POLICY REPRESENTATIONS IN CZECH SOCIAL POLICY: HOW TO SPEAK ABOUT POVERTY WITHOUT INEQUALITIES

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In the last two decades, sociological focus has partly shifted from poverty to the concept of social exclusion. Whereas the basic concept of poverty usually refers to material status and state of lacking resources based upon vertical inequalities, social exclusion goes beyond economic dimension, is understood as the "inability to participate effectively in economic, social, and cultural life and, in some characteristics, alienation and distance from mainstream society" (Duffy 1995).

As Nolan and Whelan (2007) remind us that the widespread adoption of the terminology of social exclusion in Europe reflects the concern that focusing simply on income misses an important part of social conditions. Notwithstanding the dominance of the social exclusion concept, some authors (e.g., Peace 2001; Levitas 1996; 2005; Percy-Smith 2000) consider dissimilarities of poverty and social exclusion concepts to be rather rhetorical. The authors either point out its vagueness considering it as a synonym or euphemism for poverty, or point out that the term exclusion can legitimize vertical inequalities between the rests of the society. It might also present the socially excluded as culturally distinct from the mainstream society and focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society (Levitas 2005).

The paper explores how this theoretical shift has been reflected in public discourse in the Czech Republic. How do poverty and social exclusion work as discursive concepts, what do they represent, how they relate to each other and what effects are produced by this distinction. The paper covers the period from the beginning of 2006 to the end of 2015 and it is based upon media and policy representation of poverty and social exclusion in the Czech Republic.

Poverty and social exclusion as policy concepts

Taylor-Gooby (2004) describes the risks connected with poverty and social exclusion – such as lack of access to secure employment due to obsolete skills, inability to supply care for children, difficulty in accessing newly targeted services, and problems in coping with the consequences of migration - as new social risks. Poor or socially excluded people are more prone to those risks, but they also have less material, social and cultural resources to cope with them. Research carried out by Taylor-Gooby (2001) suggests that the impact of risk is differentiated across social groups. Abbott and Quiglers (2001), for instance, showed that unemployment risk has increased with labour market flexibility and the poor tend to occupy riskier employment professions. Implications of the transition to a new welfare state addressing new social risks have been extensively discussed (e.g. Bonoli 2005; Esping-Andersen 1999; Starke 2008; Taylor-Gooby 2004).

Generally literature (see Spicker et al. 2007) comes across three main ways of distinguishing between poverty and social exclusion: (1) while poverty only concerns economic conditions, social exclusion reflects the larger living circumstances of individuals, households and communities (social exclusion always contains a dimension of poverty; however, some poor people may not be socially excluded); (2) poverty is seen as a static phenomenon existing at a given temporal moment, while social exclusion is understood as dynamic concept allowing us to study the factors behind someone's fall into social exclusion, which include poverty; (3) social exclusion represents an extreme form of poverty.

Béland (2007) describes social exclusion as a new paradigm. He presented social exclusion as a contentious concept which has been spreading across Europe since its adoption of the first Blair government in the UK. Béland suggests that the current political focus on social exclusion has helped to shift policy attention away from other forms of inequality, including income inequality between the wealthy and the rest of the population.

Ruth Levitas (2005) defines three main political approaches to the issue of poverty: (1) the redistribution approach, which assumes that in order to fight poverty, we must get rid of income and opportunity inequalities; (2) the "moral underclass" approach, which assumes that the root of poverty and social exclusion lies in the moral weakness and bad behaviour of the poor; and (3) social exclusion,

which emphasizes work and education as key paths towards social integration. Levitas (1996) called this discourse as a new Durkheimian hegemony treating social division which are endemic to capitalism as resulting from an abnormal breakdown in social cohesion which should be maintained by the division of labour. For the new Durkheimian hegemony, occupation is not merely route to material resources, but provide cultural integration as well.

The concept of social exclusion works to obscure the inequalities between paid workers and to devalue other ways of cultural integration such as care, unpaid work or participation in public space. Levitas (2005) points out that the elusive nature of the concept of social exclusion only contributes to legitimizing inequalities in the rest of the society. The social exclusion rhetoric presents only the extreme forms of poverty as worthy of our attention and, at the same time, dismisses other forms of social inequality as common and normal aspects of the late-modern capitalist state. It also presents the socially excluded as culturally distinct from the rest of the mainstream society and focuses primarily on the issues of the poor, rather than the functioning of the society.

Methodology

Carol Bacchi's (Bacchi 2009; Bacchi and Goodwin 2016) approach stemmed from studies of governmentality (Foucault 1991; Miller, Rose 1990; Dean 1999). The approach is focused on the following questions: (1) what are the prevailing representation of the social problem; (2) what presuppositions or assumptions underlies these representations; (3) how have these representations come about; (4) what is left unproblematic in these problem representations; (5) what effects are produced by these representations; and (6) how and where have these representations been produced, disseminated and defended. This approach is used to identify dominant media and policy representations.

The approach is influenced by genealogical thinking in discourse analysis. Michel Foucault (1981) distinguishes between an archaeology and a genealogy of discursive studies. While archaeology helps explain 'forms themselves', genealogy accounts for their contingent emergence and production. Archaeology provides the means to delimit research objects, while genealogy analyses their constitution by recounting the historical practices from which they were constructed. Where archaeology provides us with a snapshot, genealogy pays attention to the on-going character of debates (Foucault 1981: 70–1).

According to Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham (1999), genealogy (1) describes statements with an emphasis on power; (2) introduces power through a history of the present; (3) describes statements as an ongoing process; (4) concentrates on the strategic use of archaeology to answer problems about the present. Following a history of the present, one can explain what has made a current solution possible. Genealogical description provides us with the account of how current perceptions of individual and state responsibilities are embedded in histories and how history is internalized in current debates and current discursive practice.

In many aspects, the genealogical approach is similar to Ruth Wodak's (Wodak and Meyer 2001) discourse-historical approach. One of the most salient distinguishing features of the discourse-historical approach is its endeavour to work with different approaches, multimethodically and based on a variety of empirical data as well as background information. The interpretation of discourses and texts is always integrated into their historical context. The task of the analyst is to identify `topoi' - parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are the content-related warrants or `conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim.

The explicit relation between policy representation and conclusion rules which connect them with specific claims leads us to better understanding to effect produced by specific policy representations. With respect to critical analysis of public policy, the relations between policy discourse and its institutional effects is the way how to unfold policy narratives and hidden rules of policy-making.

Media data were extracted from the Newton Media Search. The archive covers the content from more than 900 national and regional periodicals, professional journals, Internet news servers and transcriptions of commentaries, discussions and news programs broadcast on main television and radio

stations in the Czech Republic. Our analysis covered the time period from the beginning of 2007 to the end of 2015. From search results, only articles related to poverty and social exclusion were selected for further analysis. The final corpus contained a broad range of genres – news articles, features, interviews with policy makers and practitioners, letters to the editor, etc.

Based upon the media search, key policy proposals and empirical reports were identified. These documents were also included to our analysis. In relation to them, the incorporation of policy documents strengthened relationships between our data and public policy agenda and allow us to distinguish the differences between public and decision-makers discourse.

Poverty and social exclusion in the Czech Republic

In today's Czech Republic, poverty or social exclusion threaten approximately 1.5 million people, including nearly 100,000 children below 6 years of age and almost 180,000 of people over 65 years of age. The share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the Czech Republic currently reaches 14.6% that puts the Czech Republic below the EU-28 average, which is 24.7% (Eurostat 2015).

We can presume that the number of people living in socially excluded localities is between 95,000 and 115,000 people living in 606 socially excluded localities and approximately 700 dormitories in the total of 297 towns and municipalities (Čada at al. 2015). Social exclusion represents, in a sense, the tip of the iceberg, in which material deprivation combines with the barriers on the open labour and housing markets, with limited access to public services, with low levels of political participation and, in many cases, with the geographical segregation and symbolic stigmatization of the people living in these conditions. In remote areas or inner peripheries, we sometimes see the emergence of clusters of socially excluded localities, which are perhaps less densely populated, but cover a larger total area than those situated in urban localities.

Most people living in more that 50% of the socially excluded localities are Roma. Among the EU Member States, the Czech outcome was the lowest rate of impoverishment, but compared to the overall population of the Czech Republic, the poverty rate for Romani people is significantly disproportionate (FRA 2016).

Some of the present-day socially excluded localities were formed at locations where the poor population was large even before 1989. However, most of these localities were formed because of the post-communist transformation to a free market economy in the 1990s. In this period, many unqualified people, mainly Roma, lost their jobs and consequently their incomes. It has been well documented that Roma were disproportionately affected by the economic restructuring and found themselves increasingly excluded (Guy 2001). Experts estimate that the unemployment rate in socially excluded areas oscillates between 65 and 90 percent (Čada et al. 2015). Long-term exclusion from the labour market has often led to life strategy changes resulting from seriously weakened family incomes, evictions, and relocations.

Poverty discourse in the Czech Republic

The media facilitate the belief that the Czech Republic is a classless society by (1) presenting the statistics comparing the Czech Republic with the EU, (2) downplaying structural economic concerns, and (3) portraying poverty as a marginal phenomenon. The topos of classless society is the dominant policy representation in the Czech Republic. This representation is based upon European statistics, mainly Eurostat reports, which have repeatedly showed that the Czech Republic features the lowest rates of both poverty and persistent poverty across all EU countries. The Czech Republic is followed by Netherland, Denmark, Slovakia or Finland. This story is also supported by measures of low income inequalities and low unemployment. "Data clearly show that inhabitants of the Czech Republic are in average richer, healthier and live longer than their ancestors. The GDP, for instance, has increased by three time in last 16 years," referred media in 2014 when the government agreed on the Strategy for Social Inclusion.

The media tone was in line with the government's rhetoric. "Although the Czech Republic has a low share of social protection expenditure in relation to GDP (in 2010 it was 20.1% in the Czech Republic compared with 29.4% in EU), it has the lowest poverty rate in all EU countries compared to other EU countries, which shows very good efficiency of social transfers." (see The Strategy for Social Inclusion

agreed in 2014). The topos of classless society can be paraphrased by means of the following conditional: if there is a classless society than poverty is a marginal phenomenon related only to specific groups.

Iyengar's research (1990) indicates that media tend to frame poverty in one of two ways: as either an episodic or a thematic issue. Episodic framing depicts poverty in terms of personal experience by highlighting the circumstances of a poor individual or family. Conversely, thematic framing takes an abstract, impersonal approach to poverty by focusing on general poverty trends and public assistance. The Czech dominant narrative falls on the thematic side of policy representations.

Indeed, the dominant narrative on poverty might be also disseminated through episodic framing too. In 2016, a member of parliament was asked by the biggest Czech news server idnes.cz to live on social benefits. Markéta Adamová, a liberal member of parliament, agreed on this experiment and wrote a diary as a part of server's coverage on poverty in the Czech Republic. 'It is not too much, but I have confirmed what I suspected - it is possible to live on benefits, it is only necessary to think of every expense,' the MP summarized her experience. Her words were underscored by a journalist experienced the same test. The poverty was represented as frustrating, uncomfortable and difficult but not dangerous to life. Poverty was depicted as something what you can cope with when you are self-disciplined and smart enough. This story can illustrate the topos of harmless poverty which can be summarized in the following conditional: if there is a good efficiency of social transfer, poverty is uncomfortable but not harmful.

Poverty, in media, is represented by four main groups of people: (1) old people, especially solo-living women, (2) single mothers whose ex-partners skip the alimony, (3) homeless persons; (4) people living in so-called socially excluded localities. However, through the dominant narrative, poverty of these specific groups is often marginalized and reframed from poverty narrative to something else.

Old people are presented as passive victims. In their case, media associate poverty with loneliness, hopelessness, naivety and vulnerability. As Vidovičová and collective (2015) point out that, in media, decrease of income and cost containments are very often presented as an inevitable part of seniors' lives. However, economic problems of seniors are very often reframed in problems of a lack of social relations and recognition by society. In line with dominant narrative, media and experts stress the low risk of poverty in this group and exceptionality of poverty. 'Seniors and senior households are not among groups most at risk of income poverty and material deprivation,' Vidovičová and her co-authors summarizes. The topos of seniors' poverty can be described as follows: if a policy action or decision does include seniors in social networks and society does recognise them, their other problems will be solved as well.

Same as seniors, single-mothers are seen as victims of their relationships and their environment is blamed for their situation. Single mothers are associated with insecurity and dysfunctional family relationships. "At the time of a sudden loss of income or loss of housing, there was no close person to them who would support them financially or provide a roof overhead," a journalist characterized their situation. The policy concerning single mothers in the Czech Republic is defined by the Czech alimony policy in which alimony is the central policy instrument for regulating the life of single parents and it is also the dominant narrative in the related public debate. According to Czech policy documentation, the main goal of alimony policy is that 'the child's well-being' is covered by the alimony. The data on single-parent situation, referred by Durnova and Hejzlarova (2017), show that mothers do not have these resources and their condition is basically dependent on alimony (Bicaková and Kalíšková 2016; Formánková and Křížová 2014; Kalíšková and Munich 2012). In 2017, the government approved a draft law that would improve the circumstances of single parents who have problems with alimony payments. Labour Minister Michaela Marksova proposed the state to provide advance payments to single parents in such cases and start legal proceedings to refund the money from the debtor. The topos of single-mothers can be paraphrased by means of the following conditional: if the child's well-being is at risk, then state should take an action. However, the state should play a mediator between mother and her former partner.

In case of homelessness, poverty is predominantly presented as a matter of choice and a specific lifestyle (shelter housing, dumpster diving). 'I have got a lot of opportunities to change my way of living.

But I refuse to bid. Because when you accept something from someone, you feel obliged to him or her,' a homeless person interviewed by media recounted. To be homeless is associated with positive categories such as pride, independence or group cohesion, on the other hand, drug or alcohol addiction is often mentioned as a negative category. As Hejnal (2013) shows, in policy discourse, homelessness is framed predominantly as a problem of addiction or a security risk for the rest of society rather than a problem of poverty. The topos of homelessness can be condensed in the conditional: if there are no problems with homeless for the rest of society, there is no need for a policy action

People living in so-called socially excluded localities are portrayed by media as a typical image of persistent poverty. In this narrative, poverty is portrayed as deviance associated mainly with people who do not participate in labour market. The poverty representation combing emphasis on low prevalence of poverty and low unemployment rate creates no room for persistent poverty and justify policy's shift from social assistance to workfare models of social benefits provision (see Sirovatka 2014).

While temporary absence from labour market, as it was in case single-mothers and seniors, is justified, the persistent absence is seen undesirable and shameful. Temporality represents an important symbolic boundary between deserving and undeserving poor. The topos of temporality is based on the following conditionals: if the absence from labour market is temporal, policy action should support him or her. On the other hand, if the absence is persistent, policy action should enforce him or her to take a job and work properly.

The measures adopted in 2011 represented a reform with a great emphasis on workfare together with further deteriorations in social protection. All unemployed was obliged after 2 months of unemployment to participate in public service for up to 20 hours per week (which in fact corresponds to a part-time job). Refusal leads to exclusion from all entitlements to unemployment. Even though, in November 2012, the Constitutional Court cancelled public service as a compulsory activity for benefit recipients, another form of pressure on benefit recipients considered as passive or working in a shadow economy was implemented, requiring the unemployed to appear two times per week at a given time at points established at post offices. In 2014, the Parliament returned the public service to the Czech law in a way which complied with the requirements of the Constitutional Court. The new rule will be introduced in the second half of 2017. All the poor registered at the Labour Office for more than six months will work for less than the minimum wage and each person who will not work for 20 hours per month loss a significant share of his or her social benefits.

The poverty narrative gains an individualistic focus on the lack of human capital, work ethic, the behavioural choices of the poor, and the generosity of governments programs. The narrative meets with public opinion. Since 1989, the society has taken liberal attitudes to the redistribution of social benefits, education and social housing. The public has accepted principles of market liberalism on housing and employment (Sirovatka, Saxoneberg 2009).

The liberal attitudes to housing and employment are deeply rooted in poverty representation and their conclusion rules. With low prevalence of poverty, good efficiency of social transfers and low rate of unemployment, everyone, with some temporal exceptions, is responsible for his or her situations.

In his analysis, Entman (1995) identified two distinct categories used by media to tell stories about poverty: stories that depicted poverty as behaviours that threaten community well-being (e.g., crime, drugs, and gangs) and stories that focused on the suffering of the poor. In case of single-mothers, as well as seniors, the second frame prevail. On the other hand, in terms of homeless persons and people living in so-called socially excluded localities the first frame is dominant. Even though poverty as a specific rhetoric trope is included in policy narratives related to homeless people and inhabitants of socially excluded localities, their situation is more frequently described in a specific language of social exclusion. The language of social exclusion, how we will see in the following part of the paper, is more suitable to describe the situation when the poor threat community well-being.

Social exclusion discourse in the Czech Republic and its genealogy

The term of social exclusion has in recent years developed into a key concept in Czech public policy approaches towards poverty. The existence of a socially excluded locality is a crucial condition for the involvement of the governmental Agency for Social Inclusion. Several interventions supported from EU

Funds were directed towards socially excluded localities and the new operational programmes foresees to reserve significant resources to municipalities with socially excluded localities (Úřad vlády 2015).

The concept social excluded locality was introduced in 2004 by the group of social anthropologists who conducted a study "Long-term Stationary Field Research of Socially Excluded Roma Communities" commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The main objective of the project was to study seven selected localities which would serve as a basis for interpretation of the environment of socially excluded enclaves in the Czech Republic (1) in terms of life strategies of inhabitants, (2) in terms of the external factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of socially excluded enclaves, (3) in terms of processes of socio-cultural change taking place in the context of a transforming complex society, and (4) in terms of possibilities to overcome the current disintegrating tendencies and to contribute to the social cohesion of the Czech society.

The project was the first attempt to map a spatial dimension of poverty. The project imported the Oscar Lewis's (1959, 1966) concept of culture of poverty into the Czech context. Lewis defined the culture of poverty as a set of adaptations that offer a solution to problems of poverty in the short term but perpetuate poverty in the long-term. These adaptations become habitual, are passed down to subsequent generation and create a cycle of poverty. In the US context, the culture of poverty was very closed to racialization of poverty. Since publication of Lewis's body of work, numerous scholars (Bourgois 2001, Duneier 1999, Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016) criticized the idea that the poor have inferior values, norms, and behaviour that lock them into lower class position. In contrast to the US debate, in the Czech context, the concept of the culture of poverty was intended to de-racialized debate on poverty. After 2000, a new generation of social scientists questioned the validity of the ethnic approach arguing in favour of ethnically neutral policies (Moravec 2006). They argue that specific conditions of poor Roma localities did not stem from traditional Roma values but they resulted from specific culture of poverty reflected on their economic conditions. Socially excluded localities were associated with social benefits dependence, alternative economic structures (such as illegal work, usury or crime) and strong family ties. The topos of culture of poverty is based on the principle and claim that the poor people are poor because they have different values and norms. The topos is a tautological argumentation scheme because it states, in the same time, that these values and norms result from situation of poverty. Rooting the argumentation in a vocabulary of values and norms, justify the boundary between temporal poverty and persistent social exclusion. In the situation of social exclusion, the social assistance need to be combined with changing of attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

Even though the project "Long-term Stationary Field Research of Socially Excluded Roma Communities" originally spoke about socially excluded communities, in the end, the researchers opted for the term localities to rid of ethnic dimension. "The inhabitants of socially excluded localities should be perceived as inhabitants of mostly transient social formations in which the culture of poverty is reproduced rather than members of the unified community." (Hirt and Jakoubek 2005)

Municipalities and families are considered as main actors of policy change. "The state must motivate municipalities not to create new ghettos and the state must motivate "Roma" nuclear families to move away from their broad family circles. The must get a chance to get social housing or to enter the free housing market." (Hirt and Jakoubek 2005) Professional social work represented the key policy tool how to change the situation. Whereas the problem was presented as a systemic one (concentration of poor people and privatization of municipal housing), the solution was an individualistic one – social work with individual clients, their families and moving them from socially excluded environment into mainstream society. The frame resonated very strongly with a dominant individualistic and meritocratic narrative od post-socialist liberal capitalism.

In this context, it should be noted that anthropologists produced the study in cooperation with the non-governmental organization People in Need - a significant provider of social and street work. Since 2000s, there has been a strong push for standardization and professionalization social service provision. Large organization, such as the People in Need, influenced significantly the final form of the standards of quality. The policy gradually displaced voluntary, small, local NGOs in favour of the larger organizations, such as People in Need, able to follow the applicable standards and succeed in funding competition (see Synková 2011).

People in Need focused on social work (housing, children's education, employment, debts), conduct expert studies for governmental bodies, provide expert comments, and advocate legislative changes on the national level. They refused the ethnic basis of social inclusion policies and argue for a primary focus on vulnerable, excluded and marginalized people, not on the Roma people. There has always been a tension over the ethnicization and de-ethnicization of the social exclusion problem that, as Synková (2011) pointed out, "obviously discloses much deeper issues concerning power struggles between different camps, and questions of access and control." However, the "ethnic-blind" discourse arguing for not using the ethnic label to avoid stereotypes and not to obscure the social mechanisms that create "ghettos" became dominant. The topos of ethnic-blind solutions can be characterized by the following conclusion rule: ethnicity and poverty are two distinctive categories that should be treated separately.

The concept of socially excluded locality was further cemented by the he publication of the report "Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities in the Czech Republic and Absorption Capacity of Entities Involved in this Field" (GAC 2006). Conducted for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, this report identified 310 socially excluded Roma localities across the Czech territory. The main objective of the analysis was to (1) gather basic information about the situation of socially excluded Roma localities to ensure proper configuration of the European Social Fund (ESF) utilization system in the programme period of 2007 – 2013; and (2) ascertain potential and level of absorption capacity of entities involved in this field and providing services therein.

In contrast to the domestic ethnic blind discourse, the European discourse got a Roma card back to the game. Roma were officially seen as the subject of internal EU concern and their problems have become strongly Europeanized (Sigona and Vermeersch 2012). EU institutions considered Roma one of Europe's largest and most disadvantaged minorities facing significant level of poverty, social exclusion and rights abuses. Roma communities tend to score low on all key indicators including income, education, employment, and with worse access to healthcare. Integration of marginal Roma communities became an official requirement to be met to access EU funds. The topos of Roma as the most vulnerable group was based on the following argumentation scheme: Roma because of their ethnic origin are subject of discrimination and unprecedented social exclusion, the EU fund should be used to improve their situation preferably.

In ESF programme period 2004 - 2006, problems of Roma localities had been addressed via an 'integrated approach' in which the members of Roma localities were perceived as one of a number discriminated groups or groups at risk of social exclusion and projects were supposed to include a wide range of these groups. However, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs revised this principle because it had not been sufficiently effective and failed to bring the desired positive changes regarding the social inclusion process of Roma communities. The mapping served to better address the EU assistance according to needs of socially excluded areas.

The report summarizing the mapping refuted a common, but inappropriate labelling of socially excluded localities as ghettos. "The increasing usage of this common label, clearly bearing negative connotations, in texts written by journalists, non-profit sector workers as well as members of academe (regardless of contents of the texts) reproduces and strengthens negative perceptions of such localities and motivates related behaviour in practice." (GAC 2006) Despite of this statement, media used the term of ghetto while referring on the study: "A unique map shows where the Roma ghetto is in the Czech Republic" , "Roma ghettos: how to get out" , "In the Czech Republic there are more and more Roma ghettos". The concept of ghetto was reinforced by the NGO "People in Need" which started a public campaign "Liquidate Ghettos!". Regardless expert discourse and its recommendations, public discourse insisted to see the socially excluded through ethnic lenses.

Using the term of ghetto further reinforced the discourse securitization. The topos of security risks was used to persuade municipalities to implement integrational policies. "Municipal representatives and mayors will realize that socially excluded localities will be the source of major problems that pours out of them, causing problems for the entire area and municipalities will start to deal with this issue," Ivan Gabal, the main author of the report, described in media.

Following the findings of the report, in 2008, the government established the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities. Its main task was to support municipalities in policies aiming at the

integration of the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities. The Agency has become a dominant actor in creating knowledge about social exclusion. Between 2006 and 2013, the Agency commissioned more than a half of the studies, situation papers and policy documents dealing with social exclusion. Housing has been the most researched subject area, followed by education, social services, the labour market and demographic characteristics. On the other side of the imaginary range we find the relatively less researched areas such as indebtedness, regional differences and migration.

In 2010, the Agency prepared the Strategy for Social Inclusion 2011–2015 which contains measures in different policy areas (security, housing, education, social services, family, healthcare, employment, benefit systems, regional development). In July 2012, the name of the Agency was shortened to Agency for Social Inclusion in order to underscore its ethnic neutral character.

In the Czech context, the concept of social exclusion has become dominant in both the analytical and the practical approach to poverty. The definition was founded primarily on the material and spatial dimensions of social exclusion. In this case, a socially excluded locality equalled a neglected locality. In addition to the material and spatial dimensions, these definitions also foregrounded the symbolic dimension, mainly ethnic dimension.

The ethnic dimension of poverty influenced heavily discussion after the economic crisis. Increased unemployment hit worst the group of less educated workers and elementary occupations. The population of underdeveloped and economically weak regions was desperate and turned its anger against their socially excluded Roma neighbours. The right-wing Neo-Nazi extremists reacted upon these sentiments by organizing demonstrations and marches in several Czech towns where Roma ghettos were located. Some of those demonstrations were met with local people's support. Securitization and social conflict represented key issues in social exclusion policies.

The general increase in social tensions and insecurity was accomplished by growing strength of a discourse which decries the Roma as "maladjusted" and which was shared by the media, institutional representatives and the populations living in the vicinity of socially excluded localities. The rejection of the socially excluded can also drive the general public to assume a negative stance towards the services aimed at improving the situation of all inhabitants of a municipality. As an example, we can mention the referendum organized in 2013 in Teplá near Karlovy Vary, where local citizens rejected the construction of a new centre for social prevention. Out of a total of 1103 voters, 1006 citizens were against the project. The creation of the Centre for social prevention services in Teplá was initially opposed by a local citizen's association, which openly expressed its concerns against the possible influx of more socially excluded Roma into the municipality. However, the referendum was also a protest against labelling the town as a socially excluded locality. "The government agency has made a socially excluded area from Teplá and the surrounding area," a referendum's organizer explained (Matoušek, Kaiserová 2015). The similar reaction raised publication of a new map of socially excluded localities in 2015. "In the evening, you go to sleep in the developing city of the young people and, in the morning, you wake up in a "socially excluded location," a mayor of the town where socially excluded locality was identified complained in a local media (see Nymburský deník).

Social exclusion has become heavily contested and stigmatizing category. Furthermore, it was understood by local actors as a performative category when a group of experts and public officer has got a power to fabricate socially excluded locality despite of protests and refusal of local inhabitants. The uneasiness of local actors with the term socially excluded locality stems from their perception that this term was a product of discursive power of national actors and experts over the local reality. The social inclusion agenda has become a battle zone between national policies and local reactions.

Conclusions

The discursive distinctions between poverty and social exclusion represent an important boundary how to understand categories of deservingness. Whereas the discourse on poverty with its emphasis on temporality thematises categories of suffering, the discourse of social exclusion with emphasis on persistence and cultural difference is associated with categories of threads and stigma. In this context, speaking about social exclusion does not mean an emphasis on multidimensionality of poverty but rather racialization of poverty.

The Czech poverty topoi are based on perceptions of classless society and harmless of poverty. These topoi are cemented by the statistical representations of low prevalence of poverty, low rate of unemployment and good efficiency of social transfer. It contributes to the prevailing perception that poverty is not an urgent problem for Czech society. However, this perception is challenged by Czech sociologists (see Večerník, Mysíková 2015) arguing that percentage of the poor is higher than Eurostat says. The price differences and medium income which is in Western countries twice higher than in the Czech Republic are taken in consideration. These questions and uncertainties are largely ignored when the topos is used in discussion. The statistical measures function as a black box which are left unproblematized in public discussions.

The poverty topoi construct poverty as a marginal phenomenon, mainly seen through individualistic lenses. In terms of the deserving poor, such as single-mothers or seniors, the poverty is narrated in social frames – such as failure of social relations. In terms of the social exclusion, the poverty is seen through security or cultural lenses.

In Ruth Levitas's (2005) terms, the Czech discourse on social exclusion corresponds with a combination of the "moral underclass" approach, which assumes that the root of poverty and social exclusion lies in the moral weakness and bad behaviour of the poor; and social exclusion, which emphasizes work and education as key paths towards social integration. It also presents the socially excluded as culturally distinct from the rest of the mainstream society. Social exclusion is strongly presented in policy documents, the topos is associated with cultural elements and closely connected with the European structural funds implementations.

In Czech context, the topos of social exclusion is a specific way how translate poverty into etnic categories. The Czech Republic became the home of that version the culture of poverty. The idiom of exclusionary talk is not explicitly racist or ethnic, but the vocabulary of inadaptability is strongly associated with ethnic elements. This situation put the Czech integrational policy in a schizophrenic situation. There were actors coming mainly from big NGOs or public administration who proposed ethnic-blind solutions and ethnic-blind discourse, however, they did so in a highly ethnicized environment. This environment strikes back and, in practice, can change the inclusive discourse into exclusivist one.

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