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How Immigrant Integration Policies in Central-Eastern Europe Metropolises Highlight a European Frame of Integration Policy

1. Introduction

The Czech Republic and Poland have not been considered as the destinations of immigration – even as of 2018 this is still the case. Poland, for instance, has been generally depicted as a state of large emigration to the USA and Western Europe (Okólski 2012), and the outflow of labour migrants has only increased when Poland joined the European Union (EU). Therefore, migration policy has never been high on the political agenda neither in the Czech Republic nor in Poland, and as such it has been viewed as an apolitical issue. However, during the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015, for the first time the subject of migration has been brought into the public debate in these states (Kubicki et al. 2017). The migration has been used in political campaigns, such as general elections, in both states and this has shaped the attitudes towards foreigners in both states, and changes in migration policies and regulations followed (Trbola, Rákoczyová 2011). During this time and over the last years these two states have been undergoing a transformation from emigration to immigration destinations, due to an intensive inflow of labour migrants mainly from the Eastern neighbouring states.

In comparison to Western states, the number of migrants in Poland and the Czech Republic in the past few years has not exceeded 5%. Therefore, the situation in the latter states has not been as urgent but there has been a growing understanding on the local level that an increasing number of migrants needs addressing. The majority of migrants in these two states is concentrated in the capital cities. Over the last five years, the Central Eastern Europe (CEE) states have witnessed a high inflow of labour workers that has coincided with the rise of populism, anti-EU discourse as well as the turn towards negative attitudes towards foreigners.

As Goffman’s frame analysis (1974) has been used by Rein and Schön’s (1994) policy studies, and has experienced a recent revival in the analysis of immigrant integration policies (Scholten 2011), we use this theory in our analysis. We have assumed that the European accession of the Czech Republic and Poland, and the following introduction of policies which have been promoted by the European Commission (EC) and targeted immigrants (the *European Fund for the Integration of Third Nationals* (EIF) and the *European Fund for Refugees* (ERF), as of 2014 known as the *Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration* (AMIF)), have contributed to a frame shift in the policy response to immigrants in both states.

We explore how the *European Frame* has been institutionalized on the municipal level of policy making; as well as in what ways and how far the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 has

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shifted the CEE countries towards, specifically on a national level, more restrictive migrant policies; and how this has changed the process of institutionalization on a local level – a change that has been already underway prior to the refugee crisis. The tensions between the different levels of governance regarding approaches to integration policies during the time of the crisis brings our attention to the concept of the multilevel governance (MLG) (Hooghe, Marks 1996; Piattoni 2001). By using the MLG approach in our analysis, we can look at the relations between transnational, national and local levels from the top down and bottom up perspectives. Moreover, we shall also look at, if, and in what ways the process differs in both states as well as what funding sources both states use. In particular, we shall look at the role of the European funds as monies from national budgets are very limited when it comes to integration policies in CEE.

The decision to study policy frames on the local (municipal) level stems from the fact that in Europe immigration is predominantly a city phenomenon and that in CEE, on the state level of policy making it is relatively less important. However, we would argue that focusing on the local level enables researchers to study organizational design of policy formulation and implementation. This process of policy design is made up of different types of actors: 1) city hall agencies, 2) state and regional agencies, non-governmental organizations, migrants associations – which, together, constitute the local organizational fields (Matusz-Protasiewicz 2013). An organizational field is a meso-level social order (Fligstein, McAdam 2012) where social actors, who relate to each other because of a common issue, are brought together (Hoffman 1999) – in the case of this study the issue bringing together social actors is the integration of immigrants. Organizations that participate in an organizational field create a common meaning system (Scott 2014). Yet, fields are spaces of both cooperation and conflict (Fligstein, McAdam 2012; Pawlak 2018).

In this paper, we shall analyse the institutionalization of immigrant integration policy framing in Prague and Warsaw as our case studies. In particular, we shall focus on the largest migrant communities in both states, namely: Ukrainian and Vietnamese; refugees from the Caucasus and expats from Western Europe, and other developed states. This paper is organized along the conceptual framework proposed by Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas (2016). First, we shall discuss the concept of frame shifts in integration policies. Second, we shall explain our methodological approach. Third, we shall analyze the content of policies, specifically looking at policy frames, policy aims, and policy target groups. Fourth, we shall discuss policy governance, focusing on strategy, organization of policymaking and implementation, actors, and multilevel context and influence. Lastly, we shall compare and contrast the cities' approach to immigration, including immigrant integration governance – their policies as well as policymaking in this area.

2. Frame shift in Central Eastern Europe

Until the EU accession of the Czech Republic and Poland, these states had a very limited policy response to the presence of immigrants² because up to this point, it had been viewed as a

²In the Czech Republic and Poland the terms 'migrant/s' and 'immigrant/s' are not used, instead 'alien/s' and/or 'foreigner/s' (Czech: *cizine*; Polish: *cudzoziemiec*) are used in their Alien Policy/Alien Act. These terms are also applied in legislation.

future problem, along the lines of ‘let’s cross the bridge when we get there’. Therefore, the lack of policies had been justified and the existing policies focused, mostly, on asylum seekers and refugees. However, over the past five years, the presence of the European funds (specifically, the launch of the *European Fund for Integration of Third Country Nationals* in 2009) and a marked unrelenting rise of immigrants in both states have the emergence of the so-called *European Frame* – this has become the favoured approach to immigration. This frame can be described as “*Integration may be a small, yet it is an existent problem, and we need to tackle it in a European way*”. The institutionalization of this frame is an example of diffusion and local adaptation of social practices or of a journey of ideas (Czarniawska, Joerges 1996; Djelic 2008) of the EU frame to local contexts. It is not a mechanical process of policy transfer but rather a result of organizational actors working together in order to use available financial resources as well as to apply new *symbolic resources* to legitimize their actions. In this paper we follow the Hooghe and Marks (2001) understanding of local level as an active actor of multilevel governance in integration policy, acting both in horizontal and vertical networks, not only policies implementation but also integration policy development.

In the Czech Republic and Poland, the European funds (ERU, EFI, recently FAMI) have been used to finance various *ad hoc* initiatives in the area of migrant integration, very often without a clear, long-term strategy on a national level. The main actors involved in the practical implementation of the integration programmes were NGOs whose role in the institutionalization of integration strategies/policies in all CEE states has been significant (Pawlak, Matusz-Protasiewicz 2015).

3. Method

Our research on the comparison of the institutionalization of integration policies in the CEE cities is first of its kind in this area. In order to understand how this institutionalization happens, we have decided to use the *European Frame* on a city level as this enabled us to study the actual content and governance of integration policy. Our decision to do so is also underpinned by research on the local turn in integration studies (Penninx 2004; Alexander 2007; Caponio 2010). We have decided to focus on Prague and Warsaw as our case studies in order to test the hypothesis that there is a common pattern of integration policy in the CEE metropolises. Previous research (Scholten 2016) clearly shows that Western and Southern European models of integration policy are aligned. But there is a distinct absence of data on whether there is a development convergence in CEE, especially when as CEE is in a different stage of development of both migration and integration policies than Western and Southern Europe.

In the analysis of the empirical data, we have used local policy documents (city strategies, action plans etc.), minutes from the meeting of consultative bodies, recommendations and reports provided by different stakeholders (NGOs and migrants associations). Due to the very fragmented approach to integration, besides the official documents directly addressing this area, we looked at the local strategies/policies aiming at social cohesion, education, housing etc. These written sources are supplemented by in-depth one-on-one interviews (semi-structured) with the key actors in both cities (municipal civil servants, NGO activists, leaders of migrants associations).

5. Analysis of the cases

In order to analyse the cases of Prague and Warsaw, we have used a mixed method approach, namely, Penninx's (2014) comparative policy approach as well as the theories of institutional diffusion and translation of practices (Djelic 2008; Sahlin, Wedlin 2008). As we aim to understand how the EU level shapes the institutionalization on a local level in CEE, how this diffusion happens, and whether, and/or how, it is transferred into a local context practices. We use the former approach to clarify whether there is a common pattern emerging in the CEE context. But in order to understand how organizational actors search for policy responses to their new problems we use the latter approach. The managing of policy responses to new problems has been noted to be effective in Western Europe (Pawlak 2013). Firstly, we analyse the content of the policies (policy frames, policy aims, and policy target groups) that is what are the targeted groups and how many integration actions have been implemented on a local level. Secondly, we focus on policy governance, in particular on strategies, organization of policymaking and implementation, and policy actors. We argue that the local responses to integration of migrants – within the structure of multilevel governance, in which the transnational level (the EU) addresses general frame for integration, the national level (the CEE states) – are characterized by weak, or absent, integration policy, and the city level tries to deal with the everyday needs and realities of integration.

4.1 Content of policies

4.1.1 Policy frames

In comparison to the approach taken by the Western European cities, The *European Frame* in Prague and Warsaw positions immigration as an issue of relatively low importance for the cities (Tbola, Rákoczyová 2011; Matusz-Protasiewicz 2013). However, the existence of the immigrant communities in these cities and their “proper” treatment – by this we mean an adequate access to social services – is then conceptualized as the cities being modern in their approach to immigration. The future of the immigrants is considered in the context of the anticipated growing numbers of immigrants and the significance of this for the cities. There is a consensus amongst the local policy makers that the policies aimed at/for immigrants should, on the one hand be designed to meet immigrants' specific needs. On the other hand, it is important to foster the intercultural dialogue and the openness of the host society towards this new phenomenon. Thus, the policy aims constitute an adaptation of the goals set by the *European Common Principles of Integration*. Although the EC defines integration as a two way process, the CEE states formulate policies aims in such a way as to change very little in the institutional structures of the host societies. Our research findings clearly show that adaptation to structures is considered (by our respondents and as seen in formal and informal practices) to be the task of the immigrants, while to assist in this adaptation is the responsibility of the host society and, in particular, that of the local authorities.

In both cases the development of integration strategic documents and/or plans seems to be only a partial adjustment to the European standards.

However, the increase in the number of migrants in the cities has lead to a development of *ad hoc* emergency solutions – as it was the case in Prague during the time of the economic crisis

of 2008 when many migrants had lost their jobs (Drbohlav et. al 2010; Tbola, Rákoczyová 2011; Horáková 2012). It has been the first time since the inflow of migrants that integration policy had been designed to solve actual problems of actual migrants.

Similarly to Poland, in the Czech Republic the NGOs involved in the integration field have started acting as service providers in situations in which the state has not developed the policy and tools aimed at supporting the integration of migrants. There is no defined strategy of integration based on the specific needs of migrants, local characteristics and long-term aims, instead local actors work together on a more informal basis, e.g. acting as service providers and being actors of policy making. For example, in Warsaw the *Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners* (SDCF) (in Polish: Komisja Dialogu Społecznego ds. Cudzoziemców) brings together a number of NGOs. The SDCF advises the City Hall, although it is not an advisory body but a networking organization that links together its member organizations. In the Czech Republic there is the *Administration Committee of the Council of Prague for the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners* (ACCPANMIF) (in Czech: Komise Rady hl.m. Prahy pro oblast národnostních menšin a integrace cizinců na území hl.m. Prahy) which is quite similar in its organization to the Polish equivalent.

4.1.2 Policy aims

The policy aims in the two cities are rather vague and lack of focus. As such, these aims are often said to promote/recognize cultural diversity rather than concentrate on the legal-political dimensions or socio-economic aspects of integration. In the field of diversity management and intercultural dialogue, the local level seems to be flexible in adopting its own strategies. The legal-political and socio-economic dimensions, similarly as in the Western European states, are developed as a part of legal regulations on a national level. However, on a local level there is relatively smaller opportunity for local policy makers to act independently from a national level.

The formulation of a national integration policy has been in a permanent state of development with no end in sight as such both states' policies lack legally binding regulations and institutional arrangements. For example, the national government in the Czech Republic has developed two strategic documents *Principles of Policy for the Integration of Foreigners* (in Czech: Zásady Koncepce Integrace Cizinců 1999) and the *Policy for the Integration of Foreigners* (in Czech: Koncepce Integrace Cizinců 2000, revised 2006 and 2011). Both documents are not legally binding and have been viewed as a set of recommendations and good practices from the more advanced and experienced European states. Similarly, in Poland the strategic integration document *Migration Policy of Poland* (in Polish: Polityka Migracyjna Polski 2012)³ had been also used more as a guide rather than a legally binding document. These guidelines had not been transferred into policy, and therefore had not been implemented. The documents' focus, as in the Czech Republic, is based around the language learning, socio-economic orientation, self-sufficiency, relationships between migrants and the receiving society – which is quite similar to the goals set up by the EC. At the beginning of these strategic documents, there is an acknowledgement of the cooperation between

³ This document was abandoned in 2016 and as such, in Poland there is no strategic document on migration policy.

national and local level actors. Even though there clearly was a declaration, its scope, however, had been limited and had not really been transformed into practice.

One of the most important achievements of the Czech strategic documents on a national level has been the setting up of an institutional platform in Prague. The idea required the Ministry of Interior to establish the so-called integration centres in each of the Czech Republic's fourteen regions. Because the centres have been set up with the EFI funding, their aims are the same as that of the fund: legal counselling, language courses, social and cultural courses. It is important to add that the EFI was formed specifically for the third country nationals (TCN) and not EU citizens which means that centres targets only a part of migrants legally living in Prague (Blahoutová 2012). Similar *Multicultural Centre* (in Polish: Centrum Wielokulturowe) has been established in Warsaw. The centre is an interesting example of cooperation between actors from various levels. It is an official institution of the City Hall, although the city's budget supports only its basic functioning. A consortium of NGOs runs the centre and its main activities are supported by the European funds. There is also an element of cooperation on a national level, for example, it is possible to apply for residence at the centre – this is a form of competition for the regional representation of the Ministry of Interior.

5.1.3 Policy target groups

In Prague and Warsaw, the immigration policies target beneficiaries of international protection (mostly from the Caucasus) and the TCN (the two major groups are: 1) Ukrainians – culturally close to Czech and Poles, as they speak a Slavic language, and 2) Vietnamese – perceived to be culturally distant). The policy makers from both states have started to focus more on the engagement of school children in migration issues of their states. Additionally, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and raising awareness of the host communities/societies have also gained more policy attention. The cities have the same policy target groups as the target groups of the European funds (the EIF and ERF, lately AMIF). In both cities the integration policy and/or programmes adopted at national level, apply only to migrants who are TCN who legally reside in these states. Such programmes are financed through the European funds covering this category of migrants and as such EU citizens and their family members are excluded from national and local integration programmes, and have no access to services provided under the integration policy; for example they cannot receive legal counselling.

According to Drbohlav and colleagues (2010: 83), in the Czech Republic there has been a shift in the notion of integration from a group oriented one-way approach, to more individual two-way civil integration, including migrants and receiving society, approach. This approach has also been woven into the Prague local integration strategy, where inclusive policy aiming at integration of all inhabitants of the city has been emphasized (Praha – metropole všech, Prague – city for all). The key focus of this approach is to address all inhabitants as the target group for integration activities in the city – as seen, and modelled on, in the strategies in Western European in cities such as Stuttgart or Amsterdam.

NGOs based in Prague have been targeting their activities to a diverse group of TCN. Apart from offering general counselling for all migrants, some of the NGOs target specific social groups in the migrant community and professional groups within the public sector. For example, *La Strada* takes care of the victims of trafficking and exploitation of labour; *META* focuses on

the equal access to education and works together with schools in Prague to arrange inclusive education system for young migrants; *Organizace Pro Pomoc Uprchlíkům* helps refugees and asylum seekers in particular; *Inbáze* is very much focused on migrant families and children but it is also actively engaged in the promotion of crosscultural understanding between migrant societies and the Czech society. The majority of NGOs working in the area of immigrant' integration in Prague, same as in Warsaw, initially worked with refugees.

In 2018 Warsaw's strategic document was announced (*Warszawa 2030*) in it, immigration is mentioned only once in the chapter on economic development. It is noted in the paper that Warsaw would like to attract leaders and talented people as their desired migration group. However, groups of migrants, such as beneficiaries of international protection, can be found in the more specific city documents – “Warsaw strategy for solving social problems 2009-2020” (in Polish: *Warszawska strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych na lata 2009-2020*), Program of the development of education in Warsaw (in Polish: *Program Rozwoju Edukacji w Warszawie*). The city's primary focus is to support the beneficiaries of international protection. Moreover, the category of school-pupils is highlighted – it merges the immigrant children with Polish re-emigrant pupils, and with the members of established ethnic minorities, such as Germans, Ukrainians and so on.

4.2 Governance

4.2.1 Strategy

The cities passively undertake actions in integration. Their programmes are not coordinated, they are short-sighted in focus and are heavily dependent on the financial schedule of the EU funding. Therefore, in June 2014, Prague announced its official strategy: *Praha - Metropole Všech (Prague- city for all)* while Warsaw has launched a specialist team whose job is to coordinate foreigners, national and ethnic minorities (within the structure of the City Hall) and the *Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners* (an advisory body made of NGOs). Warsaw has also initiated a strategic document, titled: *Warszawa Różnorodna (Diverse Warsaw)*. However, the development of this document had been eventually abandoned.

The document *Praha – Metropole Všech* highlights the role of cooperation between various stakeholders on a horizontal (NGOs, city administration and migrants organizations) as well as vertical level (regional support platform, national committees on integration). The document has an entire chapter dedicated to institutional responsibilities. However, the responsibilities are based on regional and local platforms of cooperation, rather than positions of people in charge of this issue or departments within the structure of local administration. The responsibility for minorities and foreigners has been added to the duties of the deputy director of the Municipal Office who is a member of the *Committee of the Council of Prague for the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners*. The ICP has been tasked to lead practical activities in the field of integration of diverse actors. The City of Prague was a founder of the Centre (a public service organization) however as it was financed from the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals and the City of Prague's budget, its operations were project based and not a structure within the city's institutional structure. The ICP, in a sense, operated as an umbrella organization for divers NGOs that work in the field of integration in Prague. Yet, again the local integration strategy was project-based and has been marked as unstable and shortsighted.

4.2.2 Organization of policymaking and implementation

Similarly to the dispersion in strategy, there is a distinctly large dispersion of responsibilities and lack of coordination, in both cases because there is no institutional arrangements in the cities' structure that is responsible for the whole process of integration. NGOs in these two cities play an important role (thanks to the support from the EU funds). Although in Prague a number of local politicians have started paying more attention to the integration issue (see the Libus district), it still remains at the bottom of the local politicians' agenda. Although this issue has been addressed in political campaigns (e.g. local elections), it has been largely left unattended, with no legal implications and/or changes in law. The government of the Czech Republic prefers short-term migration to the settlement of migrants (Kušniráková, Čížinský 2011: 506), as such the integration is considered less important.

It is important to stress that the local integration strategies are often formulated and implemented by a network of multiple stakeholders, such local public institutions, NGOs, migrants organizations, labour unions, employers organizations, state agencies, educational institutions, churches, sport club, neighbourhood associations etc. These multiple actors might take part in policy making or only shape the integration process indirectly throughout their regular activities. Because of the multitude of actors – with specific needs – involved in the process, policy making and development need coordination from local administration as otherwise the process is fragmented and there are only *ad hoc* activities in some areas of integration. One of the reasons why cooperation platforms have been established in the analyzed cities has been to create a space/frame to enable an exchange of information and strengthen learning processes as well as share good practices.

Prague's integration governance is a characteristic of a weak institutional consolidation and an absence of migrant organizations that would have a full legitimacy to represent the organized interests of particular migrant groups. In terms of institutional coordination there is a distinct lack of interconnectivity between stakeholders working in integration field. The Prague's model requires NGOs to have a strong position in their locations in order to substitute and/or replace the role of public institutions in managing the access to public goods related to successful integration of migrants, and to manage integration projects; whilst also function as the main points for the absorption of policy goals from the EC documents (because they use its money) as well as a place of sharing and transferring good practices from abroad. These integration programmes are funded through short-term budgeting and the City Hall awards low-budgeted grants for particular projects on an annual basis. NGOs remain predominantly funded by state and European funds. Although Prague's integration governance has become institutionally consolidated and this, in turn, has improved the interconnectivity between its stakeholders through the preparation of a long-term integration strategy, it has only taken off in 2014.

Since 2006, integration governance has been coordinated through the *Committee of the Council of Prague for the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners* (in Czech: Komise Rady hl.m. Prahy Pro Oblast Národnostních Menšin a Integrace Cizinců na území hl.m. Prahy) and the *Committee of the Council of Prague for the Awarding of Grants in the Area of National Minorities and Integration of Foreigners* (in Czech: Komise Rady hl.m. Prahy pro udělování grantů v oblasti národnostních menšin a integrace cizinců na území hl.m. Prahy). Both committees do not meet on a regular basis and are reconstituted every municipal

election. The first committee has been made up of 14 members that represent the following actors: political representation, municipal bureaucracy, governmental representatives, and non-governmental sector. It does not have a clearly defined programme and meets as and when necessary. The committee serves mainly as a mutual information point for the stakeholders involved in the Prague's integration governance. In its scope, the committee discusses the content and rules of the annual grant competitions – that are awarded later by the second committee – and is composed from purely political representation and municipal bureaucracy.

As of 2018, the content and extent of integration governance is still dependent on the results of municipal elections and change in Prague's political leadership. This clearly shows that the integration governance has not been properly established as a permanent institutional domain of Prague's public policy agenda – if it were, it would be, at least partially, resistant to the changes brought on by the election cycles. The City Hall has one established bureaucratic position, *Specialist for National Minorities* (in Czech: *Specialista pro Národnostní Menšiny*) that has been written into the agenda of integration policies. The *Specialist for National Minorities* is in charge for the administration of grants awarded by the City Hall in the domain of cultural integration that focus on the activities of national minorities and migrant communities. Its key functions are to monitor as well as liaison with other stakeholders of integration governance, especially regarding the meetings of the two aforementioned committees.

In Warsaw there is a significant gap between politics and policy in the matter of integration. In the City Hall of Warsaw the issues of integration are not centrally located but scattered between different branches. The main beneficiary of state-level funds is *Warsaw Family Assistance Centre* (in Polish: *Warszawskie Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie*) – the city's social welfare agency that is also responsible for integration programs for the recipients of international protection. The integration programmes for the beneficiaries of international protection are the most institutionalized national integration policies (Frelak, Klaus, Wiśniewski 2007). The programmes are run by the local agencies but financed and coordinated by the state.

The financing from the city budget goes into the two policy areas, namely 1) education and 2) culture. A number of school initiatives are supported by the city but it is not the city's initiative *per se* rather it is the responsibility of the local authorities to provide extra Polish classes for foreign pupils, as stated in the *Education Bill*. The role of the city in the area of culture is to support events and projects highlighting its cultural diversity. This is mostly done in the form of open bids for funding projects run by NGOs, not by the city's institutions that deal with the arts and culture.

All other areas of integration policy implementation, such as educational and cultural projects have been, up until 2016 financed by the EIF, ERF, and AMIF. In order to estimate the proportions of funding from these three sources (national, local, and European) we (Pawlak, Matusz-Protasiewicz 2015) have analyzed the available data on the budgets of the non-governmental organizations active in the Warsaw's integration field.⁴

⁴ In Poland NGOs in order to obtain the status of 'a public benefit organization' that allows them to receive 1% of income tax paid by physical persons, have to submit their annual financial reports which are published on

Between 2011 and 2013 the European Funds had been the main source of financing NGOs. This means that NGOs operating in the local integration field were familiar with the framing of integration issues set up by the EC and they had to apply organizational and administrative practices as required by the EC to receive the grants. The European Funds were a key resource supplier so organizations started to conform to the 'European' practices (DiMaggio, Powell 1983). Yet, the political changes in Poland after national elections in 2015 meant that NGOs financial support from the EU sources has been blocked. As of 2017 Poland, before Estonia, is the second EU member-state with the smallest share of the AMIF funds going to NGOs (ECRE 2018). This has resulted in NGOs shifting their focus from the EU towards cities for funding. At the same time cities (ruled by mayors opposing the national government) have started to openly highlight their willingness to run integration policies. *The Union of Polish Metropolises* has declared its openness towards immigration (in opposition to national government) and has established a team that is tasked with developing a place where the exchange of experiences and sharing good practices can take place.

4.2.3 Actors

In Prague and Warsaw's City Halls, the units assigned to deal with the integration policies are of relatively low status, and are positioned quite far from the core of their organizational structure. These units are supposed to coordinate the actions of various divisions (which are responsible for culture, education, housing and social assistance) but their actual influence is quite limited. In Prague, immigrant integration centre has been already working (*Integration Centre Prague*). In Warsaw a new actor has emerged, namely *The Warsaw Multicultural Centre* and is financially supported by the City Hall, and it is also run by a consortium of NGOs.

In both capital cities, the fields of NGOs interested in assisting, and advocating for, immigrants (e.g., legal advice, direct social assistance, promotion of cultural diversity, support for immigrant pupils), as well as immigrant associations, have become more prominent. These organizations try to influence local policies by means of engaging with various consultative bodies but also by approaching national authorities that shape general policy framework.

For the last two decades (2000-2018), the NGO sector has been growing gradually to about 15 organizations of various sizes; this number also includes organizations that do not specialize in migrant issues *per se* but work with migrants as people in need of social services. The majority of these organizations have become statutory members of the *Regional Advisory Platform*. Moreover, their fifteen-year long operations have established an in-depth know-how, such as: policy expertise, fieldwork experience, and relationships with migrant groups. *Inbáze* (est. 2006), *Organizace ProPpomoc Uprchlíkům* (est. 1991), *Sdružení Pro Integraci a Migraci* (est. 1992), *Poradna Pro Integraci* (est. 1997) – these are the core organization in Prague's integration governance NGOs sector, and as such these organizations have taken part in the arrangement of the ICP and their experts took part in the completion of Prague's integration strategy.

Although these NGOs are Prague-based, their scope of operation includes also other Czech Republic's regions. Moreover, they act on both local and national (and also partly on

the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's website. This data allowed us to analyze the budgets of 15 NGOs from the local integration field.

international) levels to facilitate policy-making as the civil society equivalent of the public administration. Together with other important Prague's organizations – *La Strada* (est. 1998), *META* (est. 2004), and *Centrum Pro Integraci Cizinců* (est.2003) – they generally function as contact centres for migrants who need social, employment, legal, housing, but also psychotherapeutic counselling. The average turnout of clients for the seven aforementioned NGOs is more than 13.000 per year. At the same time, the NGO sector functions as an expertise hub for public administration in providing advice on the legal rights of migrants in the access to public goods.

The NGOs, as members of many international projects and policy networks, through their participation in integration projects, have served as main points for the direct transmission of good practices from abroad. As certain NGOs specialize in an area/issue, this enables them to learn more about integration governance. For example, *Organizace Pro Pomoc Uprchlíkům* has taken part in projects that focused on sharing policy knowledge on how to deal with asylum policies. *Sdružení Pro Integraci a Migraci* has taken part in projects on the regularization of irregular migrants and integration policies in CEE. *META* took part in projects that focused on equal access to education and support for migrant youth, while *InBáze* was involved in learning how to train professionals in intercultural mediation. *La Strada* took part in international projects on anti-trafficking campaigns.

In the structure of the City Hall of Warsaw there are three branches that could be called integration policy actors: 1) *Warsaw Family Assistance Centre* (responsible for running state-financed integration programmes for immigrants under the international protection – in 2014 2.1% of its budget was spent on expenses for immigrants); 2) *the Bureau of Education* (responsible for the running of all types of schools, setting up the Polish language tuition for immigrants, and providing multicultural assistants, and their native language classes); and 3) *the Bureau of Culture* (responsible for supporting city theatres, museums, libraries and cultural events and those that relate to ethnic diversity). Other branches of the City Hall are also responsible for a number of issues that impact immigrants but these branches are considered less important. *The Team for the Coordination of Actions for Foreigners, National and Ethnic Minorities* (in Polish: Zespół ds. koordynacji działań na rzecz cudzoziemców, mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych) located at The Centre for Social Communication has been operating since 2013. The team has been established in order to bring together actions in the following areas: education, intercultural dialogue, support of the multicultural heritage of Warsaw, antidiscrimination and support for integration. The team is a body of civil servants from different branches of government set up to exchange information and coordinate their actions.

There is an impressive group of NGOs in Warsaw that focuses its actions on the specific needs of immigrants. As both, the state and the city, are largely absent in the field, the NGOs are rather proactive in obtaining the EU funding, we think it is important to look at them more closely. There are 49 organizations that are either based in Warsaw and run the EIF-funded projects, or are member-organizations of the *Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners* (in Polish: Komitet Dialogu Społecznego ds. Cudzoziemców). Therefore, we argue that these NGOs could be regarded as members of the integration field and the *Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners* could be considered as an internal governance unit of the field (Fligstein, McAdam 2012).

The NGOs that deal with migration issues in Poland are strongly oriented towards frame of integration policy as promoted by the EC (Pawlak, Matusz-Protasiewicz 2015). In the previous section we showed that funding from EU is a consistent part of their budgets. Furthermore, the dates when these organizations have been established suggest that the availability of European funds could be considered a significant factor in their formation.

From the 49 organizations active in the Warsaw integration field, 14 registered between 2001-2002. This means that they were established before 2001 as the registry of NGOs was only launched in that year and the already existing organizations had to start registering. In the first four years after Poland joined the EU, in 2004 many new organizations have been set up. We think that the proliferation of NGOs is connected to the new funding opportunities that arose from the accession, firstly from the *European Social Fund*, and secondly, from the *European Fund for Refugees*. Since 2008 there has been, on average, 1.5 new organizations entering the field. There is a marked difference between the organizations' age and the average age of NGOs in Poland. In the general population of NGOs in Poland 22% of these organizations are between five and ten years old (Przewłocka, Adamiak, Herbst 2013: 29) – however, in the field we analyzed, 53% of the NGOs' population are in this age bracket.

The NGOs in the Warsaw integration field differ from other Polish NGOs fields with regards to their legal standing. In Poland, 80% of NGOs are set up as associations (Przewłocka et al. 2013: 6) but in the analyzed field only 30% of NGOs operate as such. The dominant legal structure in the field we analyzed is foundation; nearly 70% of NGOs in our sample are foundations whereas in the general population of Polish NGOs it is less than 20%). Polish legal regulations of foundations mean that it is easier to govern them than associations because associations require democratic procedures of decision-making involving all its members. Moreover, according to research findings, associations are focused predominantly on their members while foundations prioritize obtaining funds from local, national or European budgets as well as delivering services to the clients who are members (Przewłocka, Adamiak, Zajac 2012). Interestingly, migrant organizations usually take form of associations but their presence in the field is not as strong, and the field is dominated by NGOs run by Poles (Grzegorzówka 2013).

The availability of European funds has contributed to the emergence of NGOs in the field and has supported their existence. From 2015, the unavailability of these funds has resulted in the shrinking of the NGOs in the field. However, NGOs can also apply for funding from the city's budget and have started to work with different bodies from the City Hall in order to plug the funding hole. In this paper we highlight the relations between the city hall and NGOs: 1) the establishment of for Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners in 2012 and 2) the process of joint establishment of the Multicultural Centre in Warsaw by the coalition of NGOs and the City Hall in 2014.

The Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners is one of the 33 such committees working with the City Hall of Warsaw. These committees are mostly consultative bodies but they also influence the city policies more directly by assigning its members to boards that evaluate applications for city financing. These committees are made of organizations, not people. The *Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners* is one of the youngest in Warsaw. It was established in 2012 and consists of 31 member-organizations. The branch in the City Hall responsible for the contacts with the *Committee is the Centre for Social Communication* – the largest unit in the city administration responsible for its public relations, consultation of city policies and several other issues which “do not fit” into the profiles of other units in the City Hall.

The Warsaw Multicultural Centre is an initiative started by one of the NGOs active in Warsaw: *Fundacja Inna Przestrzeń* (The Other Space Foundation). The Other Space Foundation was established in 2006, initially as an active cultural domain in charge of organizing ethnic festivals and promotion of cultural diversity in Warsaw. Since 2009 the NGO has been lobbying for the establishment of the *Warsaw Multicultural Centre*. The NGO has managed to build a coalition of nearly 20 organizations supporting the idea of the Centre. The NGO also acquired the support of the European Fund for Third Country Nationals Integration to run the pilot project at the Centre.

It was not until 2014 when a new organizational actor emerged as the organizations in the coalition of NGOs decided to establish together the *Foundation for the Multicultural Centre in Warsaw*. Also in 2014 the City Hall granted a building for the Centre and money to support its maintenance for three years. The City only supports the physical space (the building) of the Centre but any other activities are to be financed from other sources. In 2017 the new consortium of NGOs won an open bid for the running of the Centre, because of this the Centre is more dependent on the City Hall than on the EU funds.

4.2.4 Multilevel context and influence

The two cases that we have analysed show why the multilevel organizational context of policy transfer and application are important. The local city organizational fields of immigrants' integration are influenced by the EU agencies as well as by the international networks that are developed by NGOs. These multilevel links foster the flow of ideas and practices, and are used to legitimize the applied policies. The organizations tackling a relatively new issue deal with a lot of uncertainty, this is why these organizations turn to Western European models of integration in order to mimic their structures of operations in this new area.

The integration of immigrants as a new public policy is still in the early stage of development in Prague. The most advanced project, in terms of the institutionalization of this area, is the ICP. The ICP was established in 2012 as part of the implementation of the *Conception for the Integration of Foreigners*. The costs of the ICP's establishment and subsequent operation have been covered by annual subsidies provided by the European Integration Fund, as is the case for other integration centres across the Czech Republic (including 25% of mandatory co-funding covered by the City Hall). The ICP is assigned a double function. First, it provides a coordination platform for all stakeholders in the Prague's integration governance. In this sense, it is a fully funded and established institution that facilitates an exchange of information between stakeholders and synchronizes their activities in favour of a more coherent, efficient and predictable policy environment. Second, having opened already six branches around Prague (with office space provided for free by particular city districts), it complements the provision of social/legal counselling, socio-cultural education and teaching of the Czech language that, thus far, have been organized exclusively by NGOs. The integration centre forms a basis for the potential establishment of a sound institutional framework. Indeed, the need for institutionally coherent and integration governance strategy have been expressed by the municipal politicians in the context of the ICP's establishment. This is how Václav Novotný, the *Deputy Mayor of Prague*, defined the ICP's expected mission:

Hereby, Prague starts finally to tackle the issues concerning the integration of foreigners. In the capital city, there is the biggest amount of foreigners in the Czech Republic, but nothing has been done in this policy area yet [sic].

Thus, the ICP has declared several general targets for its operation in the integration of TCN who live in Prague. It attempts to eliminate the abuse of migrants' disadvantaged position in the various spheres of life. It intends to reduce the possibility of separated ethnic enclaves that could potentially develop in Prague. There is also a declared aim to support the development of civil society and reduce the potential tension between Prague's majority and migrant populations. Lastly, the integration centre has decided, and committed, to engage migrants in the decision-making policy processes and public life. Hence, in the first year of operating, the ICP provided services to 2025 clients; including around 580 clients who used social counselling, 400 clients who used legal counselling, while 328 clients were involved in the Czech language courses with the success rate of 70 per cent in final exams.

Although the ICP initially had been perceived as a new and redundant competitor by the non-governmental sector, it has become a crucial policy platform in the coordination of Prague's integration governance. As a policy platform, it is a consultation place that facilitates formal interaction of various stakeholders in Prague's integration governance and promotes an exchange of interests, needs, and opinions among these stakeholders: *Forum for Migrants* (in Czech: Forum Migrantů), *Regional Advisory Platform* (in Czech: Regionální Poradní Platforma), and *Expert Group* (in Czech: Expertní Skupina). There also had been the *Advisory Platform of City Districts* and *City Hall for the Area of Migrants Integration* (in Czech: Poradní Platforma Zástupců Městských Částí a Magistrátu hl. m. Prahy Pro Oblast Integrace Cizinců) that included the representation of the ICP and all city districts in order to discuss the progress of integration policies in Prague. Moreover, based on these consultation forums, the ICP has been also assigned to coordinate the preparation of a strategic document that would define the long-term targets and direction of Prague's integration governance, and would also respond to the *Conceptions for the Integration of Foreigners*. The preparation of the strategic document *Praha – Metropole Všech* (Prague - Metropolis for All, henceforth known/referred to as Prague's integration strategy) was finished in June 2014.

The Regional Advisory Platform was established as a major policy forum for the coordination of integration governance. Since its establishment in 2012, it has been regularly convened every two or three months. The platform involves 54 experts who represent Prague's main NGOs that deal with migrants' integration, Prague's public administration (city districts, city hall), state public administration, Ministry of Interior, and academia. The majority of its working history has been spent on the creation of the Prague's integration strategy. The platform is the first large-scale and long-term project which represents an institutionalized body where contacts, experiences, information, and policy practices can be shared, discussed, and subsequently transformed into strategic documents, and guides that would address the main issues of integration governance in Prague. In this sense, the problem of interconnectivity between the stakeholders has been highlighted during the platform's meetings. The platform has made the stakeholders aware of their counterparts and established formal relationship between them. The platform's much needed interconnectivity has improved markedly due to regular meetings, mutual exchange of information about the projects organized by the member organizations and institutions, and through the discussion

of crucial shortages of existing integration policies that were experienced by the stakeholders and their clients. And as a result the platform has created a knowledge hub that gathers issues and problems that are later addressed in Prague's integration governance.

The preparation process involved the division of the platform into four working groups. Each group had eight members (free to invite external guests) representing the ICP, NGOs, academia, and public administration. Each group worked separately on broader policy areas: education; social activation of migrants; access of migrants to social services; employability of migrants in the labour market. The working groups' findings were discussed again and revised within the whole platform. The process of consultations also included a workshop that brought all working groups together to address any inconsistencies and/or duplicate ideas in their work. At the same time, the executive *Expert Group* was elected that included representatives of the City Hall, the ICP, city districts, NGOs, and the Ministry of Interior. The Expert Group was responsible for overseeing the working groups' outputs and eventually transforming them into Prague's integration strategy.

The Forum for Migrants has not met, unfortunately, its expectations because migrants limited organizational capabilities.⁵ This problem has been already acknowledged during the initial meeting of the *Regional Advisory Platform* when the absence of migrant representation that is typical for the platforms in the Western European cities (as had been reminded during the meeting) had been noted to be rooted in migrants' limited organizational abilities. Moreover, there have been repeated appeals to the platform's members to provide contacts for those migrants who would be able, and want to, and have such social position as well as financial means? to talk on behalf of their particular group. As such, the operation of *Forum for Migrants* was problematic. Migrants have on the whole, welcomed this suggestion as a step forward in their own involvement in public life. However, the invited representatives of particular migrant groups were visiting the forum randomly, while the forum itself has been convened only five times since its establishment in 2012. In this sense, the migrant communities have not been able to actively participate in the policy-making process due to the low institutionalization of migrant organizations.

In Warsaw the multilevel context for framing integration policy is clearly visible. Before 2015 the presence of the European funds made NGOs much stronger actors. Using European funding NGOs have started not only to provide services for immigrants but also lobbying for changes in local and national policy. The part of the *National Migration Policy*, announced in 2012 and then revoked in 2016, regarding the integration policy was constructed by the *Ministry of Interior* along the framing of activities financed by the *European Fund for Integration of Third Country Nationals* and non-governmental organizations strongly supported this frame (Pawlak 2013). NGOs joined the *Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners* designed as a consultative body on the local level in 2013. In 2014 the *Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners* stated opinions on a draft of *National Integration Policy* and on a draft of an *Act on Foreigners*. Thus, the emergence of a two-way level interaction between national and local levels (Dekker et al. 2015) can be seen.

Warsaw's NGOs have been able to sustain lobbying for establishing local institution of *Multicultural Centre* because they had the funding to do so, thanks to the EU funds. The centre is supported by the city (building and basic financing) with an intention that non-governmental

⁵ The problem of the migrants organizations weakness is a significant one and its causes are structural. It requires addressing but due to the space limit we do not discuss it in this paper.

operator (that emerged from the coalition of organizations) will seek funding from different sources (including European). During the pilot project of the Centre NGOs' activists and civil servants from the City Hall visited and established relations with similar centres in other European cities. For example, the one-stop shop this is a Portuguese best practice promoted by the EC among European cities. One of the aspirations of the Centre is to build the institutional good practice that in the future is going to be shared with, and implemented in, other Polish cities, either as a state supported policy measure or as best practice.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Over the past decade, many studies have started to analyze the integration policy on the local level because the effects of immigration are felt more directly on this level (Borket, Caponio 2010; Ambrosini, Boccagni 2015). The majority of immigrants in the EU have settled in cities, which has put local governments under a lot of pressure to become involved in the integration process (Bosswick, Will 2002; Çağar, Schiller 2009; Dekker et. al 2015). Local authorities have been implementing national policies in a top-down way, and they operate in the MLG model. On the one hand, local authorities are embedded in a national policy system, on the other hand, they, very often, operate in transnational networks. By this we mean, that the local integration policies have been implemented in a complex multilevel system, including top-down and bottom-up relations, as well as networks of multidimensional actors working both, horizontally and vertically. This complex system has shaped the negotiations between local officials, NGOs working in the area of integration, migrants self-organizations, trade unions, churches, schools, academics and so on.

The studies of local policies in Western Europe have contributed to the understanding of relations between national policies and local ones. The researchers focused on the factors shaping the relations between national and local levels, in states with developed national models of integrations, and the long term residing migrants diasporas. In our research, we looked at the institutionalization of local integration policies in states with underdeveloped national integration policies. Looking at actors in policy network and the policy diffusion, we focused, particularly on the relations between transnational (EU) and local levels. The case studies we reviewed, the lack of comprehensive national policy and the need for the management of the local integration process has been present not only the horizontal relations of many public and private actors but also in the vertical relations. In these relations, the local actors who have been searching for norms and organizational models have bypassed the national level, and have used the recourses from the transnational level (EU). Our aim here, was to fill the gap in the research about the local level integration policy, looking at the CEE cities operating in the MLG models, in which the transnational and local levels are stronger than national levels. In both cities that we analyzed, there is a similar level of institutionalization of their local integration policies, as well as there are some similarities in the diffusion of the best practices from the EU level. Furthermore, there is the convergence of the strong role of NGOs in the development of local integration activities and the use of the EU funds. But how far, and in what ways, both cities might adopt the inclusionary integration policy through policy learning process in the cooperation with the transnational level, as well as how this might contribute to the policy convergence and the emergence of the CEE local integration model, still remain to be seen.

In both case studies, on the national level, the immigration and integration policies have not been clearly formulated. There is a distinct lack of a long term vision of migration process into both countries, what is more the process is seen as a temporary and not requiring any integration measures. This is why both cities have very unclear, fragmented, and rather *ad hoc* approach to legislation. In terms of integration, the documents adopted on the national level are very often not legally binding and function more as declarations or annual action plans – as required by the EC.

Our research clearly shows that the European funds designated specifically for migrant integration (the EFI, EFU, AMIF) have become the key source of financing for NGOs in both cities; City Halls also actively have applied for the European funds. European NGOs' networks, the EU platforms for the exchange of experiences such as the European Integration Forum, working together with partner cities (city networks as Intercultural Cities, CLIP, etc.) have jointly created conditions where applications to the *European Frame of Integration* have been encouraged. In this case, the frame had not diffused mechanically but rather, it had been translated into the local context. Many actions of city halls and NGOs, in Prague and Warsaw, have been aimed at creating institutions that resemble the models from Western Europe – i.e. the centres for integration. Yet, these actions are not the sole responsibility of the City Halls as many of these actions had been outsourced to NGOs with an understanding that these organizations would seek, and find, financial resources elsewhere.

The centres that have been established in both cities also play a very important symbolic role. Their very existence has been used as evidence that the cities run integration policy. Yet, the actual practice, or enactment, of integration policies is not particularly impressive. The centres are project based which means that they are not included in the institutional system of the municipalities. On the one hand, the strong role of NGOs in the field of integration is used by the municipalities (they use NGOs as service providers, experts), on the other hand there is no long term system of financing them, which in practice means that NGOs' projects are temporary. The limited funding from the national and local budgets could be understood as stemming from the lack of integration policy and the absence of political commitment to tackle this public domain systematically.

Ironically, in Warsaw the newly elected national government and its openly anti-immigration rhetoric have triggered the City Hall to become more active in the integration policy. The City Hall – controlled by the opposition party – in order to emphasize the political differences between the opposition and the government, has engaged in pro-immigrant policy making. As the national government anti-immigrant rhetoric is also anti-European the adaptation of European frame by the City Hall suits the political motives of the former.

The actions of both cities are limited by the national regulations as these give a relatively small number of policy tools for the local governments to utilize. The Czech Republic and Poland are centralized states, thus on the national level only the integration of the beneficiaries of international protection is recognized as a state's obligation. In both states, the national level focuses on the regulations of migrants, and not on acknowledging their role in integration policy.

As both cities have started to experience an increase in their migrant population, this has created more new bottom-up pressure to address immigrants in local policy. The issues of integration needs have started slowly to be part of public discourse on the city level. This rising presence can be seen mostly in the field of education because schools' principals have to deal

with the specific needs of the immigrant students. In the Czech Republic, at the time of the economic crisis of 2008, many migrants had lost their jobs, which had raised public interest in their living and working conditions, and the potential need for social services to step in and help.

In both cities the local organizational fields of integration are well interconnected. The City Halls facilitate interaction between NGOs by setting up bodies, such as the Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners in Warsaw and the Platform of Cooperation in Prague. The transfer of social practice, in a well-connected field, is faster and the system of common meaning is more institutionalized. We would argue that there is no doubt that in both cities the NGOs are the most influential actors in the process of integration governance. They identify the needs of migrants in the cities, and provide the local authorities with the expert knowledge on integration based on the experiences from the field, as well from the exchange of good practices from working on a transnational level (international projects financed from the EU funds, participation in European Integration Forum and so on). As aforementioned NGOs work is project based and the lack of long term planning, and barriers in accessing diverse financial resources have only exacerbated the temporal status of many NGOs.

Both cities have aimed their activities specifically for TCN because this is the target group of the EU funds. However, financing integration activities only from the EU funds excludes the EU citizens from the majority of the existing projects, even if their everyday needs are similar to those of TCNs who live in either of the cities.

Looking at the future of local integration policies in Prague and Warsaw one question remains open, namely when, and how, will the local authorities develop a vision for integration and decide on a long-term system of financing it. The horizontal and vertical cooperation of local actors will be crucial for forming a sustainable integration policy because the inflow of migrants in both cities has been increasing systematically.

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