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# Xenophobia among the Czech Population in the Context of Post-Communist Countries and Western Europe<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article is based on data found in the *European Values Study* of 1999, and focuses on the following questions: (1) What is the degree of intensity of xenophobia among the Czech population in comparison with the states of Western and post-communist Europe? (2) How is the view of the 'foreign' ethnic group differentiated? (3) What groupings among countries may be identified if we examine the character of xenophobic attitudes among the population? (4) What factors influence the level of xenophobia of an individual? In concurrence with the observations of other authors the article confirms the overall high degree of intensity of xenophobia among the population of post-communist countries in comparison with advanced Western states. The intensity of xenophobic attitudes among the Czech population (measured through an overall index of xenophobia) roughly corresponds to the average of attitudes of the entire sample. From the viewpoint of attitudes toward individual 'foreign' ethnic groups (people of different race; Muslims; immigrants and migrants workers; Jews; Roma), the respondents expressed the strongest rejection of the Roma, and were the most tolerantly inclined toward the Jewish ethnic group. The EVS data essentially enabled a partial identification of traits for a profile of a xenophobe, as an older individual, with a lower level of education, and in a certain sense a marginalised 'victim' of the modernisation process (transformation), on the whole insecure, distrustful, and at the same time authoritarian in nature.

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## Introduction

The findings of public opinion surveys in the Czech Republic during the last decade are unequivocal: Czechs cannot be said to be overflowing with love for the other ethnic groups living in this country.<sup>1</sup> Czechs are of course not the only ones whose relations with foreigners are less than warm; surveys in other post-communist countries have revealed similar attitudes there too [Večerník 1998: 330, Haerpfér and Wallace 1998,

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<sup>1</sup>) According to IVVM data, the percentage of inhabitants who acknowledge that their relation to the Roma is negative has fallen (from 70% in 1991 to 52% in 1998) [Jaký... 1998], but there is still a high level of inter-ethnic tension. At the end of 1999 only one quarter of Czechs believed that the majority of Roma were able to live in harmony with other people [Věř ejnost... 1999]. The percentage of people expressing negative attitudes towards people from the Balkans rose from 40% in 1993 to 44% in 1998. In 1993 approximately 39% of the population were hostile to the Vietnamese, while by 1998 this figure had fallen to 26%. In 1995 36% of respondents had a negative attitude towards people from the former Soviet Union, but in 1998 fully half of all respondents acknowledged such negative attitudes [Jaký... 1998].

Wallace 1999]. The clearest factor is the lack of acceptance of the Roma.<sup>2</sup> While Western Europe has accepted floods of foreigners in the post-war era, the closed communist Czechoslovakia had very little experience with other ethnic groups, with the exception of the Roma. The Marxist doctrine of the time, with its stress on class antagonism, hatred and struggle, left little space for developing friendly relations with foreigners. Dušan Drbohlav [1999: 1] sees the Czech Republic today as part of a region where for various historical reasons there has been an inclination more towards a model of 'ethnic purity' and 'cultural homogeneity'. The greater likelihood of Czechs rejecting foreigners, i.e. xenophobia, does therefore have a certain logic.

This article is an attempt to answer the following questions: (1) How strong is the xenophobia of Czechs in comparison with other Western European *and* post-communist countries? (2) How much do views of 'foreign' ethnic groups vary? (3) What groups of countries can we identify in terms of their xenophobic tendencies? (4) What factors influence the level of xenophobia felt by an individual? Before we begin to compare the data, it is worth considering the concept of xenophobia itself and its implications.

### The Concept and Implications of Xenophobia

Xenophobia<sup>3</sup> as distrust, dislike of and even hostility towards foreigners or to anything and anybody from outside one's own social group, nation, country, etc. [Orenstein 1985, see also Hjern 1998: 9] has been observed in a number of other living creatures, apart from humans. Among humans, fear of 'unknown' people can be seen even among babies less than three months of age [McEvoy 1995].

Xenophobia, as sociobiologists have noted, is by no means a *quite logical* strategy, at least from the point of view of the survival of the individual. If the history of the human race, as Chad McEvoy [1995] writes, is basically interwoven with constant skirmishing between different groups, then individuals long had (and in certain conditions still have) good reason to be wary of those who were seen as different or foreign. This is the meaningful protective function of xenophobia. An analogy for xenophobia can be found in the negative response of the human immune system. Just as the human body is best able to avoid a potential disaster caused by some foreign matter by rejecting it, so may an individual or a group be best able to avoid damage caused by foreigners by a tendency to distrust, avoid or reject individuals who seem 'foreign'.

The idea of xenophobia is bound up with the distinction between *us* and *them*. As Eric Hobsbawm [1992: 6] says, "'we' are French, or Swedes, or Germans or even members of politically defined sub-units like Lombards, but distinguished from the invading 'them' by being the 'real' Frenchmen or Germans or Brits, as defined (usually) by putative descent or long residence. Who 'they' are is also not difficult. 'They' are recognisable as 'not we', most usually by colour or other physical stigmata, or by language. Where these signs are not obvious, subtler discriminations can be made...". The opposition of *us* and *them*, adds Zygmunt Bauman [1996: 45], serves to distinguish between us, our benevolent and well-meaning nation, and them, our evil, aggressive and constantly intriguing neighbours.

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<sup>2</sup>) In the Czech Lands, tensions between the Roma and the majority population have been noted since the 16th century [Nečas 1991].

<sup>3</sup>) From the Greek *ξένος* = foreign, and *φόβος* = fear.

As Andrej Gjuríč [1998: 42] says, xenophobia itself is an inclination, not an error or an illness. There are three further steps before it becomes a real illness and a dangerous fear, a pathological aversion, loathing – *xenogression*. The first is if the distinction of the ‘other’ takes on a (clearly) negative connotation, becoming not just *us* and *them*, but *us* against *them*. The second is if *generalisation* comes into force and whole groups (Roma, Germans, Sudeten Germans) are unscrupulously branded in the same way. From there it is no great step to the category of collective guilt and collective punishment. The third step is *ideologisation*. “Ideology acquires a negative basis through not only justification, but also weight (...) As soon as these bounds are broached – if some government or group and its ideology justify the negative but concealed basis, or even elevates it to a principle, the road to hell is open.” [ibid.].

From xenophobia to racism is a small step. I would follow Claire Wallace [1999: 5] in saying that xenophobia is a reaction against *foreigners* (however these may be defined), while racism is a reaction against a *generic group* (however defined).

Wallace also draws attention to another very important fact. Concepts of xenophobia generally refer to ‘foreigners’, i.e. to someone who comes from somewhere else. However xenophobia is not infrequently directed against groups of individuals who are citizens of a given country, as for example against Jews or Roma. As Wallace writes, “the ‘oriental other’ (...) representing the antithesis of the ‘good citizen’ (...) they not only ‘threaten’ the categories of normal, civilised life, but they also help to define it” [Wallace 1999: 4].

Explanations of the causes of xenophobia draw on a range of factors and influences. If, for example, we use the systematic overview provided by Wallace [1999: 8-19], the following factors can be seen to be involved: (1) *Migration* (a reaction to an increasing number of migrants, including both asylum seekers and so-called economic migrants); (2) *Socio-economic changes* (particularly in reaction to economic recession and unemployment); (3) *Social structure* (the influence of age<sup>4</sup> and a lower level of education); (4) *Globalisation* (a reaction to supranational institutions and the commercialisation of culture); (5) *Nationalism* (increasing in times/periods when national integrity is under threat, after the end of the Cold War, during the intensive process of integration into the EU, under the impact of globalisation); (6) *Right-wing movements* (become stronger when faith in democratic institutions is shaken; movements stimulate talk of foreigners as a threat); (7) *Uncertainty* (a factor which cuts across the others, linked with the sense of existential and emotional threat; fear of an ‘influx’ of foreigners, taking away jobs and introducing a different culture; overall, this is stronger in post-communist countries).

Andreas Wimmer [1997], for example, adopts a different approach to explaining xenophobic behaviour. He takes a wider viewpoint, seeking to clarify both xenophobia and racism. Starting from a survey of empirical studies, Wimmer sets out – with a wealth of critical commentary – four models of explaining xenophobia and racism. First, according to *the theory of rational choice* the majority see members of other ethnic groups primarily as rivals on the work and housing markets. Xenophobia is stronger among indi-

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<sup>4</sup>) The link between xenophobia and age is not altogether clear. Studies carried out in Germany have repeatedly found a higher level of xenophobia among younger people [Wallace 1999: 14], while research from other countries has shown young people to be more tolerant than older people [e.g. Wallace 1999: 15, Nevitte 1996: 67, Gabal 1999: 75].

viduals who are in danger of losing out in this competition. According to the second model, which Wimmer terms *functionalism*, the conflicts between the majority and immigrants arise out of cultural differences. Displays of xenophobia are a reaction to difficulties in integrating minorities into the social structure and culture of the host country.<sup>5</sup> The main problem is therefore the 'foreignness' of the immigrant group. The third *theory of discourse* sees xenophobia as a product of the discourse of power groups, of their ability to define situations and label others. In this sense the presence of foreign ethnic groups can be seen as a source of political or economic problems in society. And finally, the fourth model, which Wimmer terms *phenomenology*, explains xenophobia as a product of repeated crises, for example the failure of the welfare state. The failure arouses anomic tensions in certain groups, due to their fear of losing their social position. Xenophobia and racism are interpreted as a means of re-establishing the weakened national identity.

Wimmer then puts forward his own hypothesis of the causes of xenophobia and racism. He says that xenophobia and racism can be understood as appeals to a pact of solidarity which forms the framework for the functioning of an ethnicised bureaucracy and national community, and which is at risk in times of social upheaval, particularly from the point of view of those groups whose position in society is under threat. For these marginalised groups inter-ethnic differences represent an insurmountable barrier, and they therefore do not see foreigners as legitimate competitors in the search for jobs and living space. Xenophobic discourse, writes Wimmer, does not only serve to reinforce identity in situations in which the nationalistic self-image is crumbling. It becomes a weapon in the political struggle for the right to concern on the part of parties and society as a whole: it is a competition for the collective *goods* guaranteed by the state. The contemporary form of xenophobia and racism is founded on collective identity and the guarantee of the right to participate, which are founded on the idea of a national community [Wimmer 1997]. It is clear that the explanations of xenophobia offered by Wimmer and Wallace have many points in common.

Xenophobic attitudes of groups and individuals are also related to the state's attitude to 'foreign' ethnic (racial) groups. As John Rex [1996] writes, in this sense the nation state can adopt one of four alternative types of policies towards minorities: (1) refuse to accept ethnic minorities on its territories and if necessary take direct action against them; (2) allow minorities to take up temporary residence, without any political rights; (3) accept minorities on the condition that their members renounce their own culture and the creation of a network of their own organisations; (4) try to integrate them into a multicultural society.

The first policy, says Rex, is acceptable for representatives of the extreme right, who generally defend their approach as protecting the domestic labour market and rejecting the way of life of foreign minorities. The second approach is that in force for, for example, *gastarbeiters* in Germany. Immigrants, however, become "second class citizens", in Rex's term. The third alternative is typical of, for example, France. While it may simplify naturalisation, it does not prevent migrants being excluded from education and

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<sup>5</sup>) This is not the case with migrants from European countries. Migrants from Third World countries, however, are considered to be incapable of assimilating, since they come from societies with agrarian, quasi-feudal or feudal social structures. In addition to such elements of 'cultural incompatibility', lack of education and professional experience are also cited as obstacles to the integration of immigrants [Wimmer 1997].

the political sphere. The fourth approach is that adopted by countries such as Sweden, Britain or the Netherlands. They try, in principle, to protect cultural diversity and at the same time to encourage equality, at least in the social sphere. Rex, however, believes that the rhetoric of egalitarian multiculturalism often cloaks multiculturalism based on inequality.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1980s Western democracies witnessed a rise in intolerance towards ethnic minorities. The Dutch writers van den Broek and Heunks explain this partly as the increased sensitivity of some social groups to a potential threat to their individual interests, e.g. on the housing or labour markets, and partly as society becoming oriented towards self-centred rather than open forms of individualism [van den Broek and Heunks 1994: 77-78].

Eric Hobsbawm [1992: 7-8] presents a more common explanation of the dynamics of the growth of xenophobic moods. "Indeed, for most of the inhabitants of the countries in which xenophobia is now epidemic" says Hobsbawm, "the old ways of life have changed so drastically. (...) And this seems to me to be the clue. (...) All are comprehensible as symptoms of social disorientation, of the fraying, and sometimes the snapping, of the threads of what used to be the network that bound people together in society. The strength of this xenophobia is the fear of the unknown, of the darkness into which we may fall when the landmarks which seem to provide an objective, a permanent, a positive delimitation of our belonging together, disappear. (...) 'the nation', or the ethnic group" Hobsbawm continues, "appears as the ultimate guarantee when society fails. (...) You can't be thrown out. You are born in it and stay in it. (...) And because we live in an era when all other human relations and values are in crisis, or at least somewhere on a journey towards unknown and uncertain destinations, xenophobia looks like becoming the mass ideology of the 20th century *fin de siècle*."

To return to the Czech situation, Ivan Gabal [1999] and Jiří Buriánek [1999] have each contributed to the debate, both basing their ideas on repeated surveys of Czech public opinion towards foreigners in the 1990s.

Ivan Gabal [1999] notes that in the Czech Republic there is "a strong tendency on the part of the Czechs to reject foreigners and immigration as such, together with the related question of attitudes towards coexistence with the Roma minority" [Gabal 1999: 77]. These negative attitudes are stronger among older people, and Gabal has shown how adult Czechs basically distinguish three categories of foreigners. The first includes those 'capital' foreigners who are seen as acceptable in cultural terms (e.g. Americans, French, Germans), the second group is the so-called 'relations' (Slovaks, Czech émigrés, Jews), towards whom the attitude is somewhat mixed but who are still seen as acceptable although 'foreign'. The third group, however, is made up of "Arabs, Vietnamese, Chinese, people from the former Yugoslavia, Russians, Ukrainians, Blacks and particularly the Roma, who – despite their long residence and often Czech citizenship – are seen by Czechs today as the most foreign 'foreigners'" [Gabal 1999: 77-78]. Gabal sees Czechs' xenophobic attitudes as originating primarily in the ideal of cultural, ethnic and national

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<sup>6</sup>) In Britain, for example, the ghettoising of ethnic minorities; in the case of the Netherlands a process of 'minoritisation' has been noted, in which people designated as a minority can expect sub-standard treatment; in Sweden the state has chosen older 'traditional' leaders for the dialogue with immigrants, as they can be more easily manipulated [Rex 1999].

homogeneity, from a degree of self-centredness and from a repressive approach to immigration and the settlement of foreigners.

Jiří Buriánek [1999] analysed xenophobic attitudes among Czechs primarily with respect to the Roma. He believes that Czech xenophobia has social and cultural roots, rather than ethnic ones. Among the more general causes of xenophobic behaviour Buriánek suggests the airing of individual frustrations or aggression on the 'scapegoat' principle. Attitudes towards the Roma are strongly influenced by negative personal experiences (experience of ethnic conflict) and by perception of a devastated community and generally unacceptable 'uncultural' environment [Buriánek 1999: 32-33]. Comparing data from the years between 1995 and 1998, Buriánek notes a positive change in Czech attitudes towards relations with the Roma minority. On a seven-point value index, there was shift from 2.1 in 1995 to 2.6 in 1998 [ibid.: 33]. Such a shift could of course be partly because antipathy towards 'foreign' ethnic groups is masked, or because respondents feel ashamed about their own xenophobic tendencies.

It should be recalled that the problem of xenophobic attitudes can be seen in different ways. The subject of xenophobia is often seen as an element of the concept of *tolerance* [Nevitte 1996, van den Broek and de Moor 1994, van den Broek and Heunks 1994] or *social exclusion*, as Rabušic [2000], for example, has shown.

## Data

The rest of this article will be based on a set of questions asked in the *European Values Study (EVS)*<sup>7</sup> in 1999.<sup>8</sup> Respondents had, among other things, to mark those groups of people on a list whom *they would not wish to have as neighbours*. While the EVS questionnaire included a comprehensive list of such groups, I will concentrate here on those which could be considered as *foreigners*. The category of 'foreigners' in the EVS included five groups: (1) people of a different race; (2) Muslims; (3) immigrants and foreign workers; (4) Jews, and (5) Roma.

## Results

### *a) The level of xenophobia among Czechs in comparison with the countries of Western and post-communist Europe*

Table 1 provides an overview of the percentage of respondents of different countries who would not like to have members of the given group as neighbours. The countries in the

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7) The EVS (*European Values Study*) is a longitudinal *cross-cultural* comparative survey of value orientations. Its first stage was undertaken by the Dutch and Belgians in 1981 and was carried out in 26 European countries. The second stage was begun in 1990 and included 45 countries from throughout the world, including the former Czechoslovakia. The third stage of the EVS was undertaken in 1999. The Czech EVS survey was carried out in May 1999 on a representative *sample of Czech population* over the age of 18 (N = 1 909), under the direction of Jan Řehák and Ladislav Rabušic. Data collection was carried out by SC&C, spol. s r. o.

8) At the time of writing this article EVS 1999 data was available from 25 countries. Two countries were omitted as irrelevant to the subject (as unlikely to have sufficient Roma inhabitants), so 23 countries were included in the analysis. These are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine (n = 30 698). (All German data was included in the group of 'Western' countries.)

table are ordered according to the value for the group that elicited the highest level of dismissive responses, i.e. 'Roma', shown in the last column.

Table 1. Percentage of respondents in selected countries who would not like to have members of the given group as neighbours (1999)

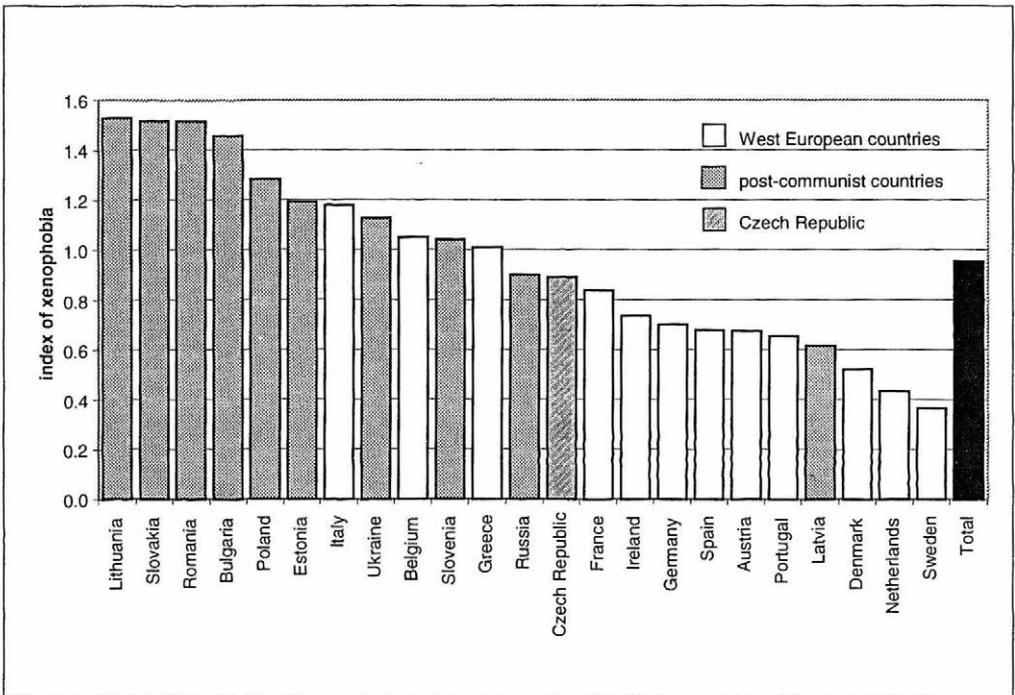
| Country               | People of<br>different races | Muslims     | Immigrants and<br>foreign workers | Jews       | Roma        |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Slovakia              | 17.0                         | 24.4        | 22.8                              | 9.8        | 77.2        |
| Lithuania             | 8.5                          | 30.6        | 22.7                              | 21.5       | 61.8        |
| Italy                 | 15.6                         | 17.2        | 16.5                              | 12.9       | 55.6        |
| Bulgaria              | 26.7                         | 21.3        | 23.4                              | 17.1       | 53.5        |
| Ukraine               | 10.5                         | 24.2        | 14.8                              | 10.4       | 52.7        |
| Romania               | 24.2                         | 31.4        | 21.1                              | 23.2       | 51.5        |
| Estonia               | 14.8                         | 22.0        | 20.7                              | 11.2       | 49.5        |
| Russia                | 8.2                          | 13.7        | 11.2                              | 11.5       | 45.4        |
| France                | 9.1                          | 16.1        | 12.1                              | 5.9        | 40.4        |
| <b>Czech Republic</b> | <b>9.6</b>                   | <b>15.4</b> | <b>19.1</b>                       | <b>4.4</b> | <b>39.8</b> |
| Poland                | 18.1                         | 24.7        | 24.8                              | 25.8       | 39.2        |
| Slovenia              | 12.0                         | 22.6        | 16.0                              | 16.8       | 36.6        |
| Germany               | 5.9                          | 12.5        | 11.0                              | 6.8        | 33.9        |
| Belgium               | 13.9                         | 19.8        | 15.7                              | 11.1       | 33.3        |
| Portugal              | 6.7                          | 7.6         | 2.6                               | 10.7       | 33.3        |
| Greece                | 14.4                         | 20.9        | 13.7                              | 18.7       | 32.8        |
| Spain                 | 10.3                         | 10.8        | 9.3                               | 9.2        | 28.0        |
| Latvia                | 4.8                          | 14.5        | 9.8                               | 5.2        | 27.2        |
| Ireland               | 12.3                         | 14.4        | 12.5                              | 11.4       | 26.5        |
| Austria               | 7.9                          | 15.2        | 12.7                              | 8.8        | 26.5        |
| Sweden                | 2.6                          | 9.2         | 2.9                               | 2.2        | 19.8        |
| Netherlands           | 5.0                          | 12.2        | 5.0                               | 1.7        | 19.6        |
| Denmark               | 7.4                          | 16.3        | 10.6                              | 2.5        | 15.3        |
| Total average         | 11.4                         | 17.8        | 14.4                              | 10.9       | 39.9        |

Source: EVS data set 1999.

The data in Table 1 offer basic and relatively unadjusted information. At first sight it is clear that a higher level of rejection can be found among the post-communist countries and that the Czech Republic has around average values. The differences in the level of rejection of the five categories of 'foreigners' under consideration are clear. The following graphs provide an even clearer summary of the situation.

Figure 1 shows the overall ranking of countries according to the level of xenophobic attitudes. The ranking is given by the average values of the 'index of xenophobia', calculated from the acceptance or rejection of the given five groups of 'foreigners'. The index is on a range from 0 to 5. The higher the value of the index, the higher is the respondent's level of xenophobia.

Figure 1. Countries by index of xenophobia and country type



Source: EVS data set 1999

Figure 1 very clearly shows the higher level of xenophobic attitudes in post-communist countries, while respondents from the developed Western democracies were the most tolerant of 'foreigners'. This figure corresponds to findings about the higher level of tolerance in developed regions towards individuals who are in some way different. The Dutch writers, van den Broek and de Moor, for example, found that at the beginning of the 1990s the peoples of Eastern Europe showed a markedly lower level of ethnic tolerance than did those in Western Europe, while within Eastern Europe the highest level of intolerance was found among Slovaks and Bulgarians, with Poland and the former East Germany emerging as the most tolerant [van den Broek and de Moor 1994: 211]. Similarly, Haerpfer and Wallace in a survey of ten post-communist countries found "the highest level of ethnic tensions" in Slovakia [Haerpfer and Wallace 1998: 186]. The above ranking of individual countries is, however, somewhat different from Wallace's [1999] findings.<sup>9</sup> The differences are probably due to the use of different concepts in the research.

The decline of tolerance towards 'foreign' ethnic groups in Italy and Belgium, which had the highest index values among the Western countries in this survey, has also

<sup>9</sup> Using the values of the index of xenophobia, Claire Wallace gained the following ranking of countries (from the highest level of xenophobia to the lowest): Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Croatia, Belarus, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia [Wallace 1999: 64-65]. In her conclusions, however, Wallace noted that from the analysis of individual countries (rather than on the basis of indicators of xenophobia) Slovakia emerged as highly xenophobic [Wallace 1999: 88].

been noted by, for example van den Broek and Heunks [1994]. Also noteworthy is the position of Latvia, which differs from the average for the Baltic countries.

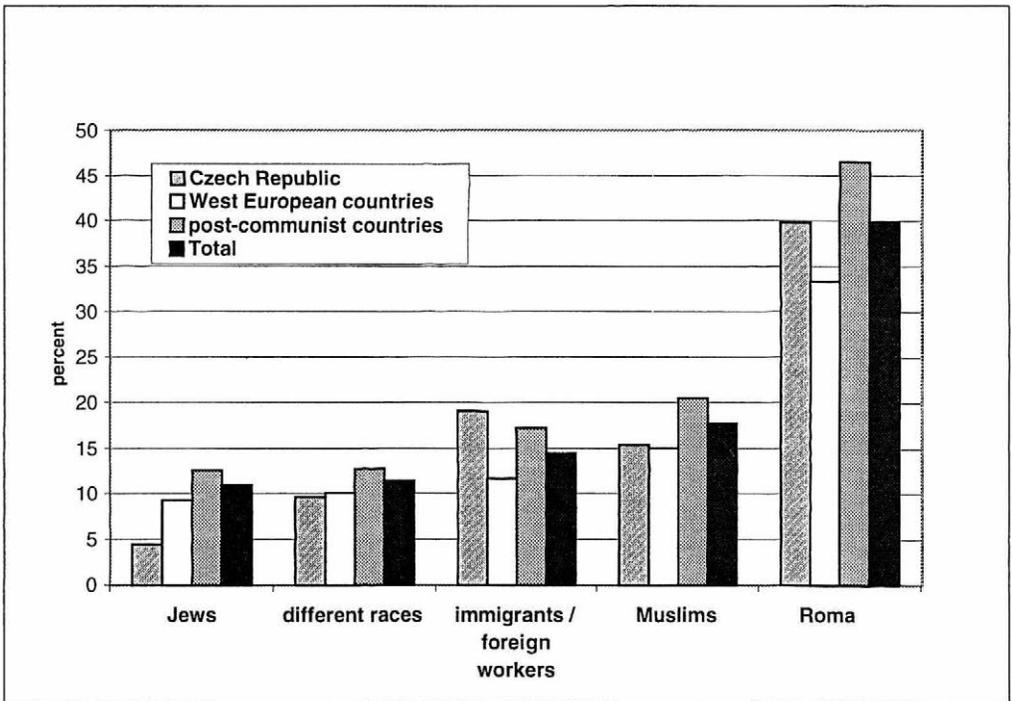
The Czech Republic had slightly below average values (from the countries surveyed) on the xenophobia index. Most of the other post-communist countries included in the survey emerge here as more xenophobic.

While this article does not include a comparison over time, it is worth noting the dramatic fall in the level of xenophobia among Czechs, from the earlier round of the EVS in 1991. The index of xenophobia in the Czech sample in 1991 was 1.54, i.e. approximately the same level as Lithuania in 1999.

#### b) Differentiation of views of 'foreign' ethnic groups

Figure 2 shows the differences in the level of rejection of the five 'foreign' ethnic groups by 'region'.

Figure 2. Proportion of respondents who would not like to have selected social groups as neighbours – by country (region)



Source: EVS data set 1999.

The data shows the massive rejection of the Roma population noted by other authors [Gabal 1999, Wallace 1999].<sup>10</sup> Of the sample as a whole,<sup>11</sup> four out of ten people on average would not like to have *Romas* as neighbours. When individual countries are consid-

<sup>10</sup> These authors were working with a larger number of ethnic groups that were considered 'foreign'.

<sup>11</sup> The average rejection of the Roma in this sample of 23 countries ranged from 15.3% to 77.2%.

ered, too, the *Roma* arouse the most negative feelings, except from the Danish respondents, who had one percent higher rejection of *Muslims*. The EVS respondents expressed the greatest degree of tolerance for *Jews*. The figure also shows the difference between the (more tolerant) Western countries and the (less tolerant) post-communist countries. The higher the level of rejection of an ethnic group, the greater is the difference between these two groups.

With respect to their relations with the different categories of 'foreigners', Czech respondents were somewhat closer to Western countries. As the figure shows, Czechs have a relatively positive view of *Jews* (in comparison with the countries surveyed), and there is a significant statistical difference<sup>12</sup> from the groups of both Western and post-communist countries. Czechs' declared attitudes towards *people of a different race* are very close to those found in the group of Western countries and are distinctively different from those of people in the group of post-communist countries. In their rejection of *immigrants and foreign labourers*, however, Czechs show higher levels than both groups (although the difference is statistically significant only for the group of Western countries). In their attitude towards *Muslims*, Czechs are again close to the Western countries and significantly different from the group of post-communist countries. And finally, in their relations to the *Roma*, Czechs' responses were significantly different from those of both groups. Rejection of the *Roma* on the part of Czech respondents was less clear than for the other post-communist countries, but still significantly above the Western European level.

### c) Grouping of countries by the nature of people's xenophobic attitudes

Cluster analysis was used to gain an overview of the similarities and differences between the different countries surveyed from the point of view of respondents' attitudes towards 'foreign' ethnic groups. This made it possible to group the countries in such a way that each group included those countries that were most similar to each other, but that the groups would be as distinct from each other as possible.<sup>13</sup>

The dendrogram<sup>14</sup> in Figure 3 is one possible presentation of the cluster analysis. Countries are arranged in the form of a horizontal 'tree', with the 'trunk' on the right and the 'branches' going to the left. The further to the left the branches separate, the more similar are the countries (in terms of the criteria in question), and conversely, those branches dividing further to the right indicate the greatest dissimilarity between the countries.

The 23 countries shown in the dendrogram basically fall into two major groups. The first of these can be seen in the upper part of the dendrogram<sup>15</sup> and includes primarily Western countries, while the countries in the second group, lower in the figure,<sup>16</sup> are largely post-communist countries. The two closest countries are the Netherlands and Sweden, followed by the group of five countries from Austria to Germany, and then in the bottom group, between the Czech Republic and France. The last two countries shown

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<sup>12</sup>) On the basis of the Mann-Whitney U test.

<sup>13</sup>) Data included in the cluster analysis basically correspond to those given in Table 1.

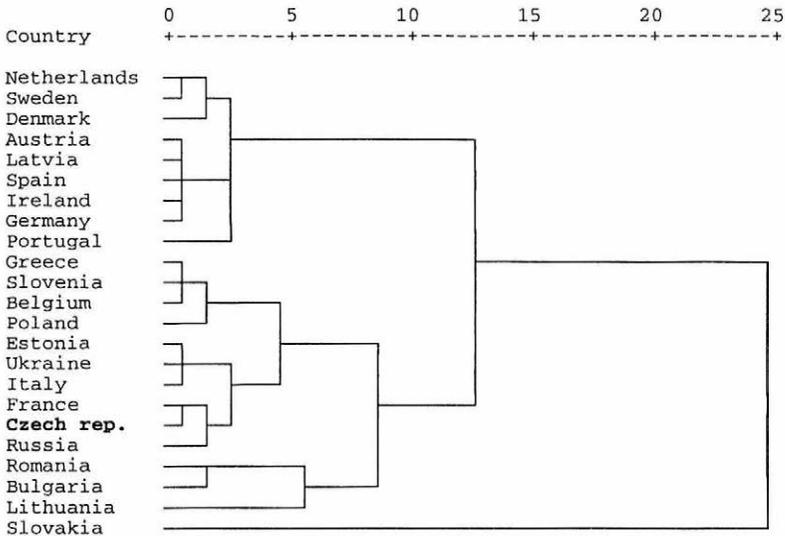
<sup>14</sup>) The variants of the cluster analysis were chosen for their relatively close correspondence with the values on the xenophobia index.

<sup>15</sup>) In the dendrogram from the Netherlands down to Portugal.

<sup>16</sup>) In the dendrogram from Greece down to Lithuania.

also demonstrated very similar values on the index of xenophobia, as do the trio of Estonia, Ukraine and Italy. Looking at the structure of the bottom group of countries, a distinct group can be observed in its lower part, including Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania. As seen in Figure 1, these three countries basically form the top of the scale of values on the index of xenophobia. Slovakia is only loosely linked with the groups. Its specific position is determined by the highest values on the parameters indicating rejection of the Roma, who already meet with the highest level of rejection among the five ethnic groups included in the survey.

Figure 3. Similarities and differences between countries according to the level of xenophobic attitudes



Source: EVS data set 1999.

The cluster analysis was carried out using the Between Groups approach.

The proximity matrix for the countries surveyed shows Sweden and the Netherlands as the most similar, while the greatest difference is between Sweden and Slovakia. The Czech Republic is, in this respect, 'closest' to France and relatively the furthest removed from its geographical neighbour, Slovakia. At least in this sense.

#### d) Factors encouraging xenophobic attitudes

The next step was to try and ascertain the relation between the level of xenophobic attitudes (expressed as values on the index of xenophobia) and a set of selected variables. The selection of variables was based on the findings of the following authors: Wimmer [1997], Haerpfer and Wallace [1998], Hjerm [1998] and Wallace [1999]. The variables considered can be grouped into the following blocks:

– *demographic variables*: sex, age;

– *variables indicating socio-economic status*: education, social economic status, unemployment;

- *variable indicating general political orientation*: orientation on the left-right scale, pride in one's nation, authoritarian features (belief in a strong leader), attitudes towards people from developing countries;
- *variables indicating personal features*: willingness to trust other people, overall satisfaction with one's own life.

The relations of these variables to the index of xenophobia was measured for the sub-groups of Western and post-communist countries, for the Czech Republic, and finally for the entire set of countries. The values of coefficients measuring association, however, were less than 0.2.<sup>17</sup> Therefore an alternative approach was selected, involving the comparison of means and follow-up significance tests. The values of the independent variables were dichotomised or trichotomised<sup>18</sup> and the average values on the index of xenophobia between variants of the independent variables were compared. The results are shown in Table 2. Statistically significant differences are shown with black dots, while circles indicate that no significant difference was found.

As Table 2 shows, there was a statistically significant difference for all the variables tested, except for the first ('sex'). However, this was the case only with the Western countries. For the post-communist countries, including the Czech Republic, the following features emerged. First, the variables of 'unemployment' and 'right-left orientation' did not show any differentiation, which in the latter case may be due to the fact that understanding of the concepts of left and right is still not clear in the post-communist countries [van den Broek and de Moor 1994]. Secondly, the relation between the variable 'pride in one's country' and xenophobic attitudes appeared to be ambivalent: in the sub-set of Western countries individuals who expressed pride in their countries appeared to be more xenophobic, while for Czech respondents it was the reverse. Thirdly, for the Czech Republic the tests showed no relationship between xenophobic attitudes and the variables of 'age' and 'satisfaction with one's own life'. Nevertheless, if in this case we instead use the adjusted standardised residual from the contingency tables, a higher level of xenophobia is found among older Czechs and those less satisfied with their lives.

It can therefore be said that for the whole data set (of 23 selected countries), including the Czech Republic, a higher level of xenophobia is more likely among older people (particularly over the age of 50), among those with a lower level of formal education, of lower socio-economic status, among those who are prepared to believe in a strong

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<sup>17</sup>) Lower values were in the great majority in the distribution of the 'index of xenophobia'. This index was on a range from '0' (= no group was indicated as 'unwelcome as neighbours') to '5' (= all groups were indicated a 'unwelcome neighbours'). Around half of the respondents (51%) in the EVS set did not indicate any group as 'unwelcome neighbours', a quarter (26%) indicated only one group, 15% indicated two or three groups, and only 8% of respondents indicated 4 or all 5 of the groups of 'foreigners' in question.

<sup>18</sup>) The variables were dichotomised or trichotomised as follows: (1) *age* (18-30; 31-55; 56 or over); (2) *age at finishing formal education* (under 16; 17-20; 21 or over); (3) *social economic status* (half of the symmetrical four-point scale); (4) *unemployment* (unemployed; employed); (5) *right-left orientation* (half of the symmetrical four-point scale); (6) *pride in one's country* (half of the symmetrical four-point scale); (7) *willingness to believe in a strong leader* (half of the symmetrical four-point scale); (8) *attitudes towards people from developing countries* (half of the symmetrical four-point scale); (9) *willingness in trust others* (dichotomic variable); (10) *satisfaction with one's own life* (trichotomised ten-point scale: 1-3; 4-7; 8-10).

leader, those with a negative attitude towards people from developing countries, among those unwilling to trust others, and those less satisfied with their lives. In the sub-set of Western countries, the factors encouraging xenophobia also include unemployment, right-wing leanings and pride in one's country.

Table 2. The influence of selected factors on the level of xenophobic attitudes – results of significance tests<sup>19</sup>

|  | Significance of test |                          |                | Total |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------|
|  | Western countries    | Post-communist countries | Czech Republic |       |
| <i>(Variable = dichotomic):</i>        |                      |                          |                |       |
| sex                                    | ○                    | ○                        | ○              | ○     |
| social economic status                 | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| unemployment                           | ●                    | ○                        | ○              | ●     |
| right-left orientation                 | ●                    | ○                        | ○              | ●     |
| pride in one's own nation              | ●                    | ○                        | ●              | ○     |
| willingness to believe a strong leader | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| <i>attitude to people</i>              |                      |                          |                |       |
| <i>from developing countries</i>       | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| trust in other people                  | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| <i>(Variable = trichotomic):</i>       |                      |                          |                |       |
| age                                    |                      |                          |                |       |
| 18-30; 31-55                           | ●                    | ○                        | ○              | ○     |
| 18-30; 56 and over                     | ●                    | ●                        | ○              | ●     |
| 31-35; 56 and over                     | ●                    | ●                        | ○              | ●     |
| age at leaving school                  |                      |                          |                |       |
| 16 or under; 17-20                     | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| 16 and under; 21 and over              | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| 17-20; 21 and over                     | ●                    | ●                        | ●              | ●     |
| satisfaction with life:                |                      |                          |                |       |
| unsatisfied; so-so                     | ●                    | ●                        | ○              | ●     |
| unsatisfied; satisfied                 | ●                    | ●                        | ○              | ●     |
| so-so; satisfied                       | ●                    | ●                        | ○              | ●     |

Note: ● statistically significant difference.  
○ statistically insignificant difference.

In other words, the various features of the profile of a xenophobe, described in the literature as older people with a lower level of education, in some way marginalised, 'victims' of the modernisation (transformation) under way, generally uncertain, untrusting and at the same time authoritarian, could basically be identified in the EVS data. As I have already said, this should be seen only as a sounding, both with respect to the variables tested, and particularly with respect to the methods used.

<sup>19</sup> As the distribution of the values on the index of xenophobia did not meet criteria of normality, it was necessary to use non-parametric tests (the *Man-Whitney* test for dichotomic variables and the *Kruskal-Walis* test for trichotomic variables).

## Conclusion

What then does the EVS 1999 data tell us about xenophobic attitudes among Europeans? The expectation that the overall level of xenophobia is higher in post-communist countries than in developed Western countries was confirmed. The opposite ends of the xenophobia ladder are occupied by the countries of Eastern Europe at one end and their north-western counterparts at the other. Approximately ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the differences found can be seen as proof of the difficulties experienced by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe during their transformation into developed societies. The Czech Republic is in the middle of this xenophobic current. The last ten years have seen a noticeable improvement in relations with 'foreigners' in the Czech Republic [see *Jaký...* 1998, Buriánek 1999] which should be interpreted against the background of change or stability in the other countries surveyed, but this has unfortunately not yet been possible. The data showed significant differences in the acceptance of 'foreign' ethnic groups. The causes of the almost universal mass rejection of the Roma [see Wallace 1999, Gabal 1999] were not covered in this article, although they undoubtedly present a challenge to both sociologists and to those working in other disciplines.

Some of the predictors of xenophobia that have been identified in developed countries were not found to be significant in the post-communist situation, although this may well change with time. It should also be recalled that in the EVS xenophobic attitudes are indicated by only a limited number of indicators which certainly do not give a full view of this phenomenon in all its breadth and forms.

Society cannot just cure itself of xenophobia. As Drbohlav [1999: 2] fittingly noted: "It is not a case of eliminating xenophobia, which is logically bound up with the development of a person and which clearly has its 'positive' protective and stimulating side, but of how it can be cultivated and minimised." Or as the Bible puts it "You shall not harm or oppress a guest, since you too were guests in Egypt" (Exodus 23, 9). As the EVS data makes clear, Czechs and their fellow pilgrims from Eastern and Central Europe have some way to go in this direction. There is no reason for hesitating as all of us have at some time been guests in another's home.

*Translated by April Retter*

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# **Income Maintenance Policies, Household Characteristics and Work Incentives in the Czech Republic**

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**Summary:** This paper investigates work disincentives imposed by the income maintenance system on the unemployed with certain household characteristics. It firstly specifies which parameters of the income maintenance system may impose work disincentives, and then attempts to identify the relationship between the work incentives and the household characteristics. It shows that the income maintenance system is more generous towards larger families with children.

The binomial logit estimation of outflows to employment using the Labour Force Survey Data evidences that between the fourth quarter of 1998 and 1999, marked as a recession period, the children characteristics were not the significant determinants of outflows from unemployment to employment. Nevertheless, the calculations of the gross probabilities show that Social Assistance recipients from the families with children have much lower outflow from unemployment.

Using the empirical results some passive labour market policy options are discussed.