international non-governmental organizations and think-tanks associated with migration advocacy.

The primary most significant drawback associated with this work's quantitative analysis is that reliable quantitative migration data is generally published by states and international organizations on an annual basis. For the purposes of this work, this necessitates that, while qualitative data is separated into semi-annual periods, quantitative data is separated into annual periods. This drawback is mitigated by multiple aspects of this work's design. Firstly, as the goal of the work is to observe general covarations in qualitative and quantitative migration indicators and not to find and prove a causal connection, annual statistics provide sufficient evidence for analysis. Secondly, even within semi-annual periods, migration flows during the 'Crisis' and following the Russian invasion of Ukraine have not been uniform within six month periods. Significant background research on the migration events under study for this paper, as well changes in discourse taking time to react to and reflect quantitative migration outcomes, minimize the impact of the lack of semi-annual quantitative data on this work's analysis.

Comparative Analysis

The insights gained through the independent quantitative analysis and critical discourse analysis of Syrian and Ukrainian migration-related discourse and outcomes are greatly enhanced through their comparative analysis. It is through this analysis that the observation of potential covariations between shifts in migration-related discourse and quantitative migration outcomes for the two people-groups under study, the stated purpose of this work, takes place. The comparative analysis in itself employs a very basic methodology. Harnessing the findings of the two completed analyses, it compares and contrasts the observed trends of each, probing the ways in which they may diverge or covary, and proposing further discussion of the complex connections between migration-related discourse and outcomes.

Data

Qualitative Analysis

   To effectively analyse longitudinal changes in Czech migration-related discourse pertaining to Syrians and Ukrainians, the periods under study have been divided into the longitudinal sections identified below, with the analysis of Syrian-related migration discourse and quantitative migration outcomes beginning at the onset of the 'Migration Crisis' of 2015 and the analysis of Ukrainians discourse and migration outcomes beginning at the onset of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Time Period	Migrant Nationality Under Study
01.01.2015 - 30.06.2015	Syrian
01.07.2015 - 31.12.2015	Syrian
01.01.2016 - 30.06.2016	Syrian
01.07.2016 - 31.12.2016	Syrian
01.01.2022 - 30.06.2022	Syrian & Ukrainian
01.07.2022 - 31.12.2022	Syrian & Ukrainian
01.01.2023 - 30.06..2023[2]	Syrian & Ukrainian
01.07.2023 - 31.12.2023	Syrian & Ukrainian

   2015 was chosen as the starting point for the analysis of Syrian discourse and migration outcomes as, prior to the 'Crisis', the presence of political discourse relating to Syrian migration in Czechia was negligible. The final period of analysis, consisting of the latter half of 2023, was

---

[2] Only qualitative data is included for the 01.01.2023 - 30.06.2023 and 01.07.2023 - 31.12.2023 periods of study due to the lack of availability of official published quantitative statistical data.

chosen as it represents the most recent available qualitative data, and can provide a retrospective overview of the evolution of migration-related political discourse and allows for conjecture regarding its future change. The lack of availability of the most recent quantitative data has necessitated that the period under study for the qualitative and quantitative components of this work do not match, with the final period of analysis for quantitative data being 2022. However, I feel that the inclusion of qualitative data from 2023 remains valuable in the context of the drastic changes in quantitative migration outcomes in 2022.

A total of 73 discourse samples have been collected for inclusion in this study[3]. During the analysis of the data, a total of 53 and 44 themes were recorded in Syrian-related and Ukrainian-related bodies of discourse respectively, with overlap between these themes bringing the total number of unique themes to 77. A total of 377 instances of the presence of these themes were recorded in the body of discourse studied.

Time Period	Discourse Samples (Syrians)	Discourse Samples (Ukrainians)
01.01.2015 - 30.06.2015	4	0
01.07.2015 - 31.12.2015	15	0
01.01.2016 - 30.06.2016	10	0
01.07.2016 - 31.12.2016	10	0
01.01.2022 - 30.06.2022	2	12
01.07.2022 - 31.12.2022	4	4
01.01.2023- 30.06.2023	2	6
01.07.2023 - 31.12.2023	2	7

[3] A full list of discourse samples can be found in Appendix 1. Note that five samples have been marked as Syrian and Ukrainian discourse samples. The total number of discourse samples included is 73, but the total number listed, when accounting for the four samples used to analyse both groups, is 78.

Totals	49	29

Time Period	Total Themes Identified (Syrians)	Total Themes Identified (Ukrainians)
01.01.2015 - 30.06.2015	44	0
01.07.2015 - 31.12.2015	59	0
01.01.2016 - 30.06.2016	85	0
01.07.2016 - 31.12.2016	61	0
01.01.2022 - 30.06.2022	4	50
01.07.2022 - 31.12.2022	16	9
01.01.2023- 30.06.2023	7	10
01.07.2023 - 31.12.2023	13	19
Totals Themes Identified	289	88
Total Unique Themes	53	44

For each longitudinal period for both Syrian and Ukrainian-related discourses, the most prominent coded themes in the data, determined by the frequency of their inclusion in the studied discourse, were identified. During periods with fewer examples of relevant discourse for the concerned people group, fewer primary themes were identified. The most prominent themes for each category of discourse over each period of study are as follows.

Time Period	Primary Themes Identified (Syrians)	Total Themes Identified (Ukrainians)
01.01.2015 - 30.06.2015	Security, Czech Public Opinion/Interest	N/A
01.07.2015 - 31.12.2015	Direct Support for Syria, Aid to Frontline Countries, Anti-Migrant	N/A

	Sentiment	
01.01.2016 - 30.06.2016	EU Response, Turkey-EU Relations, Islamic Terrorism	N/A
01.07.2016 - 31.12.2016	Islamic Terrorism, Islam, Anti-EU Sentiment, Role of Germany	N/A
01.01.2022 - 30.06.2022	'Not Real Refugees', Cultural Differences	Refugees, Refugee Centres & Distribution, Ethnic Tensions, Integration
01.07.2022 - 31.12.2022	Border Protection, Irregular Migration, Czech Policy	Housing, Czech Policy, Crisis/Unprecedented Event, High Refugee Load
01.01.2023- 30.06.2023	Migration Quotas, Schengen Border Protection, Aiding Syria Directly, Repatriation/Deportation	Vulnerable Groups, Czech Public Opinion/Interest, Czech Policy
01.07.2023 - 31.12.2023	Irregular Migration, Anti-EU Sentiment, Crisis/Unprecedented Event	EU Collective Action, Support for Ukrainian Recovery, Security

Quantitative Analysis

'Migration outcomes' measured for this work include, for Syrians, Ukrainians, and the general foreigner population in Czechia for each time period under study, the total number of legally registered individuals, the number of detected irregular migrants, the gender balance of migrants, the number of applications for international protection, the number of asylum status grants, the number of subsidiary protection grants, the number of criminal convictions, and the number of administrative expulsion orders. These data points were drawn from the Czech Statistical Office's Public Database website and the European Commission's Migration and Home Affairs Publications Database, each of which offers a variety of detailed and informative datasets regarding migration patterns into Czechia in the 21st century. The specific sources used are as follows:

- 'Cizinci Podle Státního občanství a pohlavï 31.12' (Foreigners by Citizenship and Sex as of 31 December) (2015-2022)

- 'Cizinci v ČR - Včetně azylantu' (Foreigners in the Czech Republic - Including Asylum Granted) (2015-2022)

- 'Stíhané, obžalované a odsouzené osoby podle státního občanství v roce' (Prosecuted, Accused, and Convicted Persons by Citizenship) (2015-2022).

- Annual Report on Asylum and Migration: National Report - EMN Czech Republic (2015-2022) (European Migration Network)

- R22 Azyl Udělen – Počet Rozhodnutí v Jednotlivých Letech (Asylum Status Granted - Number of Decisions by Year (2015-2022)

- R24 Doplňková ochrana udělena – počet rozhodnutí v jednotlivých letech; září 2006 – prosinec 2022 (Subsidiary Protection Granted - Number of Decisions by Year (2015-2022)

While limited to annual publication schedules, the above sources of data are the most reliable primary sources of Czech migration-related data related to the general public. All quantitative data employed in this work is publicly available for download on the webpages of the respective organizations.

Quantitative Analysis

This data analysis focuses on key indicators in Czech migration outcomes, highlighting longitudinal changes in the number, demographic and national makeup, and type (regular/irregular) of arrivals to Czechia. As will be explored in the qualitative/quantitative cross-comparison stage of this work's analysis, these outcomes will be compared with Czech migration discourse and policy changes to observe any potential co-variation.

Regular and Irregular Migration

The first and most basic quantitative migration outcome indicator is the total number of foreign individuals legally registered in a given country. Between 2015 and 2022, the total number of foreigners registered in Czechia increased by 138.7% from approximately 467,500 to 1,116,154. This increase has boosted the per-capita share of registered foreigners in Czechia to well above the European Union average, contributing to a population increase of over 216,000 new citizens while the country's natural population growth has remained negative, on average, throughout the entire period.

Through this period of unprecedented growth, the number of legally registered Syrian citizens in Czechia increased by 46.5% in 2022. The number of registered Ukrainians, meanwhile, increased by 500.2% in 2022. While the total number of both Syrian and Ukrainian citizens registered in Czechia peaked in 2022, the greatest year-over-year percentage increase in registered Syrians occurred between 2015 and 2016 (13.07%) while the greatest year-over year increase in registered Ukrainians occurred between 2021 and 2022 (223.19%). Through the 'Crisis' of 2015 and 2016, the number of registered Syrians as a percentage of total registered foreigners increased slightly while the share of Ukrainians among registered foreigners

decreased. While, as previously noted, the 13.07% increase in registered Syrians between 2015-2016, accounting for a total of 140 new registered individuals, represented the greatest absolute and proportional increases in the number of registered Syrians in the Czech Republic, it is important to note that the total number of Syrians detected as irregular migrants annually from 2015-2022 consistently outnumbered the amount of documented Syrian migrants with residence or other international protection permits throughout the time period under study. This reality is not replicated among Ukrainian arrivals, representing one of the first important conclusions of this statistical analysis: while the share of Ukrainians among foreigners in Czechia is greater than that of Syrians by a factor of over 100, Syrians have remained the single most over-represented nationality (detected irregular Syrian migrants to registered Syrians) among detected irregular migrants from 2015-2022.

Throughout the period under study, the total number of irregular migrants detected annually has increased by over 340%, with over 95% of individuals being detected during illegal stays (rather than at border crossings). In 2015, the ratio of detected irregular Syrian migrants to registered Syrians in Czechia was 2:1. While the share of detected irregular stays fell significantly in the intervening years between the 'Migration Crisis' and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, it spiked to an all-time high in 2022 with 20,980 illegal stays by Syrians being detected, representing a ratio of approximately 13:1. By comparison, the ratio of detected irregular Syrian migrants to registered Ukrainians in Czechia has not exceeded 1:10 through the entire period under study, dipping to a record low of approximately 1:225 in 2022.

The above data represents an important reality in Czech migration outcomes that has featured heavily in Czech migration-related discourse and policy changes; while Syrian citizens make up a small percentage of the total foreigner population in Czechia, they have been

disproportionately represented among irregular migrants in the country since 2015, and have become by far the most significant group of detected irregular migrants in the country.

Migrant Demographics

As elaborated in this work's discourse analysis, in addition to being generally characterized as irregular migrants in Czech migration-related discourse, Syrian nationals have also been characterized as primarily young men, a characterization often evoked in contrast to the demographics of Ukrainian refugees, which are generally characterized as being disproportionately representative of women and children. Among legally registered Syrian and Ukrainian nationals in Czechia, gender disparities are evident. Between 2015 and 2022, an average of 55.7% of registered foreigners were men, with the Syrian average being 63.2% and the Ukrainian average being 53.1%. The difference becomes more apparent when examining demographic changes in legally registered foreigners between 2021 and 2022, which saw the share of men as a percentage of all registered Syrians increase from 57.9% to 62.2% while the share of men among registered Ukrainians decreased from 57.05% to 43.40%.

From 2015 to 2021, the share of men as a percentage of individuals granted asylum among Syrians and Ukrainians was less than that of the total migrant populations of each country registered in Czechia. While this remained the case for Syrians in 2022, with the share of men being 4.1% greater among total registered migrants than among asylum recipients, the gender balance among Ukrainians underwent a drastic change. While the total share of men among registered Ukrainians dipped from 57.1% to 43.4% between 2021 and 2022, their representation among asylum seekers increased from 49.6% to 53.2%. These demographic changes, both as reflections of concrete quantitative migration outcomes and as perceived on-the-street realities

among Czechs, have undoubtedly played a role in shaping Czech migration discourse, and were in some way shaped by said discourse. It is important to note, however, that detailed demographic statistics regarding the age and sex of Syrian and Ukrainian irregular migrants are not available, and that the demographic data above, particularly that pertaining to Syrians, does not necessarily reflect the demographics of migrant populations as a whole. Reports from 2015 to 2022 documenting the demographics of Syrian refugee arrivals in Turkey, Germany, and the United States generally state that men make up 50-60% of the total population.

International Protection Applications, Asylum Grants, and Subsidiary Protection

When examining quantitative migration outcomes for any nation in the context of migration 'crises', an analysis of the processing, granting, and denial of different types of international protection is necessary, as these processes represent the clearest manifestation of Czech refugee policy implementation. Between 2015 and 2022, a total of 12,327 individuals lodged applications for international protection. Of these applicants, 681 individuals were granted asylum status while 1,604 were granted subsidiary protection, leading to an overall approval rate of 18.51%. Total applications lodged by Syrian nationals remained relatively low throughout the period under study, peaking in 2015 at 8.85% of total applications and averaging 3.84% from 2015 to 2022. Approval rates were consistently high among Syrian nationals, whose applications were approved 92.41% of the time on average. Ukrainians, meanwhile, whose share of total applications peaked in 2015 at 45.51% and averaged 27.31% of total applications, saw an average approval rate of 17.62%. The vast majority of positive international protection decisions for Syrian and Ukrainian nationals resulted in the issuance of subsidiary protection, with an average of 12.4 subsidiary protection grants issued for every asylum grant. This ratio
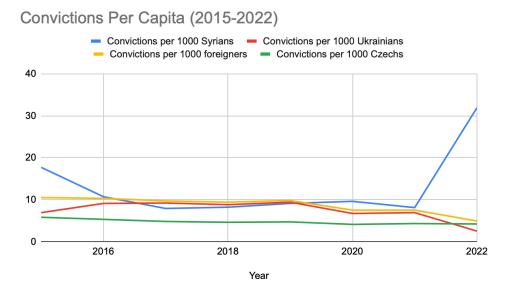
peaked in 2022, which saw the highest number of subsidiary protection grants, at 157.5:1 and reached a low in 2018 at 5.3:1.

Criminality among Syrian and Ukrainian Nationals in Czechia

One of the most prominent topics in migration-related discourse in Czechia and around the world today is security. For the purposes of this work's analysis of Czech discourse, this security is best examined through the lens of crime. If, as certain leaders have espoused, Syrian migrants are dangerous to Czech society, this reality should be reflected in disproportionately high rates of criminal convictions.

Between 2015 and 2022, an average of 4.7 criminal convictions per 1000 citizens were issued per year, gradually decreasing from 5.8 to 5.2 with a notable drop to 4.1 in 2020. Foreigners, meanwhile, saw an average of 8.7 convictions per 1000 people, dropping from 10.5 in 2015 to 4.9 in 2022, also seeing a notable drop from 9.8 to 7.5 between 2019 and 2020. Among registered Ukrainian migrants, an average of 7.4 convictions per 1000 people were issued over the time period under study, lower than the average for foreigners. Peaking at 9.2 in 2016, Ukrainian convictions per capita hit an all-time low in 2022 of 2.5 per 1000. From 2015 to 2022, registered Syrians saw an average of 12.9 convictions per 1000 people, increasing from a low of 8.1 in 2021 to 31.9 in 2022. The second highest year for per-capita convictions among registered Syrians was 2015, which saw 17.7 convictions per 1000 people. The below figure illustrates the spike in per-capita criminal convictions among Syrians as well as Ukrainians' steadily declining per-capita conviction rate. The severity of the increase in per-capita convictions of Syrian nationals is undoubtedly exaggerated by their low total population numbers in Czechia, but the surge in 2022 remains notable, and could be correlated with significant

increases in reported irregular migrant arrivals on Czech soil in 2022, as well as increased

resources being granted to Czech migration-related administrative and policing bodies following

the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Convictions Per Capita (2015-2022)

— Convictions per 1000 Syrians   — Convictions per 1000 Ukrainians
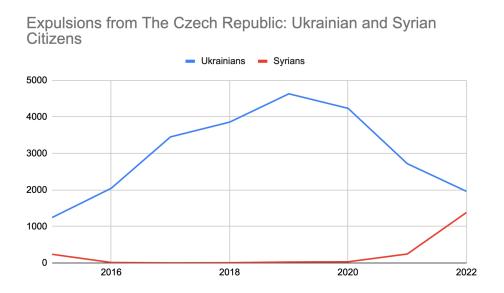— Convictions per 1000 foreigners   — Convictions per 1000 Czechs

Year

While crimes committed by registered Syrians during the period under study have never

represented more than 0.1% of all criminal convictions in Czechia, it is evident that they are

overrepresented in the Czech criminal justice system (on a criminal conviction-per-capita basis).

This reality, combined with the predominantly male demographics of registered Syrians,

undoubtedly contributes to their discursive construction as security threats.

Expulsions

In addition to the granting of protection and asylum status to foreigners, the Czech

government's issuance of administrative expulsion orders is also a key metric in characterizing

the country's migration outcomes, particularly in the context of anti-migrant protectionist

discourse which pervaded throughout the period under study. Between 2015 and 2022, a total of

1943 administrative expulsion orders were issued against Syrian nationals, while 24,137 were

issued against Ukrainians. The greatest share of expulsion orders issued against Syrian nationals were issued in 2022, when 1960 administrative expulsion decisions accounted for 71.13% of all expulsion orders issued against Syrian nationals. By contrast, only 79 total expulsion orders were issued against Syrians between 2016 and 2020. The greatest share of Ukrainian expulsion orders occurred in 2019, with 4631 orders totalling 19.19% of total Ukrainian expulsions issued. 2020 was a similarly eventful year for expulsions against Ukranians, with 4233 expulsion orders accounting for 17.54%. 2015 and 2022 each accounted for the smallest shares of expulsions, seeing 1243 and 1960 expulsions accounting for 5.15% and 8.12% of Ukrainian expulsions from 2015-2022 respectively.

Expulsions from The Czech Republic: Ukrainian and Syrian Citizens

As the total number of irregular migrants in Czechia is not known, it is not possible to determine exact per-capita rates of expulsions for Syrians and Ukrainians respectively. However, the above-discussed fluctuations in expulsions over time provide useful insight into the implementation of Czech migration policy as a co-constituent of migration-related discourse and migration outcomes.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Czech migration-related political discourse has undergone several significant and notable shifts during the last decade, varying alongside quantitative migration outcomes, Czech societal pressures, and migration policy previously discussed in this work. The following critical analysis delves into the development of this discourse approaching it as a medium through which, in the words of Van Dikj (2001), "...social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context". It is organized into eight longitudinal sections as identified above. This arrangement is conducive to the analysis' provision of insights into longitudinal shifts in themes, frames, and processes of securitization, as well as shifts in underlying Czech sociopolitical context over the period of analysis, as explored in the migration history section of this work.

First Period: January 1st, 2015 - June 30th, 2015

Remembered today as the de-facto beginning of the 'Migration Crisis' in Europe, this period saw a significant uptick in the prevalence of non-European migration-related themes in Czech political discourse, and marks the emergence of the discursive frameworks and processes of securitization that would characterize Syrian migration-related discourse in Europe and Czechia for the next decade. During this period, no notable examples of Ukrainian migration-related discourse were noted. The most prominent themes/keywords that emerged in the studied Syrian-related discourse during this period are 'security' and 'public opinion'. The relative dominance of these themes in the early days of the 'Migration Crisis' is logical when examined in the context of the emerging 'Crisis', Czechia's historical relationships and power dynamics (or lack thereof) with non-European migrants, refugees, and Islam.

Themes of security relating to migration, as discussed by representatives of Czechia's migration-facing ministries and offices, were often framed within administrative discursive frameworks and focused on the implementation of Czech and European migration-facing security practices. Key government representatives such as Interior Minister Milan Chovanec referred to incoming Syrian refugees as 'family members', and 'children' in his discussions regarding methods to 'eliminate security risks' (Radio Prague International, 2015).

"With all these available sources [Czech and host country secret service cooperation] we can conduct thorough background checks, primarily of the adult family members of the children, and with this we hope to eliminate any security risks" (Milan Chovanec) (Radio Prague International, 2015).

Though, in this text, Chovanec situates the processing and acceptance of these individuals as an administrative matter, it is important to note that Czcehia's agreement to take the refugees to whom he refers is situated within a complex political context. While Austria, Germany, and many Western European states committed to resettling thousands of Syrian refugees each as quickly as possible, Czechia chose a highly selective and very limited approach, establishing a working group to find ideal resettlement candidates (Radio Prague International, 2015). The individuals selected by this working group, the people to whom Chovanec refers in his above statement, consisted of 70 Christian Syrians living in Jordan. His implicit assertion that, through the hand-picking of a limited number of non-Muslim refugees, all security risks associated with their assimilation in Czechia could be eliminated, insinuates that Muslim Syrian refugees are less

desirable and pose a greater security risk to Czech society, reinforcing a cultural and faith-based hierarchy among foreigners.

Alongside the relatively muted discourse characterizing Czech institutional and ruling-party responses to the 'Crisis', discourse explicitly securitizing Syrian refugees emerged rapidly among Czech populist politicians, most notably then-President Miloš Zeman and prominent opposition leader Tomio Okamura. While Zeman would emerge as Czechia's most prominent anti-immigration leader, contributing regularly and significantly to the discursive framing of Middle-Eastern migrants and refugees as security threats, commanding trust and respect among the Czech public, Okamura's role in amplifying their discursive securitization should not be understated. Taking to social media, several of Okamura's statements received significant news-media coverage in the opening months of the 'Crisis', contributing to the centering of migration securitization in Czech politics and the framing of Middle-Eastern migrants, refugees, and Muslims in general as threats to Czech society.

...how we can protect our democratic way of life and the heritage of our ancestors from Islam...breed dogs and piglets as pets and walk them near neighbourhood centres, mosques, and popular hangouts… (Levi, 2015).

Okamura's statements were decidedly the most extreme to emerge in the mainstream Czech political discourse in 2015, and played heavily into existing stereotypes regarding Muslim and Middle Eastern people, as demonstrated by his mentions of terms such as 'kebab' and 'burka' in his rhetoric (Levi, 2015). He also played a key role in securitizing Muslim immigrants and refugees, identifying them as hostile invaders, decrying the "...expansion of Islam…" and

stating that Muslims "...have no tolerance for us…" (Levi, 2015). Despite its overt extremity, Okamura's rhetoric proved popular among many conservative, populist, eurosceptic Czechs, as reflected by the successful founding and rapid growth in popularity of his political party, 'Freedom and Direct Democracy', which was founded in June, 2015. The foundation of the Party constitutes meaningful context for the examination of Okamura's early-2015 discourse. Harnessing existing populist ideologies and discourses legitimized by President Zeman, Okamura's statements served to reinforce clear hierarchical relations between the Czech people and Syrian newcomers, effectively enacting and reproducing the social dominance of native Czechs to further his social power by centering himself as Czechia's most outspoken migration critic.

Given Czechs' previous support for the often nationalist, eurosceptic, and emotionally-charged rhetoric of the President, it can be argued that the rapid popularization of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric was a foregone conclusion upon the commencement of the 'Migration Crisis'. The rapid emergence of migration as a domestic political issue, alongside constant domestic and international news coverage regarding the entry of migrants into Europe, occurred simultaneously with the emergence of Czech migration-related public opinion as a prominent theme in the discourse. With an early-2015 Czech public opinion poll suggesting that as many as 94% of Czechs agreed that the "European Union ought to send illegal migrants back where they came from" and mass anti-immigration rallies taking place in Prague's Wenceslas Square, the role of migration-related discourse in enabling, reflecting, and reproducing the social dominance of ethnic Czechs in Czechia, drawing from Czechia's complex and fraught history of interaction with foreigners, was on clear display from the early days of the 'Crisis' (Willoughby, 2015).

Second Period: July 1st 2015 - December 31st, 2015

The second period under study, which marked the peak of the 'Migration Crisis' in terms of quantitative migration outcomes, saw the continuation of the rapid development of Czech migration-related discourse. Concepts of security were broadened from Czech to European and worldwide scales, while the discursive framing of refugees came to incorporate the lived experiences of the Czech public and political leaders as refugees and migrants flowed into the European Union, and the validity of the suffering and needs of refugees and migrants was called into question by conservatives. This period also saw negativity dominate Czech migration-related political discourse, with occurrences from the European Union's response to the 'Crisis', to EU-Turkey relations, to violence in the Middle-East being employed to frame the inflow of refugees into Europe as profoundly undesirable, dangerous, and the result of missteps taken by non-Czech political actors.

The most dominant themes and keywords found in the discourse from this period reflect these realities, with 'direct support for Syria/Middle East', 'aid to frontline countries', and 'anti-migrant sentiment' displacing 'security' and 'public opinion'. The employment of this trifecta of themes to discursively frame migrants as problematic and unworthy of support was demonstrated concisely in Miloš Zeman's 2015 Christmas address to the Czech people, which has remained one of the most impactful pieces of Czech migration-related discourse over the past decade.

Compassion is possible for the old, the sick, and especially children, but the vast majority of illegal migrants are young healthy men without families. And I wonder why these men don't take up arms and fight for the freedom of their country against the Islamic State. Their escape

objectively strengthens the Islamic State. And I can't imagine that at the time when our young

men were fleeing the protectorate, they were fleeing in order to receive welfare benefits in Great

Britain. They fled to fight for the freedom of their country (*Vánoční Poselství Prezidenta*

*Republik*y, 2015).

This statement, made near the conclusion of Zeman's speech, effectively discredited

refugees' plights, shifting responsibility for their situation and the state of their countries of

origin squarely onto them while identifying "the vast majority of them" as being dangerous and

unworthy of compassion (*Vánoční Poselství Prezidenta Republik*y, 2015). This piece of

discourse is a textbook example of the role of speech acts in the enacting and reproducing social

power, dominance, inequality, and securitization. By effectively situating the

predominantly-male population of Syrian refugees within the discursive framework of healthy,

potentially-dangerous fighting-age males and outside of the framework of victims worthy of

compassion, Zeman effectively dismissed their need for assistance. His comparison of the plight

of Syrians to those of Czechs and Slovaks during the Second World War is especially interesting,

as Zeman attempts to paint two groups of people, Czechoslovaks and Syrians, who both fled

their lands due to unfavourable political situations and fear of repression and violence, as having

fundamentally different motivations and intentions. His speech reflects a cherry-picked version

of Czech history where tens of thousands of young, healthy Czech men fled Czechoslovakia

between 1968 and the fall of the Eastern Bloc to support the fight for their country, not to find

better lives. By his logic, these Czechs would have been objectively strengthening the Soviet

Union. Historical revisionism aside, Zeman's Christmas address contained what may be Zeman's

most quoted phrase of his career in the international press.

I am profoundly convinced that we are facing an organized invasion and not a spontaneous movement of refugees. (Deutsche Welle, 2015).

This controversial securitizing statement came to dominate not only headlines, but right-wing Czech migration-related political discourse moving into 2016. His characterization of the 'Crisis' as an invasion is of particular note given Czechia's history of foreign occupation, and further strengthened his discursive characterization of the event as fundamentally foreign, a matter of foreign policy, and involving hostile aliens. Zeman was not alone in his historical references, with Tomio Okamura making an even more direct comparison between former occupations of Czech lands and the acceptance of refugees, demanding a referendum on the topic of Czech exit from the European Union.

The decision of the European Union to approve compulsory quotas for immigrants for their redistribution is a fundamental infringement of the sovereignty and independence of the Czech Republic. It is an act comparable with March 1939 and August 1968… The aim of this policy is to liquidate nation states, islamisation and the creation of a European superstate (*Czech MP Tomio Okamura*, 2015).

Okamura's statement typifies the more extreme end of conservative anti-migrant sentiments shared by many right-wing Czechs through the peak of the 'Migration Crisis'. Building on the discursive framework for the discussion of migrants in conservative circles which was established earlier in the year, Okamura reinforces the notion that the 'Crisis' is not a

Czech problem, but a European one, and that not only the migrants themselves, but EU governing bodies represent a fundamental threat to Czech sovereignty. The fear of domination by foreign interests, people, and organizations permeated Okamura's migration-related rhetoric throughout the period under study, and was effective in maintaining his relevance in the eyes of the media and Czech public.

More moderate conservative politicians, such as Ivana Dobešova, a member of ANO and then-Head of Czechia's Permanent Delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), refrained from characterizing EU responses to the 'Crisis' or migrants and refugees as overtly malicious, but also pushed for refugees to be kept outside the EU and argued that they were not entering the EU to flee direct danger.

In majority, these migrants are not arriving from a war zone. These people are coming to Europe from Turkey, which offered them a safe haven irrespective of their race, creed, culture or language (Dobešová, 2015).

Dobešova's remarks served not only to consolidate the framing of refugees as illegitimate, self interested outsiders, but reflected Czechia and the European Union's desire to strike a deal with the Turkish government regarding the housing of migrants outside the Schengen area. Her characterization of Turkey as a place of tolerance and safety in the face of direct evidence of squalor, disorganization, and severe overcrowding in the country's refugee camps served to legitimize Czech and European aspirations for migrants and refugees to remain there, further framing attempts at further travel into the European Union by Syrians as unnecessary. This discursive delineation between refugees perceived as legitimate victims and

opportunistic migrants looking to access the Schengen area, despite being granted safe haven, has been used in reference to a wide variety of refugee populations over time by politicians of varying nationalities. Most relevant to the Czech content, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this framing was used to delegitimize the asylum claims of Ukrainian Roma people.

In contrast, Prime Minister Sobotka, who, throughout much of his tenure, was known to denounce Zeman's more extreme populist takes on prominent political issues, framed issues relating to Schengen border protection and assistance to Middle Eastern states in a much less emotional and more sterile manner characteristic of pre-Crisis Czech foreign policy. Characterizing responses to the 'Crisis' as a multilateral task requiring cooperation and solidarity, Sobotka rarely referred directly to actions undertaken by migrants and asylum seekers, focusing squarely on policy responses and proposals for future action. His characteristic approach was exemplified in a statement to the press he made following a special meeting of the European Council on the 'Crisis'.

From a Czech point of view, the summit touched on priorities such as reinforcing the protection of the EU's external borders and setting up registration points, as well on assistance for those countries with refugee camps. We discussed the priorities pursued by the Czech Republic since the very beginning of the migration crisis. (*PM Sobotka,* 2016).

Sobotka's statement displays compassion for migrants and those housing them as well as a belief in the collective ability of the European Union to handle the 'Crisis' while asserting that Czech national priorities, and therefore political sovereignty, remain at the forefront of international cooperation.

As shown above, the second half of 2015 saw the widening, maturing, and further polarization of the discursive frames through which migrants and the 'Migration Crisis' were discussed. Clear discursive differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate securitized migrants emerged, previous concerns regarding security became concerns regarding sovereignty, and public opinion slipped into more consolidated anti-migrant sentiment. Moving into 2016, the evocation of existential threats and Europe-wide action would continue, but would begin incorporating retrospective analyses of the previous year's EU and Czech policy choices and associated quantitative migration outcomes.

Third Period: January 1st, 2016 - June 30th, 2016

As the second full year of the 'Migration Crisis' began, the salience of Czech migration-related political discourse in national politics and news media was at an all time high. President Zeman's aforementioned infamous Christmas address both characterized and further consolidated public consternation regarding the preponderance of unregistered migrants and asylum seekers moving within the Schengen Area. Furthermore, the failings of several areas of EU policy and multilateral cooperation relating to the management and controlling of the 'Crisis' had become clear, with calls for reform and opposition to migrant transfer policies rising to the fore. Finally, late 2015 and early 2016 represented the peak of the Islamic's State's military successes and territorial holdings in the Middle-Eastern region. With the shadow of the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks and Cologne New Year's Eve sexual assaults also looming large, the framing of Islamic terror groups as a significant threat to European and Czech security was all but guaranteed.

The most prominent themes in the studied discourse identified during this period were the "EU response to the 'Crisis'", "Turkey-EU relations", and "Islamic terrorism". Somewhat unsurprisingly, the most prominent player in promoting Islamic terrorism in migration-related Czech political discourse was President Miloš Zeman. Following his claims that the 'Crisis' constituted an "organized invasion", Zeman doubled down in January, stating that Europe would "...end up like Cologne" if it allowed Islamic people to settle in the EU and that "The Muslim Brotherhood cannot start a war against Europe, it doesn't have the power, but it can prepare a growing migrant wave and gradually control Europe" (Ng & Cowburn, 2015). In an April interview with Parliamentní Listy, responding to criticism from the the United States Department of State regarding his assertion that Muslim people would not respect Czech laws and instead implement Sharia Law in Czechia, Zeman defended his remarks, stating the following:

In Muslim Communities, Sharia law is sometimes applied, albeit illegally and in violation of the laws of the host country. So, this is an experience that is certainly transferable to the Czech Republic in the event that we accept the migration wave that Germany or Austria have already accepted. And you know well that the German reaction is gradually changing, and from the so-called 'wilkommenskultur', they are beginning to shift to completely opposite attitudes (*Rozhovor Prezidenta Republiky Pro Deník*, 2016).

Through this discourse, Zeman consolidates his framing of Muslim migrants and refugees as security risks, and, through his association of their presence with the potential implementation of Sharia Law, effectively links them to extremist Islamic terror organizations, enacting and reproducing their securitization. His observations of the shifts in Austrian and German political

and cultural attitudes towards the integration of large numbers of migrants are accurate at face value. It is worth noting, however, that he employs the apparent failures of these states to avoid negative repercussions of the 'Crisis' and to legitimize the Czech populist euro-skeptic view that EU resettlement and migrant distribution schemes were undesirable, and that the EU response to the crisis as a whole, as pushed by the Union's de-facto leader and most significant destination for migrants and refugees, Germany, constituted a failure.

As in the year previous, Prime Minister Sobotka acknowledged many of the same pressing issues related to the crisis as his populist colleagues, but continued to rally against the framing of migrants and refugees as malicious invaders, and characterized European responses to the 'Crisis' as flawed, but generally well intentioned. In a January 2016 speech delivered to the Czech Chamber of Deputies, Sobotka concisely and deliberately consolidated his moderate framing of the 'Crisis' by directly addressing anti-migrant and anti-EU discourse, arguing that nationalist and isolationist reactions were not only unnecessary, but counterproductive and not in the best interests of Czechs.

Migration can only be tackled by a united Europe, not by individual countries acting in isolation. I am keen to dispel the illusion and reject some of the proposals that crop up very frequently espousing the notion that we should wash our hands of the migration crisis by exiting the European Union. "Let's rid ourselves of this migration crisis by erecting a fence around the Czech Republic and not letting anyone in." Such naive approaches would do nothing to bring the migration crisis under control, and sooner or later, if we do not come to grips with this problem on a European-wide basis, it will have a profound effect on life here in the Czech Republic too…

Refugees are no organised army. Washing in with this wave of migration is a mix of refugees fleeing war in Syria and Iraq, along with economic migrants hailing from countries not ravaged by armed conflict, such as Pakistan. Europe is now paying the price for, in effect, politically turning a blind eye to the war in Syria…

I would also venture that immigration policy must have rules and limits. In my opinion, it is incumbent on Europe to help those who are fleeing war and persecution, but only insofar as this does not expose it to any danger itself, especially when we consider Islamist militants ("Speech on the Migration Situation", 2016).

Sobotka's remarks, similar to Zeman's, frame the 'Migration Crisis' as a European issue, but the former's encourage Czech policymakers to take ownership of the European processes of migration management, subverting Zeman's hierarchical depiction of Czechs as victims of Brussels' incompetence. In a similar vein, Sobotka acknowledges the possibility that militants could be among the people attempting to enter the Schengen area, but reiterates that their existence does not excuse Europeans of their duty to assist those fleeing from conflict. Continuing his frank and straightforward discussion of the crisis, Sobotka provides a detailed breakdown of EU-Turkey relations and the implementation of the new EU-Turkey action plan, which, as previously mentioned, had become a prominent theme in Czech migration-related discourse due to Turkey's key role in controlling the flow of migrants into Europe. Refraining from either praising Turkey as an ideal end-destination for migrants or accusing its government of intentionally pushing migrants into the European Union, Sobotka's discourse continued its pragmatic and dispassionate tone.

The principles of cooperation with Turkey were defined ahead of the summit by the Action Plan on cooperation between the European Union and Turkey, which we approved at the end of October. It stands on two pillars: First, Turkey must strictly enforce its applicable laws. What we are saying is that if Turkey is not doing everything it is able to do by law to stem the flow of migration into Europe, it should start doing so immediately. There should be improvements in the conditions faced by refugees living in Turkey, and improvements in registration, asylum procedures, and integration into Turkish society. This includes better access to the Turkish job market. Smuggling and trafficking need to be combated. We are keen to improve mutual exchanges of information with Turkey, to start organising returns and to assist Turkey in tackling organised crime ("Speech on the Migration Situation", 2016).

The language used by Sobotka reflects the tone generally employed by representatives and official publications of the Ministry of the Interior, serving a similar functional purpose. The lexicon of his discourse aligns with his framing of the 'Migration Crisis' and associated issues as serious, high-level diplomatic matters that must be resolved through planning, cooperation, and effective organization. His choices of words and framing contrast greatly with those of Zeman and Okamura, whose above-mentioned discourse samples served to situate Czechs as victims of a hierarchical relationship dominated by Brussels and call into question the true needs and intentions of incoming refugees. Though it is certain that Sobotka too sought to forward his political ambitions through his speech acts, his clear resistance against the former speakers' efforts to frame Czechs, not migrants and refugees, as the primary 'Victims' of the crisis, and his discursive subversion of the supposed EU-Czech hierarchy through his framing of policy

approaches to the 'Crisis'' solution as collaborative multinational projects, is notable given future shifts in his statements.

Fourth Period: July 1st, 2016 - December 31st, 2016

The latter half of 2016 is generally considered today as the conclusion of the main phase of the European 'Migration Crisis'. For the purposes of this analysis, it represents the most mature phase of mid-crisis migration-related political discourse. The dominant themes identified during this period reflect the reality of the 'Crisis'' ongoing, yet diminishing nature as well as its political and societal impacts over the preceding year, with a greater focus in migrant-related discourse on those already in Europe, rather than those attempting to enter. It incorporates discussions of issues concerning integration and criminality that had become more clear over the preceding year, and showcases political fatigue among moderate politicians. The most prominent themes identified are 'Islamic Terrorism', 'Islam', 'Anti-EU Sentiment', and 'Role of Germany'.

As previously discussed, throughout most of the 'Crisis', Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka took a moderate stance on the plight of migrants and refugees, expressing that Czech affairs and interests would remain prioritized, but that the European community had a duty to accommodate asylum seekers as much as possible. This period, however, saw his position shift to a less migrant-friendly, yet similarly sober stance, framing Middle-Eastern refugees as undesirable and stating that no state should be compelled to accept them. His comments regarding the duties of states to accept certain numbers of refugees, as dictated by European Union quota mechanisms, would come to feature heavily in Czech migration-related discourse in the future, and first came to the fore during this period. Changes in Sobotka's framing of the 'Crisis' and its victims were typified in an August 2016 statement.

We don't have a large Muslim community here, and to be honest, we don't want a large Muslim community to form here, given the problems we're seeing… It's not possible to put an equal sign between refugees and terrorists. But at the same time, it's not possible to have the same approach as Germany last year, namely to authorise the influx of a huge number of people without any oversight (Czech PM Says no to 'Large Muslim Community', 2016).

In his statement, Sobotka does not adopt populist, nationalist discursive frameworks or the hierarchical framing of Czechs as suffering under an incompetent EU as championed by Zeman, Okamura, and other conservative politicians, but rather conveyed his position in an informal and dispassionate tone. As before, he was careful not to directly equate refugees and migrants with terrorists, but associated them with 'problems' seen in Germany and overtly stated that they are not wanted in Czechia, enacting a milder version of securitization than Zeman and Okamura. Around the Czech executive branch, other politicians also connected the threat of Islam and terrorism with anti-EU sentiment, often making references to the potential consequences of abiding by refugee accommodation quotas set by the EU.

After what has been happening in Europe, I can say clearly that I don't want even a single refugee in the Czech Republic, not even temporarily… And even if they came, then the Czech Republic should fight the European Commission's decision and sue it over possible sanctions… (Andrej Babiš) (*Czech Deputy PM Rejects Refugee Quotas,* 2016).

Our country simply cannot afford to risk terrorist attacks like what occurred in France and Germany. By accepting migrants we would create fertile ground for barbaric attacks… (Miloš Zeman) (*Czech President Warns of Migrants' 'Barbaric Acts'* (2016).

During this period, President Zeman continued proposing characteristically headline-worthy solutions to the accommodation of migrants and the solution of the 'Crisis', consolidating his framing of it as a significant threat to Czech society that should be dealt with elsewhere, including the suggestion that certain Greek islands could be used to house migrants as a form of Greek national debt repayment. In the context of this securitized 'not in my backyard' discourse, acknowledging the strong anti-migrant positions of many Czech leaders, V4 (Visegrád Four) leaders, and Czech citizens, the Sobotka government elected to pursue a middling approach to EU refugee acceptance quotas, declining to pursue legal action against the Union, but electing to accept 80 Syrian refugees.

A retrospective analysis of Czech migration-related discourse throughout the 'Crisis' yields a fascinating glimpse into the evolution of the ways in which the 'Crisis', its victims, and their securitization transformed over time alongside quantitative migration outcomes. The expansion of the scope of migration-related discourse from a domestic issue of security and public opinion, to multilateral action for the conclusion of a primarily non-European problem, to an eminent threat posed both by migration and by European Union institutions is noteworthy. Furthermore, shifts in the framing of the source of threats to Czech society, primarily among conservative politicians, from migrants and refugees themselves to European Union pro-migration policies, is fascinating.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Czech migration-related discursive frameworks would only become more nuanced and complex, with cultural, security, historical, and multilateral divides becoming evident not only between migrants and Czechs, but between Syrian and Ukrainian migrants.

Fifth Period: January 1st, 2022 - June 30th, 2022

This period began in earnest following the Russian Invasion of Ukraine which occurred in February. The sudden and massive influx of Ukrainian refugees into Czechia and the European Union, surpassing the total number of Syrians granted access into Czechia through the entire 'Migration Crisis', contributed to the domination of Ukrainian migrants in the discourse. Comparisons between refugee and migrant groups still played a significant role, however, as almost all mentions of Syrian and Middle Eastern migrants occurred within statements and discussion of Ukrainians. The subsequent themes dominating Syrian-related discourse were 'Not Real Refugees', and 'Cultural Differences', while the most dominant themes in Ukrainian-related discourse were 'Refugees', 'Refugee Centres & Distribution', 'Ethnic Tensions', and 'Integration'.

The stark contrast between the framing of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees is clearly demonstrated by almost all sources of political discourse that mention both groups. In a May 2022 statement, for example, President Zeman stated that he "...think(s) that the support of the Czech nation will not cool down toward the Ukrainian refugees, because we will constantly see their suffering...". In the same statement, he posited that "...Ukrainians fall into our cultural circle, not just linguistically, but also because of their Christian roots and the like, while Muslim

refugees live in a very different, Islamic culture…", further adding that most Muslim (and

therefore Syrian) refugees have been "economic migrants". This discursive framing of Syrians as

unfit for integration into Czech society is reinforced, in this case, through their definition as the

effective opposite of Ukrainians, who are, by virtue of their cultural and historical ties to

Czechia, as well as their victimization by Russia, worthy of support and compassion.

This worthiness and apparent 'sameness' to Czechs manifested in the complete lack of

securitization of Ukrainian refugees in Czechia during this period. In March 2022, Prime

Minister Petr Fiala announced that a national state of emergency would be implemented in

response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees, not in order to protect Czechs from the security

risks associated with the acceptance of refugees from war-ravaged states, as was often discussed

during the 'Migration Crisis', but in order to streamline the admittance of refugees from Ukraine.

We are declaring a state of emergency so that we are capable of handling the influx of

refugees from war-ravaged Ukraine. It does not affect Czech citizens… It will have a totally

different impact than the one declared during the Covid period… In short, we are declaring a

state of emergency for Ukrainian war refugees and those providing them with immediate

assistance, not for citizens of the Czech Republic. (*Czechs Declare 'State of Emergency for*

Ukrainian War Refugees' (2016).

His statements demonstrate both his commitment to the effective management of the

growing humanitarian plight of Ukrainian refugees as well as a shared understanding with the

Czech population that the admittance of tens of thousands of refugees per week is acceptable.

The framing of Ukrainian victims of the Russian Invasion as Slavic Europeans sharing histories

and values with Czechs is of utmost importance to their continued non-securitization and to the credibility of claims that massive refugee inflows will have minimal impacts on everyday Czech life. Nowhere is the importance of framing of Slavic Ukrainian refugees to their migration outcomes in the Czech context made more clear than when compared to the treatment and discursive construction of Roma-Ukrainian refugees attempting to enter Czechia. In May 2022, Interior Minister Vít Rakušan claimed that the influx of Roma refugees to Prague could be linked with criminal organizations, and that many were partaking in "social tourism" (and therefore were not real refugees like other Ukrainians). Tomio Okamura, meanwhile, also decried the presence of Roma refugees among Ukrainian arrivals: "Inadaptable migrants are being deployed against the will of the population…"   The discrediting of non-Ethnic Ukrainian refugees, and resulting ethnic tensions between Roma, Syrian, and Ukrainian refugees would remain prevalent throughout the following periods of analysis. During this period, observed contrasts in the framing of ethnic Ukrainian and Ukrainian Roma refugees are more telling than those between Syrians and Ukrainians; the former groups come from the same location and have been victimized by the same forces. The primary difference between the two is that Ukrainians have been discursively constructed in the Czech national conscience as honest, hardworking Slavic people capable of integrating while Roma are framed similarly to Syrians as dangerous, opportunistic liabilities. It should be noted that, while themes of integration, refugee centres and distribution were often discussed in the context of positive public and political action when referring to non-Roma Ukrainians, early indications of trepidation regarding the overwhelming number of Ukrainian arrivals began to emerge during this period.

We have already passed the first, quick phase and we are trying to motivate people to enter the labour market, to actively take care of themselves. (Interior Minister Vit Rakusan, discussing changes to Lex Ukraine) (*Czech Authorities Tighten Rules for Ukrainian Refugees*, 2022).

We have to try to communicate, motivate and tell those people - if you want to have a job, housing or a place for your children in school or kindergarten, you have to move from the most burdened regions, which is Prague, Central Bohemia and partly the city of Brno and its surroundings, to other parts of the country (Labour and Social Affairs Minister Marian Jurecka) (*Czech Authorities Tighten Rules for Ukrainian Refugees*, 2022).

They [federal government] have not given them [regional governments] a single crown. Even foreign media are writing about the government's failure to handle the refugee crisis. (Andrej Babiš) (*Czech Authorities Tighten Rules for Ukrainian Refugees,* 2022).

The speed and size of the refugee wave is incomparable with past waves, [but] the Czech Republic can handle it. (Petr Fiala) (*Czech Authorities Tighten Rules for Ukrainian Refugees,* 2022).

The above statements clearly express concern due to the unprecedented nature of the situation. However, it is important to note that the above statements do not securitize Ukrainian migrants or take on populist/protectionist stances, but instead focus on the management, distribution, and integration of incoming refugees, avoiding the characterization of Czechs as

victims of the 'wave' of asylum seekers and instead as a strong people capable of weathering the storm. The management of the influx of refugees by multiple levels of government as well as the Czech population would continue to feature heavily in Czech migration-related discourse through the remainder of the period of analysis, with motifs of solidarity, equity, national unity, strength, and resilience prevailing.

Sixth Period: July 1st, 2022 - December 31st, 2022

This period, immediately following the initial unprecedented influx of refugees into Czechia and other Visegrad Four states, saw the maturing of Czech migration-related discourse on Ukrainians as well as the substantive re-emergence of Syrian-related discourse in Czech political debate, in light of significant spikes in detected irregular Syrian migrants in Czechia. During this period, the most prominent themes in Syrian-related migration discourse were 'border protection', 'irregular migration', and 'Czech policy', while the most prominent themes in Ukrainian-related discourse were 'housing', 'Czech policy', 'crisis/unprecedented event', 'high refugee load'.

The predominance of all three prominent themes relating to Syrian refugees and migrants during this period can be associated with the aforementioned increases in detections of irregular Syrian migrants in Czechia, as well as to the temporary unilateral reinstatement of border controls by the Czech policy on the Czech-Slovak border. Justifying this unprecedented action, Interior Minister Vít Rakušan rationalized the action by stating that "The floodgates to Europe have been opened by Turkey." and that "Unfortunately the wave of migrants coming across the Slovak border into Czechia flowed without any significant action being taken by the Slovak side." (McEnchroe & Novák, 2022). As was often the case during the 'Crisis' of 2015-2016,

Syrians were securitized and referred to as part of a disaster unleashed by political forces, with no mention of their wellbeing or suffering as a result of their ongoing plight.

The discursive framing of this issue as one of security and state politics without a human element, aside from the potential to cause Czech citizens to suffer,, contrasts greatly with contemporary discussions of issues surrounding the accommodation of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees in the country. Following a decision from the Czech Parliament's lower house to evict Ukrainian refugees from their accommodation in the Liberec region in a bid to increase the efficiency of refugee housing, Czech Prime Minister Fiala immediately condemned the action, while Martin Kuba, Civic Democrats Party Member and Head of the Association of Regions, called the move "completely absurd", proposing that it was made so that "...politicians can relax there" (Smith, 2022). This defence of Ukranians in the face of the immense challenges imposed by their sudden arrival also extended to Czech international diplomatic discourse. In an October 2022 meeting with the Greek Minister of Migration and Asylum as well as the Greek Prime Minister, Czech Interior Minister Vít Rakušan portrayed the challenges posed by Ukranian and Middle Eastern migrants as follows:

Europe is under the pressure of a large wave of migration. The Czech Republic is facing a big problem after the war in Ukraine, as we have welcomed tens of thousands of refugees. We have over 400,000 refugees in the Czech Republic. A big wave, which forced us to change our entire social system… Illegal migration is much larger in numbers. We note the highest numbers since 2015. We are looking for solutions for the safety of our citizens. We carry out border controls with Slovakia, but it is not easy or simple at all. (Vit Rakušan) (*Meeting of the Minister of Migration and Asylum*, 2022).

As identified in the most prominent themes of this period, the crisis surrounding Ukrainian refugees in Czechia centred around state policy responses to overcome the overwhelming numbers of refugees "welcomed" into the country and to ensure their accommodation, while Syrian and Middle Eastern refugees continued to be discussed as 'illegal' threats to Czech border security and public safety, necessitating continued policy responses to ensure the safety of Czechs, reinforcing their national autonomy and territorial integrity.

Moving into 2023, public support for the acceptance and integration of Ukrainian refugees continued to cool somewhat in the face of continued economic and social change resulting from the significant influx of new unemployed people into the country, as reflected by public opinion polls. Despite this, Ukraine-related Czech political migration discourse continued to be characterized by empathetic solidarity with Ukrainian refugees. The most prominent identified themes were, 'vulnerable groups', 'Czech public opinion', and 'Czech policy'. Syrian-related discourse continued to reflect alarm from the previous year's unprecedented spike in irregular migrant detections, which were largely made up of Syrians, as well as debate surrounding amendments to European Union migration policy reforms. The themes identified during this period were similar to those identified in the second half of 2015, a period which also saw the reaction of Czech political discourse to an unprecedented Syrian migration event. The identified themes were 'Schengen border protection', 'migration quotas' and 'repatriation/deportation'.

Addressing the recent surge in detection of irregular (predominantly Syrian) migrants in Czech territory, Prime Minister Petr Fiala justified Czechia's policy measures aimed at limiting the influx and championed the protection of external Schengen borders from irregular incursions.

The numbers of illegal migrants streaming into Europe is increasing. They have increased significantly in recent weeks. That is why we introduced temporary controls on the border with Slovakia and other neighbour states did the same. This development shows that the current European migration policy is not working well enough. We need to agree on an effective solution and introduce changes… As we see it, the key to success is better protection of the EU's external borders, a better migrant return policy, prevention of illegal migration through cooperation with the countries of origin and more effective steps taken against people smugglers. (*Czech PM: Bolder Steps Needed to Resolve Illegal Migration,* 2023).

As in previous periods, Czech efforts focused not on the accommodation and integration of Syrian refugees, but on keeping them outside of the Schengen area. Here, the mention of "better migrant return" policies is notable. As the highly disproportionate amount of irregular Syrian migrants entering Czechia meant that many were eligible for deportation, migrant return policy instruments could now be discursively framed as a part of a crime-prevention strategy over which Czechs could exercise control, mitigating security risks associated with irregular Syrian irregular migration precipitated by subpar EU responses to border control problematized by leaders such as Zeman, Dobešova, Sobotka, and Babiš. Where Dobešova, Sobotka, and Fiala's framing of poor EU responses to the Crisis differed from those of Zeman, Babiš, and Okamura, is in the formers' criticism of the Union's ineffective actions without condemning it as a whole or framing it as an overbearing hierarchic governing body over the Czech state.

Czechia's now-overt unwillingness to accommodate Syrian migrants on its soil was further solidified in June 2023, when it voted in favour of a reform to the European Union's

migration policy relating to refugee acceptance quotas. A successor to previous attempts at instituting mandatory quotas for refugee distribution among EU states, this reform provided alternative options for member states to provide their support including financial and material contributions or expertise. While seen as a victory by some, prominent and prolific anti-Syrian-migration leaders Andrej Babiš and Tomio Okamura slammed Czechia's vote in favour of the amendment, framing it as a concession of Czech interests to those of Brussels and a future source of unwanted, presumably Syrian or otherwise Middle-Eastern, asylum seekers. Okamura described Czechia's agreement "...an incredible betrayal, an incredible failure of our government, which is servile to Brussels." while Babiš stated "The Czech Republic should decide for itself who will live here" (*ANO Requests Parliamentary Debate on Reform of EU Migration Rules,* 2023).

This rhetoric, while not out of character for Babiš and Okamura, is interesting in the case of this specific policy change, as Czechia was not compelled by it to accept any migrants or refugees whatsoever, and would be temporarily exempt from any mandatory participation due to the large number of Ukrainian refugees in the country. With all parties being aware that the quantitative migration impacts of Czechia's vote would be minimal, Babiš and Okamura's remarks reflected disgust with the principle of the Czech government bowing to migration policies drafted in Brussels. Having already framed the European Union itself as a security threat to the Czech people in the context of migration during the 2015 'Crisis', Okamura and Babiš' reactions demonstrated that, within their discursive frame of reference, any and all assistance granted to Syrian migrants, directly or indirectly, constituted the sacrifice of Czech interests to those of EU leaders in Brussels and to those of opportunistic, dangerous, non-European migrants and refugees seeking to take advantage of Czechia's people and economy.

This policy reaction contrasts greatly with discourse surrounding the establishment of the role of Czechia's National Coordinator for the Integration of War Refugees in February 2023. Created with the goal of promoting inter-regional inter-sector cooperation in public and private spheres for the benefit of Ukrainian refugees, the creation of the office is a clear indicator that Czechia continues to prioritize the accommodation of Ukrainian refugees on a permanent basis.

Having dealt with the first crisis phase of the refugee wave, it is now important to further strengthen the government's cooperation with the political representation in the regions. We need to focus on good cooperation between all key sectors to support the process of adaptation and integration of war refugees, a large number of whom are women and children. (Petr Fiala) (National Coordinator for Adaptation and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine, Klára Šimáčkova Laurenčiková, 2023).

In the Czech Republic, there is a significant percentage of people over 65, unaccompanied children, pregnant women and mothers with children under three, people with disabilities or serious illnesses, and people with mental health problems… We must also focus on the prevention of risk phenomena such as falling into poverty, loss of housing or sexual exploitation (Šimáčkova Laurenčiková) (National Coordinator for Adaptation and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine, Klára Šimáčkova Laurenčiková, 2023).

The Minister also praised the work of the group so far and wanted to continue the good cooperation with the National Coordinator, especially in the area of prevention of labour exploitation and support for vulnerable groups. (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Marian

Jurečka, 2023) (National Coordinator for Adaptation and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine,

Klára Šimáčková Laurenčiková, 2023).

In the above discourse samples, it is clear that the presence of particularly vulnerable

people within the population of Ukrainian refugees in Czechia plays a key role in framing

government responses to their treatment and management, just as the responses of populist

politicians such as Zeman to the arrival of Syrian refugees in 2015 were coloured by their

predominantly young male demographics. Despite the fact that the integration of individuals

with war-related mental health problems and severe disabilities into Czech society presents little

economic benefit and, concerning those with mental health issues, greater security risks, by

virtue of being Ukrainian (and not Roma), these individuals are discussed within discursive

frameworks of compassion and responsibility to aid. It is worth noting that Roma refugees

fleeing Ukraine, who were characterized as economic migrants and freeloaders, shared similar

demographic characteristics to the Ukrainians discussed in the above discourse. However, by this

point in time, both political and societal stances on the worthiness of Ukrainians, Roma, and

Syrians had begun to solidify, and while increasing numbers of Czechs would begin to

experience Ukraine related refugee fatigue, the discursive framing of Ukrainians in Czech

migration-related discourse would continue to be empathetic, optimistic, and relatively

uncontroversial for the remainder of the period of analysis.

Eighth Period: July 1st - December 31st, 2023

This final period analysis, which, at time of writing, has recently come to an end, marks

the most mature period of Czech migration-related discourse. With the peaks of Ukrainian

arrivals and of Syrian irregular migrant detections in the past, this period saw the emergence of few new themes in the discourse, and can be viewed as a period of discursive and political consolidation. The most prominent themes evident in Ukraine-related migration discourse during this period were 'support for Ukraine', EU collective action', and 'security'. Syrian-related migration discourse saw the dominance of themes similar to the preceding year, with 'irregular migration', 'anti-EU sentiment', and 'crisis/unprecedented event' at the fore of political discussions.

In the context of a December 2023 meeting with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Prime Minister Fiala made a statement referencing continued inflows of "illegal migrants" (who statistically are predominantly Syrian) into the Schengen Area.

Our countries agree that the EU urgently needs to reform its migration policy. The current situation is unsustainable, and we need to find a common European solution very quickly… We must discourage illegal migrants from going to Europe and fight against smugglers and traffickers in human misery… (Petr Fiala) ('Prime Minister Fiala Discusses Illegal Migration, Transportation, and Energy Cooperation with Austrian Chancellor Nehammer', 2023).

In this statement, Fiala maintains the previously established framing of Syrian refugees and migrants as an undesirable liability and "unsustainable" problem to be solved. His moderate position within Czech migration-related discourse is revealed through his calls for multilateral/European solutions to migration-related issues as well as his omission of themes of terror, security, and religion, reflecting his previous criticism, but not condemnation of the EU.

The contrasts between moderate and populist positions are made increasingly clear upon the examination of Tomio Okamura's August 2023 rhetoric, which remains remarkably consistent with his statements throughout the period of analysis.

...Europe is once again witnessing record illegal immigration. The EU and Fiala's government are unable to solve it. Stop EU, stop illegal immigration! The SPD movement does not want to end up like Islamised Western Europe. We are fighting against the EU migration pact, which secures Fiala's government and which introduces mandatory quotas for immigrants or a fine of roughly half a million crowns for each rejected immigrant (Opatrná, 2023).

Okamura's discourse typifies populist viewpoints on Czech-Syrian migration-related discourse during the period of analysis: framing the issue of irregular Syrian and otherwise Muslim migration into the EU as an urgent, existential crisis, discrediting EU policy responses, framing the Union itself as an oppressor against which Czechs must fight, engaging in fear-mongering comparisons with Western European states, and championing nationalist unilateral responses to the issues at hand. Aided by the gradual erosion of Syrian-sympathetic views on the 'Crisis' initially held by prominent figures such as former Prime Minister Sobotka, it is clear that, in the near future, Syrian and Muslim migration in Czech political discourse will be viewed as an inconvenient problem to be solved at best, and an existential crisis of national self-determination and cultural survival at worst.

Throughout this period, the presence of security concerns among moderate Czech politicians in reference to Syrian migrants remained low given the dearth of attacks and other security incidents involving said migrants. In contrast, security featured prominently in

Ukrainian-related Czech migration discourse for the first time in response to several alleged incidents involving violent attacks on Czech citizens by Ukrainian migrants in August 2023. Responding to increasing public alarm concerning the degradation of Czechia's security situation in the presence of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian migrants, Interior Minister Vít Rakušan made the following statement:

Despite these attacks which we have all condemned, Czechia remains one of the safest countries in the world. The crime rate in this country is not growing with the growing number of foreigners. Compared to 2019 (the last pre-Covid year), we have recorded 5,000 fewer crimes in 2023. Over that time, the number of foreigners has grown from 6 to 11 percent. (*Interior Minister: Czechia Not 'Less Safe' Because of Foreigners*, 2023).

At present, it is clear that violent criminal actions perpetrated by Ukrainian migrants in Czechia are not linked with political or religious agendas. However, the contrast in the reaction of Czech political discourses in the aftermath of violent attacks perpetrated in Europe by Syrian and Ukrainian migrants respectively is notable, and can be attributed to the maturing and solidification of the discursive frames within which each migrant group is discussed. While attacks perpetrated by Muslims are seen as a reasonable cause for the inadmissibility of Syrian migrants into the Schengen Area and Czech Republic, attacks perpetrated by Ukrainians are met with reassurances of safety. Rakušan's reaction to this statement, when paired with President Petr Pavel's September 2023 speech to the United Nations General Assembly during which he restated Czechia's unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine and highlighted Czechia's

status as the state with the most Ukrainian refugees per-capita in the world, typifies the current state of Ukrainian-related Czech political migration discourse.

The maturing of both Syrian and Ukrainian-related Czech migration discourse through periods of crisis, instances of violence, partisan disagreement, public concern, and unilateral and multilateral policy responses has clearly demonstrated the ways in which the discursive framing of different groups of migrants is both impacted by Czech political and social histories and impacts the treatment and therefore migration outcomes of said migrants, as will be examined in the following section.

Comparative Analysis

As previously stated, the primary goal of this thesis is to observe and explore potential covariations between the discursive construction of Syrian and Ukrainian migrants in Czech political discourse and quantitative migration outcomes over time. To this end, a comparative analysis of prominent discursive themes and quantitative migration outcomes will now be conducted for each calendar year, as the quantitative data gathered for this analysis is published on an annual basis.

Period 1: 2015

Themes of 'security' and 'public opinion' rose to prominence in the early days of the 'Migration Crisis', when very small numbers of Syrian nationals had entered Czechia; In 2015, only 135 total applications for international protection were lodged by Syrian nationals in the country. Though international protection application acceptance rates were high, Syrians were disproportionately represented among detected irregular migrants, many of whom were on their way to Germany, and who outnumbered registered Syrian nationals by a ratio of 2:1 in 2015. Syrians may have been discouraged to apply for asylum in Czechia in light of the lack of established Syrian communities, limited economic opportunities, anti-migrant political discourse, and negative public opinion directed towards them in contrast to Germany in the early days of the crisis.

2015 represented the second highest year for criminal convictions per-capita among registered Syrians in Czechia. However, it is worth noting that themes of security during this period stemmed primarily from terrorism and large-scale national security threats, drawing on events occurring outside the country. In the discourse studied for this work, there was very little

discussion of Syrians' overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and it was not observed to be associated with themes of 'security' during this period. Addressing topics of crime and terrorism, the emergence of 'direct support for Syria/Middle East', 'aid to frontline countries', and 'anti-immigrant sentiment' during the latter half of the year can also be largely attributed to events occurring outside Czechia. However, it is worth noting that the disproportionately male demographic makeup of Syrians in Czechia, as decried by former President Miloš Zeman in comments regarding their threats to national security and duty to fight the Islamic State in Syria, was very real and at its most pronounced in the early days of the 'Crisis'. In 2015, Syrian men made up almost 75% of Syrian permanent residents in Czechia, while accounting for over 60% of those granted asylum and over 65% of all Syrians in the country. These percentages, while skewed by a small sample size compared to Ukrainian and total foreign populations in Czechia, are disproportionately high, and emerged alongside the development and consolidation of securitized discursive frames relating to Syrian migrants in Czechia.

It is apparent that, during this first year of the 'Crisis', Czech migration-related discourse was generally influenced more by migration outcomes and developments outside of Czechia than by those within them. Given the relatively low numbers of Syrians participating in Czech social and economic life during the period, the general dominance of discursive themes not pertaining to the everyday lives of Czechs is logical.

Period 2: 2016

By 2016, the peak of the 'Migration Crisis' had passed, with key metrics such as total detected irregular migrants, detected illegal stays, and total unaccompanied minors all decreasing. The share of Syrians among applicants for international protection decreased from

8.85% to 5.28%, while total numbers of asylum and subsidiary protection grants for Syrians also dropped. However, over the previous year, the registered Syrian population in the country had risen by 13.07%, increasing their share of the total foreigner population from 0.23% to 0.24%.. As previously mentioned, the number of registered (regular) Syrians in Czechia in 2015 could be estimated to represent approximately one third of the total number of Syrian nationals in the country, but even the highest estimates placed Czechia as one of the EU's least refugee-bound states in 2016.

In the context of these quantitative outcomes, the prominent themes of 'EU response', 'Turkey-EU relations', and 'islamic terrorism', in the first half of the year, and 'anti-EU sentiment' and 'role of Germany' dominating alongside 'islamic terrorism' in the latter half of the year make sense. Though the share of Syrian nationals in Czech society had increased to unprecedented levels over the previous year, the vast majority of Czechs, particularly those outside of Prague, continued to lack experiences of or interactions with regular or irregular Syrian migrants in their country, informing themselves on the developing 'Crisis' through social and news media as well as the statements of political leaders. With per-capita criminal convictions of Syrian nationals dropping by almost 40% year over year, it is almost certain that concerns of terrorism continued to stem not from the lived experiences of Czechs.

With Germany suffering highly-publicized crimes perpetrated by Syrian migrants, several EU states continuing to buckle under the pressure of processing and housing hundreds of thousands of migrants, and the EU striking a deal with Turkey to limit further inflows of Syrian and other Middle Eastern migrants into the Schengen area, shifts in Czech migration-related political discourse towards strongly Schengen-focused and EU-critical stances are logical. The consolidation of this discourse, assisted by the conviction among many influential anti-migrant

voices in Czech political discourse that the country's anti-migrant rhetoric and policies 'saved' it from suffering the same fate as Germany, undoubtedly benefited from Czechia's historically contextualized political and cultural attitudes towards migration. As in the previous period, it is the author's view that it was primarily international migration outcomes and news developments, not the lived experiences of Czechs, that continued to inform Czech public opinion and political discourse during this period. Developments in the international unilateral and multilateral political management of the 'Crisis', as well as the increasingly clear and unprecedented migration outcomes associated with those decisions, particularly in Germany, can be observed to occur alongside the increasing presence of EU- and Germany-critical themes in the discourse.

Period 3: 2022

2022 marks the first and primary period during which Syrian and Ukrainian migration-related discourses clashed in the Czech political scene. With contrasting themes themes of 'not real refugees', and 'cultural differences' characterizing Syrian-related discourse while 'refugees', 'refugee centres', 'regional distribution of refugees', 'ethnic tensions', and 'integration' dominated Ukrainian-related discourses during the first half of the year, significant year-over-year changes in migration outcomes for both groups were also notable. From 2021 to 2022, the number of registered Ukrainians in Czechia increased by 223.19%, with the share of men among Ukrainians falling from 57.05% to 43.40%. During this period, the number of detected irregular Syrian migrants in Czechia skyrocketed to over 20,000, compared to approximately 2,800 Ukrainians. Crime rates among Syrians, meanwhile, almost tripled to 31.9 convictions per thousand registered Syrians, while Ukrainian rates decreased to 2.5.

As in previous years, Syrian nationals remained a small portion of Czechia's total foreign population, but they now represented the largest groups of irregular migrants and remained disproportionately represented in the Czech criminal justice system. When comparing these migration outcomes and other quantitative statistics to the discourse, it is clear that 2022 marks the first instance in which domestic experiences of migration played a primary role in influencing the direction of discourse. In turn, especially in the latter half of the year when themes of 'border protection', 'irregular migration', and 'Czech policy' came to compliment the aforementioned themes discrediting Syrian migrants' status as refugees, changes in the discursive framing of Syrian refugees, as contrasted with Ukrainian refugees, occurred alongside implementation of government actions resulting in increased irregular migrant detections, arrests, and convictions for criminal offences.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, and subsequent influx of Ukrainian refugees into Czechia, dramatically shifted Ukrainian migration-related discourse from historic themes of economic migration to those of compassionate emergency action. As discussed in this work's discourse analysis, Czechs' welcoming attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees are situated within centuries of complex historical and cultural relations, but the rapid shift in Ukrainian migration-related political discourse in Czechia that occurred in 2022 can clearly be observed to covary with the sudden changes in their migratory migration situation.

Due in part to significant changes in Syrian and Ukrainian migration outcomes in 2022, increasing the presence of migrants in Czech society, the year marks the period during which covariations in each group's discursive framing and migration outcomes are most evident. This reality is highlighted by the stark contrasts in the discursive framing of each of the migrant groups, as well as the major differences in their representation among irregular migrants,

criminals, total foreigners, and their demographics. Though it is impossible to measure the extent

to which the discursive construction of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees and migrants in Czech

political discourse may have influenced their quantitative migration outcomes or the extent to

which said outcomes may have influenced the discourse, the historically contextualized shifts in

the ways the two groups were characterized in Czech political migration-related discourse during

the period of study can be seen to covary in meaningful ways with measured quantitative

migration outcomes.

Conclusions

Migration has played a significant role in the long and storied history of the Czech people. From warring religious factions, to inflows and outflows of Czechs and foreigners following invasions, occupations, liberations, and independence days, to influxes of Vietnamese and Ukrainian workers to fill gaps in the Czech labour market, to the increasing number of foreigners in Czechia's modern economy today, the lands that are today known as Czechia have been shaped by centuries of tumultuous and consequential migration events. Throughout Czech history, particularly over the last century, the discursive framing of foreigners in the country and their respective migration outcomes have been observed to co-vary in fascinating and analytically fruitful ways.

The presence of Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovak territory at the end of the Second World War and their discursive framing as traitors to the Czechoslovak people occurred alongside the formers' mass official and unofficial expulsion from Czechoslovak lands. The replacement of anti-Soviet Czech politicians with Soviet-compliant politicians following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia occurred in concert with a lack of political migration-related discourse and general action against Russian settlement during the 'Normalization' period. The acceptance of Vietnamese migrants into Czech society has developed alongside their discursive framing as industrious, hard working contributors to the Czech economy by the Czech political class. The complex and storied history of Ukrainian migration into Czechia has developed alongside the discursive framing of Ukrainians as Slavic brethren, desirable high-skill workers, ideal candidates for integration, and fellow victims of Russian aggression. Contrastingly, the more brief, and disproportionately irregular migration history of Syrians into Czechia has occurred in concert with the framing of Syrians as security

threats, 'illegal' people, agents of islamization, and opportunistic economic migrants. Corresponding to the relatively low number of Syrian nationals who have entered or resided in Czechia over the last decade, the evolution of Syrian migration-related discourse in the Czech context can also be linked to influences outside of their Czech migration outcomes. Syrians' migration situations in other European countries, most notably Germany, as well as their discursive framing in other V4 states have undoubtedly also informed their securitization in Czechia.

It is not within the scope of critical analyses such as this to measurably link the relationships between discourse and migration outcomes, but this paper has instead endeavoured to draw attention to the complex ways in which migration-related discourse and migration vary alongside one another. It has sought to provide a nuanced analysis of the complex relationships between migration-related discourse and longitudinal migration outcomes, using an approach which could guide future researchers and analysts to better identify and associate patterns in both qualitative and quantitative migration-related data, leading to more comprehensive understandings of migration events and outcomes and thereby facilitating sound political and public responses. Furthermore, this work's analysis and contextualization of the two most significant migration events in recent Czech history has aimed to provide a robust contemporary knowledge base on which further retrospective critical examinations of Czech migration policy and outcomes can be based.

Looking to the future, current trends indicate that Czechia's economy and demographic makeup will continue to globalize, attracting a variety of skilled workers, students, and visitors from across the European Union and the world. As the diversity of its population continues to increase, political discourse regarding the preservation of Czech culture, language, history, and

societal values will surely remain relevant in Czech political discourse. Having witnessed the last decade of unprecedented European migration events, their outcomes, and their discursive framing, Czechs in the future should ideally be able to critically examine matters of migration policy and practice, separating objective facts from political spins, supporting the policies they feel are best for their country.

References

Agnew, Hugh. 2004. "The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown." Stanford, United

States: Hoover Institution Press.

Ajluni, E. 2019. "Germany's Migration Crisis." Crisis Observatory.

https://crisesobservatory.es/germanys-migration-crisis/.

ANO Requests Parliamentary Debate on Reform of EU Migration Rules (2023) *Brno Daily*.

Available at:

https://brnodaily.com/2023/06/10/news/politics/ano-requests-parliamentary-debate-on-ref

orm-of-eu-migration-rules/.

Barsa, Pavel. Rep. *Managing Immigration and Integration in the Czech Republic*. Budapest,

Hungary : CPS International Policy Fellowship Program, 2004.

Bill. *Act No. 123/1992 Coll. of 4 March 1992 on Foreigners' Stay and Residence in the Czech

and Slovak Federal Republic* . Prague, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic : Government

of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, 1992.

Bill. *Act No. 326/1999 Coll., On the Residence of Foreign Nationals In the Territory of the Czech

Republic* . Prague, Czech Republic : Government of the Czech Republic , 2009.

Bill. *Act No. 2/1993 Coll., One the Declaration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and

Freedoms as a Part of the Constitutional Order of the Czech Republic,* 1993.

Bill. *Resolution of the Presidium of the Czech National Council of 16 December 1992 on the

Declaration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms as a Part of the*

Constitutional Order of the Czech Republic. Prague, Czech Republic : Government of the Czech Republic, 1998.

Bocskor, Á. (2018) 'Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary During the "Crisis" Year', *Sociology*, 52(3), pp. 551–568.

Buzan, B. & Wæver, O. (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Rep. *Amnesty International Report 2016/17 - Slovakia*. London, England: Amnesty International, 2017.

Bachman, B. (2016) "Diminishing Solidarity: Polish Attitudes Toward the European Migration and Refugee Crisis." Migration Information Source. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/diminishing-solidarity-polish-attitudes-toward-european-migration-and-refugee-crisis.

Bocskor, Á. (2018) 'Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary During the "Crisis" Year', *Sociology*, 52(3), pp. 551–568.

Bushra Ni Ma, R. (2013). 'A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Political Speech on Online Education', *International Journal of Development in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 15.

'Cizinci Podle Státního Občanstvi a Pohlavï 31.12' (2015). Praha.

Curry, N., Baker, P. and Brookes, G. (2024) 'Generative AI for Corpus Approaches to Discourse Studies: A Critical Evaluation of ChatGPT', *Applied Corpus Linguistics,* 4(1).

Czech Authorities Tighten Rules for Ukrainian Refugees (2016) *BNE Intellinews*. Available at:
https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-2465
16/.

Czech Deputy PM Rejects Refugee Quotas, Says Country Should Fight any EU Sanctions (2016)
Reuters. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN10E227/**.**

Czech Government Agrees to Take in Syrian Refugee Children for Medical Treatment (2015)
Radio Prague International. Available at:
https://english.radio.cz/czech-government-agrees-take-syrian-refugee-children-medical-tr
eatment-8272009.

Czech MP Tomio Okamura: The EU Approval of Refugee Quotas in a New Nazi Occupation
(2015) *Britské Listy*. Available at
https://www.blisty.cz/art/79145-czech-mp-tomio-okamura-the-eu-approval-of-refugee-qu
otas-is-a-new-nazi-occupation.

(*Czech PM: Bolder Steps Needed to Resolve Illegal Migration, Radio Prague International*.
Available at:
https://english.radio.cz/czech-pm-bolder-steps-needed-resolve-illegal-migration-8796275.

Czech PM Says no to 'Large Muslim Community' (2016) *Radio France International*. Available
at:
https://www.citethisforme.com/bibliographies/ca3c9268-248e-4624-956e-395da701f756.

Czech President Warns of Migrants' 'Barbaric Acts' (2016) *Deutsche Welle*. Available at:
https://www.dw.com/en/czech-president-warns-of-migrants-barbaric-acts/a-19444629.

Czechs Declare 'State of Emergency for Ukrainian War Refugees' (2016) *Radio Prague International*. Available at:

    https://english.radio.cz/czechs-declare-state-emergency-ukrainian-war-refugees-8743717.

Dambach, Kai. 2018. "Czech Republic Remains Closed to Refugees, Says PM." InfoMigrants.

    https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/12184/czech-republic-remains-closed-to-refugees-s

    ays-pm.

"Demographic Aspects of the Foreigner's Life." Foreigners in the Czech Republic , 2014.

    https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/1414-04-2004-1__demographic_aspects_of_the_foreigner_

    s_life.

Dobešová, I. (2015). Praha, Czechia: Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věci.

Dullien, Sebastian. Issue brief. *Paying the Price: The Cost of Europe's Refugee Crisis*. Berlin,

    Germany : European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.

Economic Migrant (2024c) *Migration and Home Affairs*. Available at

    https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylu

    m-and-migration-glossary/glossary/economic-migrant_en.

European Commission. 2023. "Governance of Migrant Integration in Czechia." European

    Website on Integration.

    https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integrat

    ion-czechia_en.

European Migration Network. 2015 "Country Factsheet: Czech Republic 2015"

Europe Faces 'Organized Invasion' (2015) *Deutsche Welle.* Available at:

https://www.dw.com/en/czech-president-zeman-says-refugee-wave-is-organized-invasion

/a-18943660.

Felčer, Petr. 2022. "Myth Versus Reality: Immigration from the Middle East and Northern Africa

to the Czech Republic," Report. In *Faces of Migration*. Tváre Migrace.

https://tvaremigrace.cz/res/archive/001/000213.pdf?seek=1583081388.

First Instance Decisions on Applications by Type of Decision, Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual

Aggregated Data (2023a) Eurostat. Available at

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asydcfsta/default/table?lang=en

Glassheim, Eagle. "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak

Germans in 1945." *Central European History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 463–86.

Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (2024a) *Migration and Home Affairs*. Available at:

https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylu

m-and-migration-glossary/glossary/global-approach-migration-and-mobility-gamm_en.

Gustav Husak (2024) *Prague Castle*. Available at:

https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/former-presidents/gustav-husak.

Harrison, Erica. "Broadcasting by the Czechoslovak Exile Government in London, 1939-1945."

Essay. In *Revisiting Transnational Broadcasting* , edited by Nelson Ribeiro and Stephanie

Seul, 99–104. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2018.

Interior Minister: Czechia Not 'Less Safe' Because of Foreigners (2023) *Radio Prague*

International . Available at:

https://english.radio.cz/interior-minister-czechia-not-less-safe-because-foreigners-879140
5.

Juncker, Jean-Claude "State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty Unity and Solidarity."
European Commission. Address presented at the State of the Union 2015, September 9,
2015.

Fialova, Ludmlila, and Branislav Šprocha. "The Population of Czechia and Slovakia in
1918-1945 ." *Demografie* 60 (2018): 161–83.

Hernandez, Yutsil. 2022. "Jan Hus" Central Europe (4).

Irregular Migrant (2024b). *Migration and Home Affairs.* Available at:
https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylu
m-and-migration-glossary/glossary/irregular-migrant_en.

Jurečková, Adéla. "Refugees in the Czech Republic? Not a Trace - but Still a Problem."
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung , May 24, 2016.
https://eu.boell.org/en/2016/05/24/refugees-czech-republic-not-trace-still-problem.

Kopeček, Michal. "Czechoslovak Interwar Democracy and Its Critical Introspections." *Journal
of Modern European History* 17 (2019): 7–15.

Kouřil, Pavel, ed. *Great Moravia and the Beginnings of Christianity*. Brno, Czech Republic: The
Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno, 2014.

Koutek, Ondřej. "The Overseas Resistance on the Airwaves of the BBC: Czechoslovak

    Broadcasts From London 1939-1945." *Behind the Iron Curtain: Review of the Institute*

    for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes 3 (2014): 9–25.

Kováts, András, ed. 2015. "Hungary: Government's National Consultation on Immigration and

    Terrorism Creates Widespread Debate." European Website on Integration.

    https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/hungary-governments-national-consultatio

    n-immigration-and-terrorism-creates-widespread-debate_en.

Lazarová, D. (2015) *Czech Republic Tightens Security at Key Border Crossings with Austria*,

    Radio Prague International . Available at:

    https://english.radio.cz/czech-republic-tightens-security-key-border-crossings-austria-824

    8411.

Levi, Y. (2015). *Czech Politician: Walk Your Pet Pig Near a Mosque, Israel National News*,

    Available at https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/189495.

Maguire, Richard. *The Routledge History of Genocide*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge,

    2015.

McCann, K. and Sienkiewicz, M. (2023b) *Vol 72, The Roel of Media Narratives in Shaping*

    Public Opinion Toward Refugees: A Comparative Analysis. rep. Geneva, Switzerland:

    International Organization for Migration.

McEnchroe, T. and Novák, L. (2022) *Border Check Spat Expected to Take Centre Stage at Czech*

    and Slovak PM Meeting, Radio Prague International . Available at:

https://english.radio.cz/border-check-spat-expected-take-centre-stage-czech-and-slovak-p
m-meeting-8766681.

Meeting of the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Mr. Notis Matarachi, with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of The Czech Republic, Mr. Vit Rakusan (no date) *Hellenic Republic Minister of Migration and Asylum*. Available at: https://migration.gov.gr/en/n-mitarakis-sinantisi-me-vit-rakusan/.

Meyer, M. (2001) 'Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis: Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA', in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications.

Migration and Migrant Population Statistics (2023b) *Eurostat*. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant _population_statistics.

Ng, N. and Cowburn, A. (2016) *Miloš Zeman: Czech President Says Integrating Muslims is 'Practically Impossible', Independent.* Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/milos-zeman-czech-president-says-int egrating-muslims-is-practically-impossible-a6818491.html.

Norman, Kelsey. "Migration and Displacement in the Arab World Demands a More Equitable Response." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/05/03/migration-and-displacement-in-arab-world-de mands-more-equitable-response-pub-89520.

'"Number of Persons Enjoying Asylum Status as of 31.12.2018." Prague: Czech Statistical

    Office, 2019.

Perkowski, Nina. "More Frontex Is Not the Answer to the Refugee Crisis." Open Democracy,

    2015.

    https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/more-frontex-is-not-answer-to-refugee-crisis/.

Pew Research Center. "Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015."

    Pew Research Center, August 2, 2016.

'PM Sobotka: I Welcome the Fact The Fact that We Have Agreed on Specific Steps Which,

    Unlike Quotas, Will Help us to Manage the Migration Crisis' (2015) *Government*

    Information Centre [Preprint]. Government of The Czech Republic. Available at:

    https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/pm-sobotka-i-welcome-the-fact-that-we-ha

    ve-agreed-on-specific-steps-which--unlike-quotas--will-help-us-to-manage-the-migration-c

    risis-135220/tmplid-676/.

'Prime Minister Fiala Discusses Illegal Migration, Transportation, and Energy Cooperation with

    Austrian Chancellor Nehammer' (2023). *Government of the Czech Republic*. Available at:

    https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/prime-minister-fiala-discusses-illegal-migr

    ation--transportation--and-energy-cooperation-with-austrian-chancellor-nehammer-211041/

    .

Radio Prague International. "NVA Troops Stop at the Czechoslovakian Border." Radio Prague

    International , 2008.

https://deutsch.radio.cz/nva-truppen-machen-halt-der-tschechoslowakischen-grenze-8592

835.

Refugees (2024) *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Available at*

https://www.unhcr.org/refugees

Rep. *Tampere European Council 15 and 16 October 1999 Presidency Conclusions*. Brussels,

Belgium: European Parliament, 1999.

Reuters. 2015. "Half of Czechs Oppose Taking in War Refugees: Survey."

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-czech-opinion-idUSKCN0S11JN201

51007/.

Revzin, Grigorij Isaakovič, Milan Navrátil , and K Krbec. *Jan Žižka : 1370-1424*. Prague,

Czechoslovakia : Československá akademie věd, 1954.

Rovny, Jan. Working paper. *Circumstantial Liberals: Czech Germans in Interwar*

Czechoslovakia. Paris, France: HAL, 2020.

Rozhovor Prezidenta Republiky Pro Deník (2016) *Miloš Zeman*. Available at

http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-denik-528523.htm.

Safdar, Anaella. "Czech Leader's Anti-Refugee Rhetoric Slammed." Aljazeera, December 27,

2015.

Seidlová, Markéta. "The Birth of a Country of Immigration: The Case of the Czech Republic."

Demografie 60, no. 4 (2018): 348–59.

Smith, T. (2022) *Czech Politicians Criticise Decision to Evict Refugees from Housing Facility* , *Expats CZ*. Available at:

https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czech-prime-minister-weighs-in-on-decision-to

-evict-ukrainian-refugees-from-housing-facility.

"Speech on the Migration Situation Delivered by the Prime Minister to the Chamber of Deputies on 21 January 2016." *Government of the Czech Republic*, February 2016. Government of the Czech Republic.

https://www.vlada.cz/en/clenove-vlady/premier/speeches/speech-on-the-migration-situati

on-delivered-by-the-prime-minister-to-the-chamber-of-deputies-on-21-january-2016-139

768/.

Spindler , William. "2015: The Year of Europe's Refugee Crisis." United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015.

https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2015-year-europes-refugee-crisis.

Stojanov, Robert, Oldřich Bureš, and Barbora Duží. "Migration and Development Policies: The State of Affairs Before the 2015 European Migration Crisis in the Czech Republic and Its Current Implications." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 50, no. 3 (September 2017): 169–81.

Stritzel, H. (2007). 'Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond', *European Journal of International Relations*, 13(3).

Szalai, Máté, Zsuzsanna Csornai, and Nikolett Garai. "V4 Migration Policy: Conflicting Narratives and Interpretative Frameworks." Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, 2017.

"The Czech Government's Migration Policy Principles." Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2023. https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/the-czech-government-s-migration-policy-principles.aspx.

"The National Coordinator for the Integration of War Refugees will be Klára Šimáčková Laurenčiková." (2023). *Government of the Czech Republic*. Available at: https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/the-national-coordinator-for-the-integration-of-war-refugees-will-be-klara-simackova-laurencikova--she-wants-to-strengthen-cooperation-with-regions-an-203563/

"The Situation of Refugees from Ukraine." European Website on Integration, 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/situation-refugees-ukraine_en#:~:text=The%20Czech%20Republic%20has%20accepted,refugees%20per%20100%20000%20inhabitants.

"Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community, Signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007." *Official Journal of the European Union* 306, no. 1 (December 17, 2007).

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001) "Discourse: Language, Context, and Interaction", in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

Vánoční Poselství Prezidenta Republiky Miloše Zemana (2015) *Miloš Zeman*. Available at:

http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/vanocni-poselstvi-prezidenta-republiky-milose-zemana-992861.htm

Weber, M. *et al.* (2023) 'Social Solidarity with Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees in the Twitter

Discourse. A Comparison Between 2015 and 2022', *European Societies*.

Who is a Migrant? (2024) *International Organization for Migration*. Available at

https://www.iom.int/who-migrant-0.

Willoughby, I. (2015) *Change in Tone, Deutsche Welle*. Available at:

https://www.dw.com/en/is-czech-anti-migrant-sentiment-fading/a-18693407.

Wodak, R. (2001) 'What CDA is About - a Summary of its History, Important Concepts, and its

Developments', in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London, United Kingdom:

SAGE Publications.

Zaun, Natascha, and Ariadna Ripoll Servent. "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: The

Ambiguous Role of Germany in EU Asylum Policies." *Journal of European Integration*

43, no. 2 (2021): 157–74.

(2017) *Facilitation of Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.* Rep. Geneva, Switzerland:

International Organization for Migration.

(2019) *Pathways to Citizenship for Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States*. rep. Brussels,

Belgium: European Union.

(2023) *Annual Report 2022*, rep. Prague, Czechia: Refugee Facilities Administration of the

    Ministry of the Interior.

Appendix

Period of Analysis	URL
January - June, 2015	https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/czech-far-right-leader-tomio-okamura-urges-citizens-walk-pigs-near-mosques-defend-country-islam-1481888
	https://english.radio.cz/czech-government-agrees-take-syrian-refugee-children-medical-treatment-8272009
	https://www.praguepost.com/education/47540-czechs-open-their-universities-for-syrian-refugees
	https://www.anobudelip.cz/cs/makame/archiv/novinky/projev-andeje-babise-na-european-forum-wachau-22245.shtml
July - December, 2015	https://www.dw.com/en/is-czech-anti-migrant-sentiment-fading/a-18693407
	https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj0s7KQ-NeDAxU90gIHHR8pD0IQFnoECBYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mzv.cz%2Ffile%2F1733820%2FHamacek___Speech.doc&usg=AOvVaw0iRoG9c5bbWlWtQqunUz4b&opi=89978449
	https://english.radio.cz/immigrant-crisis-sparks-some-rifts-within-czech-political-parties-8248167
	https://english.radio.cz/czech-political-spectrum-united-opposition-eu-migrant-quotas-8248721
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/vanocni-poselstvi-prezidenta-republiky-milose-zemana-992861.htm
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/in-the-zaatari-refugee-camp--prime-minister-sobotka-personally-examined-the-use-of-financial-assistance-from-the-czech-republic-136549/
	https://english.radio.cz/syrian-born-senator-praises-wave-solidarity-refugees-despite-fear-mongering-8249372
	https://legacy.blisty.cz/art/79145.html
	https://www.politico.eu/article/prague-springs-to-intolerance/
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/pm-sobotka-i-welcome-the-fact-that-we-have-agreed-on-specific-steps-which--unlike-quotas--will-help-us-to-ma

	nage-the-migration-crisis-135220/tmplid-81/
	https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjfu_DQ_NeDAxWx-QIHHcvECrU4HhAWegQIChAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mzv.cz%2Ffile%2F1618292%2FProjev_posl._Dobesove_na_zasedani_OBSE_v_Mongolsku.doc&usg=AOvVaw2evMNng8kIcz333vRaYNlD&opi=89978449
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/joint-statement-of-the-visegrad-group-countries-137816/
	https://english.radio.cz/czech-prime-minister-says-paris-attacks-are-wake-call-europe-8242270
	https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/27/czech-leaders-anti-refugee-rhetoric-slammed
January - June, 2016	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-denik-528523.htm
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-parlamentni-listy-270344.htm
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-parlamentni-listy180728.htm
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-denik-pravo-111038.htm
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/milos-zeman-prezident-republiky-6-cervna-2016-denik-635379.htm
	https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/milos-zeman-czech-president-says-integrating-muslims-is-practically-impossible-a6818491.html
	https://vlada.mk/node/11842?ln=sq
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/clenove-vlady/premier/speeches/speech-on-the-migration-situation-delivered-by-the-prime-minister-to-the-chamber-of-deputies-on-21-january-2016-139768/
	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/integrating-muslims-into-europe-is-impossible-says-czech-president
	https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/644405/Czech-Republic-Slovakia-Hungary-Poland-fence-migrants-out-Europe
July - December, 2016	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/14/milos-zeman-czech-leader-refugees

	https://www.politico.eu/article/czech-president-calls-for-deportation-of-economic-migrants-milos-zeman/
	https://www.voanews.com/a/zcech-president-says-bar-refugees-to-prevent-barbaric-attacks/3445416.html
	http://www.zemanmilos.cz/cz/clanky/rozhovor-prezidenta-republiky-pro-parlamentni-listy-107349.htm
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/prime-minister-sobotka-czech-republic-to-provide-syrian-refugees-with-czk-170-million-in-aid-this-year---139979/tmplid-676/
	https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN10E227/
	https://www.dw.com/en/czech-president-warns-of-migrants-barbaric-acts/a-19444629
	https://www.arabnews.com/node/1029886/world
	https://dangerousspeech.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CZ_Zeman-Finished.pdf
	https://punchng.com/muslims-not-welcome-czech-republic-pm/
January - June, 2022	https://romea.cz/en/czech-republic/czech-president-calls-romani-refugees-from-ukraine-economic-migrants
	https://www.intellinews.com/czech-authorities-tighten-rules-for-ukrainian-refugees-246516/
	https://english.radio.cz/czechs-declare-state-emergency-ukrainian-war-refugees-8743717
	https://romea.cz/en/czech-republic/czech-president-calls-romani-refugees-from-ukraine-economic-migrants
	https://www.mpsv.cz/web/en/czpres
	https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/czech-republic-ready-to-accept-ukrainian-refugees-in-case-of-emergency/2503329
	https://vlada.gov.cz/en/jednani-vlady/policy-statement/policy-statement-of-the-government-193762/
	https://english.radio.cz/prague-buckling-under-strain-majority-war-refugees-head-capital-city-8744143?fbclid=IwAR1bDOsJ2XRreEdTUJ-SP8Dhc3xS_-0EHMKYzg3-FiVHKCH4HJ6zv3e1gik
	https://www.rferl.org/a/czech-fiala-ukraine-wives-children/31761096.html
	https://romea.cz/en/czech-republic/czech-interior-minister-temporary-shelter-will-be-built-so-refugees-do-not-have-sleep-in-the-hallways-of-the-main-train

	https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/25/they-wont-accept-us-roma-refugees-forced-to-camp-at-prague-train-station
July - December, 2022	https://brnodaily.com/2022/09/07/news/politics/czech-interior-minister-to-discuss-uptick-in-syrian-refugees-with-slovak-and-german-counterparts/
	https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/09/29/while-ukrainian-refugees-accepted-new-fears-in-central-europe-over-middle-eastern-migrants
	https://english.radio.cz/border-check-spat-expected-take-centre-stage-czech-and-slovak-pm-meeting-8766681
	https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czech-prime-minister-weighs-in-on-decision-to-evict-ukrainian-refugees-from-housing-facility
	https://www.veridica.ro/en/acf/czech-republic-ukrainian-refugees-as-a-political-topic
	https://ieu-monitoring.com/editorial/speech-by-czech-prime-minister-petr-fiala-at-the-eu-parliament/382439
	https://migration.gov.gr/en/n-mitarakis-sinantisi-me-vit-rakusan/
January - June, 2023	https://english.radio.cz/czech-pm-bolder-steps-needed-resolve-illegal-migration-8796275
	https://vlada.gov.cz/scripts/detail.php?id=203563&tmplid=51
	https://brnodaily.com/2023/02/28/news/30000-unaccompanied-child-refugees-in-the-czech-republic-says-human-rights-commissioner/
	https://brnodaily.com/2023/06/10/news/politics/ano-requests-parliamentary-debate-on-reform-of-eu-migration-rules/
	https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-ano-chce-mimoradnou-schuzi-k-migracni-reforme-eu-souhlas-vlady-je-pry-zrada-40434248?_zn=aWQlM0Q2MjY0NzYxNDE3MjE4MTQ2NjQzJTdDdCUzRDE3MDYxMjYyMjUuNTQzJTdDdGUlM0QxNzA2MTI2MjI1LjU0MyU3Q2MlM0RERERRUZENDcwNzg1QzQxOEY0RDgzN0U4QTkyQkIxxNA%3D%3D
	https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjbqYyY9vaDAxXhyQIHHd8vBEoQFnoECCkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mvcr.cz%2Fmvcren%2Ffile%2Freport-on-extremism-and-prejudicial-hatred-in-the-czech-republic-in-2022.aspx&usg=AOvVaw0jrCEEyIUZhgdtalpXFnNp&opi=89978449
	https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/-/coe/unhcr-roundtable-in-the-czech-republic-effective-protection-of-migrants-and-refugees-in-a-vulnerable-situation-including-women-and-children-fleeing-u

July - December, 2023	kraine
	https://www.expres.cz/zpravy/tomio-okamura-spd-vlada-uprchlici.A230726_171159_dx-zpravy_opae
	https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/czech-pm-says-eu-far-from-tackling-causes-of-irregular-migration/
	https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/current-president-of-the-cr/public-addresses-and-interviews/the-speech-of-the-president-of-the-czech-republic-at-the-78th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-17351
	https://english.radio.cz/interior-minister-czechia-not-less-safe-because-foreigners-8791405
	https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/government-tackles-anti-ukrainian-disinformation-in-roma-communities
	https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/czechia-and-the-fight-for-survival/
	https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/ukraine-demands-extradition-of-its-draft-age-men/
	https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/current-president-of-the-cr/public-addresses-and-interviews/speech-of-the-president-of-the-republic-petr-pavel-in-the-european-parliaments-chamber-of-deputies-17390
	https://www.america-times.com/the-speech-of-the-president-of-the-czech-republic-petr-pavel-at-the-78th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/