

Analysis of Experience with Employing Vietnamese Citizens in TON a.s.

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem bakalářské práce je analýza zkušeností se zaměstnáváním občanů Vietnamské socialistické republiky ve firmě TON a.s. a z toho vyplývající doporučení do budoucna. Teoretická část poměrně detailně popisuje českou legislativu pro zaměstnávání cizinců, historické pozadí česko-vietnamských vztahů, rozdíly mezi oběma kulturami, aby se nakonec věnovala různým způsobům náboru cizinců do zaměstnání v České republice. Kromě obeznámení čtenářů se základními informacemi o společnosti TON a.s. se pak převážná část analytické části zaměřuje na zaměstnance společnosti a především na jejich postoj k vietnamským kolegům. Veškerá zjištění vyplývající z dotazníkového průzkumu spolu s doporučeními a radami do budoucna jsou pak rovněž uvedena v analytické části. Analýza rozhovoru se Son Nguyen Cao, vietnamským zástupcem personální agentury ST.CZPLUS07, rovněž pomáhá čtenáři získat přehled o aktuální situaci na trhu práce, především co se týče náboru pracovníků z Vietnamu.

Klíčová slova: Zaměstnávání cizinců, integrace Vietnamců, Vietnamská menšina, pracovní agentura.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to carry out an analysis of experience with employing citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the company TON a.s. and to conclude corresponding recommendations for the future. In addition to this, the theoretical part gives a detailed description of the Czech legislation on employment of foreigners as well as a comprehensive account of historical background of the Czech-Vietnamese relationship, describes in detail differences between the both cultures and finally recounts various ways of recruiting foreigners in the Czech Republic. The analytical section, apart from acquainting readers with basic information about TON a.s., focuses primarily on company employees and their attitude to their Vietnamese colleagues. All the findings resulting from the questionnaire survey, along with recommendations for the future, are also included in the analytical part. Moreover, analysis of the interview with Son Nguyen Cao, the Vietnamese representative of ST.CZ PLUS 07 recruitment agency, also helps the reader get the picture of the current situation on the labour market, mainly as far as recruitment of Vietnamese workers is concerned.

Keywords: Employing foreigners, Vietnamese minority, integration of the Vietnamese, recruitment agency.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the impact of the global financial crisis on the economic system as a whole, both the national and world markets will sooner or later start to feel the lack of qualified workforce, as far as heavy industry, civil engineering, manufacturing, building industry or health care services are concerned. The ability to ensure sufficient amount of labour force will play a decisive role in the future development of every country and every business, providing those who succeed with competitive advantage. Employing foreign nationals is definitely an effective way how to meet these increasing demands on workforce. The aim of this thesis is to conduct an analysis of experience with employing Vietnamese citizens in the private Czech company TON a.s. and to suggest consequent recommendations and arrangements for the future.

The theoretical part will cover both positive and negative features of employing foreign nationals, mainly focusing on its legal aspects, regulations and steps to be taken by both a foreigner and his/her prospective employer. Particular attention will be devoted to analysis of statistical data concerning foreigners (mainly Vietnamese) living in the Czech Republic (these are attached in Appendix PV). Furthermore, the thesis will deal with a detailed description of historical background of the Czech-Vietnamese relationship since understanding this will help to bring deeper insight into the whole context of Vietnamese migration to Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, respectively. Besides, cultural differences and various ways of recruiting foreign nationals are also taken into account, helping to provide readers with all the available and useful information.

The analysis, on the other hand, will focus on concrete working experience of TON a.s. employees. Being one of the biggest furniture manufacturers in Europe, company's Human Resources Department wanted to find out what the attitude of their employees to Vietnamese colleagues was. By means of assessing their level of contentment via a thorough questionnaire, the thesis will evaluate whether the cooperation was more of a success or a failure, giving further explanation, recommendations and pieces of advice for the future. The author has also decided to include an interview with Son Nguyen Cao, the representative of ST.CZ PLUS07 recruitment agency, through which Vietnamese citizens have been recruited by TON a.s. Detailed analysis of the interview will provide the readers with all the essential information so that they could get the picture of how these recruitment agencies work and what the current situation is as far as Vietnamese migration and their employing in Czech companies are concerned.

Thesis Statement:

Despite being an extremely closed community, the Vietnamese nationals are exceptionally hardworking and reliable people whose ability to learn and determination to overcome the pitfalls of everyday life in a different country are overwhelming and the new generation of which (being in much greater extent assimilated into the Czech society) is to prove that Vietnamese people should no longer be regarded as foreign stallholders only, but as rightful members of the Czech society with all their rights and duties.

I. THEORY

1 LEGAL REGULATIONS ON EMPLOYING FOREIGNERS

For the *Employment Act*, a foreigner is a natural person who is not a citizen of the Czech Republic, a citizen of the EU/EEA (European Union Member States/European Economic Area States) or Switzerland, or their family member. A person without a citizenship is also considered a foreigner. Citizens of these countries, together with foreigners who have permanent residence in the Czech Republic, enjoy, for employment purposes, the same legal status as the citizens of the Czech Republic, i.e., they are in no way limited in their choice of employment, with the exception of certain professions which require Czech citizenship, pursuant to special legal regulations. (Schelle 2008)

EU/EEA and Switzerland citizens or their dependants

In compliance with the amending of *Act no. 435/2004 Coll., on employment*, the citizens of all European Union Member States, EEA States (Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland) or Switzerland, or their dependants, or foreigners who have permanent residence in the Czech Republic are not required to hold a work permit for the purposes of employment on the territory of the Czech Republic. Their employer is obliged to inform in writing about this fact the relevant Labour Office no later than the day when these persons start working and to keep records of citizens of these states and of all foreign nationals he/she employs. (Schelle 2008)

Foreigners (citizens of EU/EEA non-member countries)

As stated in *Act no. 435/2004 Coll., on employment*, a foreign national may only be recruited and employed with: (Schelle 2008)

- ✓ A valid work permit (unless otherwise stipulated by the *Act on Employment*),
- ✓ A valid permit to reside on the territory of the Czech Republic (issued by the relevant authority of the Foreign and Border Police on the basis of a work permit issued by the territorially relevant Labour Office), or
- ✓ A green card (represents both a work permit and a residence permit).

1.1 Steps to be taken by a Foreigner with Respect to his/her Employment in the Czech Republic

A party to the administrative procedure is the foreigner applying for a work permit in writing at the relevant Labour Office. He/she may be represented in the procedure by his/her employer or another authorised representative, on the basis of a written power of

attorney and to the extent specified therein. A foreigner may carry out work in the Czech Republic provided he/she has a valid work permit and a valid visa issued for an employment-related stay. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu)

1.1.1 Application for a Work Permit

The foreign national shall normally make a written application for a work permit to the Labour Office (LO) before his/her arrival on the territory of the Czech Republic in person or through the employer for whom the foreign national is to work or to whom he/she will be assigned to work by his/her foreign employer (*model application of a foreigner for a work permit is listed in Appendix PI*). The basic condition for the issuing of a work permit to a foreigner is the situation on the labour market and the fact that the vacant work position is one which, given the qualification required or the temporary shortage in workforce, cannot be occupied otherwise (i.e. with a Czech citizen). Competent to issue this permit is always the LO in whose district the work is to be carried out by the foreigner. A work permit is not required when employing a foreign national who has a permanent residence permit or when employing foreigners-graduates of secondary schools and universities in the Czech Republic. (Schelle 2008)

The application for a work permit shall contain: (Schelle 2008)

- ✓ Identification information of the foreigner (i.e., first name or names, surname, maiden name, if relevant, country of citizenship, birth number or the date and place of birth, if a birth number has not been assigned, residence),
- ✓ Address in the country of permanent residence, and a mailing address,
- ✓ Travel document number and name of the issuing authority,
- ✓ Identification information of the future employer (name, registered seat, identification number),
- ✓ Type, place of work and term for which the work should be performed,
- ✓ Any other information required for the performance of the work.

The following should be attached to the work permit application: (Schelle 2008)

- ✓ Photocopy of the page of a travel document containing the basic identification information about the foreigner;
- ✓ Declaration by an employer that it will employ the foreigner (*model declaration is listed in Appendix PII*);

- ✓ A notarised copy of a document of professional competence for the field in which the foreigner is to work in the Czech Republic (vocational certificate, certificate of matriculation, university diploma, etc.);
- ✓ Other documents if the nature of the job requires so, or if an announced international agreement, whose ratification was approved by the Parliament and by which the Czech Republic is bound, stipulates so.

Enclosures in foreign languages are to be submitted in their original or in the form of a notarised copy with an official translation into Czech. (Schelle 2008)

1.1.2 Work Permit

Work permit contains the foreigner's identification information, place of work, type of work, identification information of the employer with whom the foreigner will perform the work, duration for which it is issued, and other information needed for the performance of work. It is not transferable and it is issued for a definite period of time, not exceeding two years. However, a foreigner may apply for a work permit repeatedly. For seasonal workers employed in activities depending on the alternation of the seasons, a work permit is issued for a maximum of six months in a calendar year and may be issued even repeatedly, provided that at least six months have passed between two jobs. Work permit is valid only for employment with the employer specified in the decision, and only for the type and place of work specified therein. If any of the conditions specified in the permit are to change prior to the expiration of the work permit, the foreigner must apply at the competent LO for the issue of a new work permit. Work permit is required for all labour-law relationships within the meaning of the Labour Code, in which a foreigner engages in the Czech Republic, i.e., an employment relationship, auxiliary (side) employment, agreement to perform a work and agreement to carry out labour activity, even in the case of a concurrence of these labour-law relationships.

(http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_zamest_ciz)

A work permit shall terminate with: (Schelle 2008)

- ✓ The expiration of the time-period for which it was issued,
- ✓ The termination of the employment prior to the time period for which it was issued,
- ✓ The expiration of the permission to stay, or
- ✓ The ceasing to exist of the right to stay for other reasons.

Withdrawal of a work permit

A Labour Office may withdraw a foreigner's work permit if employment is being carried out in contravention of the work permit or if the work permit was issued on the basis of untrue information. (Schelle 2008)

Conditions for extending a work permit

A work permit may only be extended with a view to the situation on the labour market. In assessing a foreigner's extension application, the Labour Office evaluates whether it has on file a job applicant for whom that specific position, hitherto occupied by a foreigner, would be suitable.

A foreigner may apply for an extension of a work permit no earlier than 3 months and no later than 30 days before its expiration, at the relevant Labour Office. The condition for an extension of a work permit is that the employment will be carried on with the same employer. The application for an extension of a work permit contains the same requisite details as an application for a new work permit (*model application for an extension of a work permit is attached in Appendix PI*). A statement of the employer that it will continue to employ the foreigner must be attached with the application (*model declaration by an employer that it will employ the foreigner is listed in Appendix PII*). The continuation of the employment of a foreigner with the same employer is conditioned on the foreigner having received a work permit from the Labour Office and a permission to stay in the Czech Republic from the relevant authority of the Foreign and Border Police. With the adoption of the amendment to *Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment (Act No. 306/2008 Coll.)*, work permits can be issued or renewed, as appropriate, for a period of up to two years, effective as of January 1st, 2009. Moreover, medical certificate on the foreigner's health condition is no longer required and does not need to be attached to the work permit application form. (Schelle 2008)

1.1.3 Green Card

The green card is a permit for long-term residence for employment purposes in the Czech Republic under special circumstances. It simplifies entry to the job market for foreigners who have qualifications for which the Czech Republic has a job opening. It combines the residence permit and the work permit in one document. Therefore, a foreigner who has a green card issued for a specific job is entitled to the following:
(http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zelka/zam)

- ✓ Reside in the Czech Republic and
- ✓ Work in a job for which the green card was issued.

The green card is issued: (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zelka/ciz)

- ✓ Type A: for qualified workers with university education and key personnel.
- ✓ Type B: for workers in jobs with a minimum educational requirement.
- ✓ Type C: for other workers.

The validity of the green card is for 2-3 years. The green card is for foreigners, citizens of the countries listed, which are not members of the European Union: *Australia, Montenegro, Croatia, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, United States of America, Serbia, and Ukraine*. However, Vietnam and Mongolia were removed from the list of Green Card countries, which is – owing to the long-term mutual relationship and rich history of these countries – an absolute nonsense. If a foreigner is not a citizen of any of the countries listed, for work in the Czech Republic it will be necessary to arrange a work permit.

Both a work permit and a green card are issued for a specific job with a specific employer. In terms of employment arrangements they are equivalent to each other. The law does not state that for doing some jobs a work permit is necessary and for other jobs a green card. It depends only on what the employer decides. In order that a foreigner can submit an application for a green card for a specific job, this job must be on the register of jobs available for green cards. A foreigner can search for jobs for which he/she can apply for a green card on the Internet at: http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zelka/vm

1.2 Steps to be Taken by an Employer in Obtaining Employees from Abroad

A party to the procedure is the legal entity or the natural person who wishes to obtain employees from abroad for the vacant work positions, for which job applicants cannot be hired. An employee from abroad means, for the purposes of employment, a natural person (foreigner) who is not a citizen of the Czech Republic or the EU/EEA or Switzerland, or their family member. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

1.2.1 Reporting Vacant Work Positions

A vacant work position is a position which the employer newly created or which has become available. The employer is required to notify the competent LO about the vacancy and its characteristics within 10 calendar days. The basic characteristics means the type of work, place of work, conditions and requirements for holding down a job, basic information on working and wage conditions and information, whether it is a fixed-term or indefinite period employment contract and its expected length. The employer may also provide information about accommodation or commuting possibilities. In the case of employing a foreigner, the employer must offer this foreigner employment and wage conditions customary for Czech citizens in the same work position, in line with the applicable legal regulations, and in line with any collective or labour agreements. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

1.2.2 Application for a Permit to Acquire Employees from Abroad

An application for a permit to obtain employees from abroad is submitted by the employer at the Labour Office at the place where the future employee shall carry out the work (*model application of an employer for the permit to acquire employees from abroad is attached in Appendix PIII*). The basic condition for the issue of a permit to obtain foreigners is the situation on the labour market and the fact that the position is a vacant one, which cannot be filled otherwise given the qualification required, or the temporary shortage of workforce. Competent to issue this permit is always the Labour Office in whose district the foreigner is to carry out the work. The permit to obtain employees from abroad is issued for a definite period of time, and this permit entitles the employer to recruit foreigners. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

The application shall contain:

(http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

- ✓ Identification data of the employer (name, registered seat and identification number, in the case of a legal entity, or first name, surname, birth number and place of business, in the case of a natural person),
- ✓ Information about the work position and its characteristic (type of work, place of the performance of work, basic information on the employment and salary conditions),
- ✓ Number of foreigners required,

- ✓ Planned duration of employment,
- ✓ Professional composition of the future employment force, including qualification requirements,
- ✓ Accommodation address, and other information the employer wishes to provide.

Enclosures

Referring to http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani, the employer shall enclose with its application a notarised copy of a document confirming its authorisation to engage in business (such as an excerpt from the Commercial Registry, trades licence, or any other confirmation of the status of the organisation, such as the founding deed of a social organisation, etc.).

1.2.3 The Right to Employ Foreigners

Only individuals who are over 15 years old and have finished the compulsory school attendance can be employed. If an employer has received from the Labour Office a permit to obtain employees abroad, it may only employ a foreigner, if the foreigner has: (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

- ✓ A valid work permit from the LO of the place where work is to be performed,
- ✓ A valid employment visa,
- ✓ A written employment agreement for the term corresponding to the term specified by the LO on the decision to employ foreigners,
- ✓ Provided that the employer has reported him/her to pay social security and health insurance payments.

1.2.4 Notification Duty

The employer must report the taking up of a work position by a foreigner to the LO within 10 calendar days. The employer must also inform the relevant Labour Office in writing if a foreigner to whom a work permit was issued:

- ✓ Failed to take up the employment, or
- ✓ Terminated his/her employment prior to the expiration of the period for which the permit was issued (*model notification concerning the premature termination of the employment is listed in Appendix PIV*).

The employer must fulfil this information duty within 10 days of the day when the foreigner was to take up the employment or when he/she terminated the employment.

(http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_ziskavani)

2 VIETNAMESE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Relatively good life experience in Czechoslovakia before 1989 has played a vital role in choosing the Czech Republic as a destination country for many Vietnamese immigrants. Being familiar with the local way of living, customs and traditions is also a key advantage in adapting the Vietnamese community to the Czech environment. However, living in the Czech Republic is not easy for any Vietnamese. They have not come to get to know something new. Their immigration is not driven by their desire to change their cultural environment. In their new home country, they see the possibility of improving their economic situation. They have come to sacrifice their lives in return for financial profit they will gain in the future. (Brouček 2003)

For the most part it is the Viets (Kinh) who have been coming to the Czech Republic. The immigrants are mainly from rural areas and major towns of the former North Vietnam, mostly of the poorer provinces and from the delta of the Red River. According to Brouček, the Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic sum up the purpose of their economic activities into three principles: (Brouček 2003)

1. To support their family,
2. To secure children financially,
3. To take care of parents who live in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic can be divided into several groups, the most significant division being the one that distinguishes the time of their arrival in the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia). As stated in the *Report on Migration from Vietnam to the Czech Republic* by Pechová (Pechová 2007, 17-18), three distinct groups of Vietnamese have gradually formed not only here, but also in other countries of the former Eastern Bloc: the so-called community denizens, post-revolutionary Vietnamese community and the newcomers in the nineties, followed by so-called "fresh wave" of migrants after 2000. (Pechová 2007)

2.1 History of Czech-Vietnam Relationship

The history of Vietnamese immigration plays an important role in understanding the coexistence of Vietnamese and Czech people in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, respectively. Until 1989, the central motive for Vietnamese immigration was Czechoslovakia's assistance to Vietnamese war-stricken people. However, it is questionable to what extent this assistance remained at the entry declarations (which then meant to enable education, job training and Vietnamese practice in various fields) and to

what extent the declared support transformed into the economic benefits of the receiving country (Czechoslovakia) in the sense that the Vietnamese were relatively cheap (and later for some sectors even essential) manpower. Since the early 90's it has become a standard economic immigration. (Brouček 2003)

2.1.1 First Contacts in the Fifties (Chrastava Children)

Immigration from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia (later on to the Czech Republic) has experienced several waves since 1956. During that year, with both states having signed an interstate agreement, a few individuals and particularly one hundred children affected by war came to Czechoslovakia. The Czech side placed the children in Chrastava village, where they remained together and lived collectively. Many of the young Vietnamese remained in the former Czechoslovakia and went on to study. Some of them chose this country as their new home and started new families. In subsequent years, other small groups of students followed. In 1967, some 2100 Vietnamese, mostly workers, joined the existing group of apprentices, students and trainees. (Brouček 2003)

2.1.2 Agreement with SRV from 1973

Major milestone in the evolution of Vietnamese immigration to Czechoslovakia was the year 1973. In January 1973, the Vietnamese government delegation visited Czechoslovakia to discuss the arrival of the new ten to twelve thousand Vietnamese citizens who would gain professional experience. Such a request took domestic government by surprise and was seen as extremely difficult to deal with. The Czechoslovakian party knew that such a request could not be complied with immediately. The Vietnamese delegation had already visited the Polish People's Republic pursuing similar goals and then left for the USSR to discuss the same topic. (Brouček 2003, 10)

Being unable to prepare such personnel on their own territory, the Vietnamese government viewed the preparation of skilled workers of the main occupations as one of the key issues of reconstruction and development of country's economy.

Soon, a very serious problem arose, as far as providing sufficient amount of buildings and classrooms for language teaching of Vietnamese citizens was concerned. If there were to come from 1000 to 1200 Vietnamese in 1973 and some 3 - 4 thousand in the following three years, it would be necessary to obtain premises with a capacity of 1,200 accommodation places and 80 classrooms within several months. About 700 to 800 seats should have been in Czech, whereas from 300 to 400 seats were meant to be in Slovakia.

Gradually, contracts signed in 1973, 1974, 1979 and 1980 permitted the arrival of a large number of labourers, apprentices, students and trainees. The length of stay of apprentices had been arranged for seven years, trainees were to stay for four years with a possible extension. Their number was the highest between the years 1980-1983 (approximately 30,000 people). However, the intergovernmental agreement on the gradual reduction followed. In 1985 it was only 19,350 people, of which the vast majority were men (14,973). Vietnamese were placed throughout the Czech Republic, mostly in Prague (about 4,000). (Brouček 2003)

2.1.3 Migration in the Eighties

In the first half of the 80's the best organisation of migration was achieved. There was also an effort to pick apprentices and trainees according to the needs of particular provinces, national departments and their enterprises. Also, language training for migrants had already been done back in Vietnam and then in Czechoslovakia and was at its best in the whole period. (Brouček 2003)

In the second half of the 80's both parties tried to exploit and abuse the situation to their own benefits. The Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia were being increasingly used in unattractive fields, in factories for the assembly line production, as auxiliary and helping staff, etc. On the Vietnamese side, the migration appeared to be a subject of corruption and bribery. Moreover, the Vietnamese used their earnings to send goods to Vietnam. Even criminals came to Czechoslovakia, people from an environment where bribes were normal, the children of highly ranked officials and the like. Trying to learn the craft and develop one's skills was overridden by the vision of faster and easier money. By the end of the eighties, the number of Vietnamese immigrants had gradually decreased by about one third and finally, in 1990, the validity of intergovernmental agreement expired. (Brouček 2003)

Conditions of Vietnamese workers in Czechoslovakia

The interstate treaties of VSR and CSR in the seventies and eighties guaranteed rights for any Vietnamese immigrant. Every Vietnamese citizen, upon arriving in Czechoslovakia, was given winter clothes worth 2400 crowns, and a 900 crown advance on salary repayable within a year. Workers left the Prague airport directly for the factory hostels, apprentices for one of the two language training centres. The workers attended Czech lessons for three months, medical examinations, training courses, and gradually got acquainted with their work environment. (Brouček 2003)

Upon starting work, his/her employer took over other commitments. Factories provided accommodation for financial compensation (maximum of 50 crowns a month) and meals throughout the whole week, including weekends. According to the regulations, each dormitory had to be equipped with kitchen in case the Vietnamese should find it difficult to adapt to Czech canteen meals. (Brouček 2003)

Worker's earnings were based on the agreements (representing at least 1,000 crowns in the first three months). Holidays for each Vietnamese worker were calculated as if he/she had been working from the age of eighteen (even though this was in most cases the age at which they started to learn craft). If he/she wanted to spend his/her holiday in Vietnam, it was not possible until after two years of work experience in Czechoslovakia and only those who were married could apply. In this case, the Czechoslovak party paid for his/her return trip from Hanoi. Czechoslovakian employers provided two months of unpaid leave.

After completing a four-year stay, each Vietnamese was allowed to import goods worth 50% of his/her total net earnings free of duty to their country. The factory also covered the cost of transport to Vietnam. In response to resourcefulness of some Vietnamese, stricter customs regulations were subsequently issued. Restrictions applied to the number of bicycles, mopeds, motorcycles and sewing machines being exported. (Brouček 2003)

In the eighties, discussions on the benefits and drawbacks of the "Vietnamese cooperation" were quite common among people. The fact that many Czechoslovakian factories could only meet their production plans with the substantial assistance of Vietnamese workers, and some could not even do without Vietnamese, is rather obvious. (Brouček 2003)

Students and apprentices

Apprentices went through intensive language training courses in joint centres for the first three months and then they were sent to particular businesses where they learnt language for the next three months. It was necessary to maintain three-year curricula in training institutions in order to prepare Vietnamese workers for more complex and demanding professions, while in others they could be shortened, or more emphasis on practical training could be laid. (Brouček 2003)

The Vietnamese Embassy determined the rules for study visits and behaviour of students. Students who graduated from a college or university in Czechoslovakia with a red diploma were allowed to remain in Czechoslovakia for at least six more months after their graduation and the Embassy helped them to gain a business stay permit. This rule was a great motivation for students to increase their study performance. The academic

performance of college or university students and apprentices was undoubtedly influenced by a second principle as well - the students or apprentices with unsatisfactory study results were under a constant threat of being sent back to Vietnam.

Another embassy direction was that the Vietnamese were not allowed to go out alone. The rule applied until 1980. The Vietnamese were only allowed to move in groups of no less than three (North Korean students were supposedly obliged to move in the public in the group of ten). (Brouček 2003)

The embassy exercised the system of prohibitions through the group leaders. Male Vietnamese were not allowed to socialize with female Vietnamese. Should there be a visit to a person of the opposite sex in the hall of residence or in the hostel, the door had to be open, or the presence of a third person was required. After 1982, the ban was liberalised in the sense that the male Vietnamese could date female Vietnamese; however, they were not allowed to get pregnant. Pregnancy meant an immediate return to Vietnam. Vietnamese students - men were not allowed to wear long hair, jeans, denim shirts or other western clothing. At the end of each school year, there were week-long political training workshops. (Brouček 2003)

2.1.4 Economic Migration after 1989

Although the Vietnamese had contracts for work stays in the country even after the economic transformation in November 1989, a significant number of businesses were unable to provide them with further employment because of them being wound up or transformed due to economic reasons. However, according to the immigrants themselves, coercion to return to Vietnam was rather inconsistent. Their former residence in Czechoslovakia allowed them to remain here or elsewhere in Europe. (Brouček 2003)

There were several options how to avoid returning to Vietnam. The most abused ones were emigration to neighbouring countries, especially to Germany, or the establishment of a Ltd. company collectively with the citizens of the Czech (Czechoslovak) Republic. Subsequently, there was the possibility to obtain a trade license or permission for a long-term stay, permanent residence permit respectively. (Brouček 2003)

After 1989, Vietnamese "denizens" were joined by the following immigration streams, coming from: (Brouček 2003)

1. Vietnam on the basis of the possibility of reuniting families,

2. Germany, particularly after 1993, when Germany terminated work contracts with the Vietnamese, who had had an employment contract from the time of the GDR, and force them, after a financial compensation, to reemigrate,
3. From Slovakia (mainly after the disintegration of Czechoslovakia which resulted in increased economic level of the Czech Republic),
4. Other countries: mainly from the former Hungarian People's Republic and the Polish People's Republic,
5. Illegally from Vietnam via Russia, where individuals and small groups stayed in Moscow for up to three months while waiting for their subsequent trip to Hungary. Having arrived in Budapest, a several-week long stay followed. This was a preparation to overcome the Slovak-Hungarian and the Czech-Slovak borders, respectively – as illegal immigrants hidden in trucks.

2.2 Present Situation

Being aware of some kind of exploitation through international assistance of Czechoslovakia to Vietnam, some of the Vietnamese still feel to have been ill-treated and keep bearing the unpleasant memory in their minds. It might seem that this has no significant influence on the contemporary adaptation of Vietnamese in the CR. However, the theme of the status of Vietnamese workers in the former Czechoslovakia is part of a continuous consciousness of this immigration group. *"The Vietnamese, as well as any other community, look for more historical background in order to gain awareness of their group existence and thus try to understand their contemporary significance and social weight."* (Brouček 2003, 13-19)

Furthermore, the importance of the past events and the history of the arrival of Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic are evident even in the organisation of the Vietnamese community. The vast majority of the current leaders of Vietnamese communities had experience with life in the CR before 1989. These people with more than ten-year life experience in Czech are the pivot of local communities. They see to a range of activities varying from organisation of production sites, conducting businesses as far as import and sale of Asian goods are concerned, to some add-on business, including extortions, shady speculations with estates, clandestine immigration organisation and the like. (Pechová 2007)

As far as the present situation of the Vietnamese community in CR is concerned, it is necessary to mention the phenomenon of so-called *banana children*. These are descendants

of Vietnamese immigrants who were born in the CR or have lived here since their childhood. They have adopted many values and the lifestyle of the Czech society and are often much closer to their Czech peers rather than to their traditionally-based Vietnamese community and family. Unlike most of their parents, the young Vietnamese are very well integrated into the Czech society. As a result, there is a wide generation gap the contemporary Vietnamese community (greatly dependent on family ties) must deal with. As for the current situation, the biggest problems of the local Vietnamese are those emerging within the family, stemming from deep cultural and linguistic barriers. *"Speaking in general terms, if a Vietnamese family living in CR is imperilled by a crisis, it may significantly destabilise the entire Vietnamese community, which might then have to look for different functioning mechanisms in the future."* (Pechová 2007, 26)

2.2.1 Voluntary Returns Project

This was a project of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic aimed at helping unemployed foreigners from third countries (not EU citizens). If they ended up without employment due to the crisis, means of support and money to get back home, they were entitled to a free ticket home plus a cash subsidy. The project was aimed at lowering the risk of growing crime in connection with illegal stays of unemployed foreigners.

Voluntary returns were implemented in two phases. The first one lasted from February 16th to July 24th, and the second from July 27th to December 15th. In the first phase, foreigners who stayed in the Czech Republic legally received an air ticket, a 500-euro allowance and accommodation for the last night before leaving the territory of the Czech Republic, while in the second phase the allowance was decreased to €300. On the first stage, aid was offered to 2000 foreigners and 1871 of them showed interest. On the second stage, when up to 4000 foreigners could have received aid if they had decided to return home voluntarily, only 218 foreigners turned to the ministry.

On September 15, the Ministry of the Interior launched the voluntary returns project for illegal foreigners (living in the CR without a valid residence permit). This opportunity has been used by 169 foreigners. These foreigners only received a free ticket home and no allowance. (<http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/voluntary-returns-project.aspx>)

Participation in the project does not prevent foreigners from coming back to the Czech Republic in the future. Everybody could apply just once. A total of 2089 foreigners have shown interest, Mongolians being the most numerous group (Mongolia – 1,342; Uzbekistan – 314; Vietnam – 283; Ukraine – 60; Indonesia – 28).

2.3 Future of Czech-Vietnam Relationship

According to *Human Development Index – HDI*, Vietnam is an underdeveloped country. In 2009, it only reached 116th place out of 182 countries that had been evaluated (http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_VNM.html). Due to the high need for development cooperation, Vietnam has been designated as a priority country for a long-term development cooperation with the CR. Particularly strong tradition of cooperation with former Czechoslovakia and high potential of secondary benefits (development of mutually beneficial economic relations) were among other reasons. International Development Cooperation (IDC) in a broader sense means a comprehensive government policy towards the developing and transforming partner countries, in the strict sense, IDC assistance of the Czech state is expressed by the transfer of financial, material, expert or technical assistance in order to support long-term sustainable development of partner countries. (<http://www.businessinfo.cz/cz/clanek/vietnam/rozvojova-spoluprace-cr-vietnam-06-10/1000667/45791/>)

2.3.1 Program of International Development Cooperation between Vietnam and the Czech Republic for 2006-2010

The political situation in Vietnam is characterised by the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the effects of mass membership organizations, and lack of standard democratic political parties and movements. However, there have been some liberalisation activities in the economic and social area lately and many reforms are being carried out, resulting in the gradual reduction of poverty and relatively high GDP growth (around 6-7% per year).

The Czech Republic resumed Development Cooperation with Vietnam in 1996. During this period, the CR focused primarily on projects strengthening the competitiveness of Vietnamese enterprises and infrastructure modernisation. For the period 1999-2004, the Czech Republic provided Vietnam with roughly 3.5 million USD as an official support under the auspices of the Official Development Assistance (ODA). As far as Development Cooperation with Vietnam is concerned, the Czech Republic will focus on the sectors of environmental protection (water protection, waste management, dealing with dioxin problems), agriculture (assistance in establishing better and more efficient agricultural production, dealing with problems of quality and wholesomeness of food, forestry), the labour and social affairs (promotion of gender equality in society, supporting the development of the labour market and vocational training, prevention of abuse of women

and children, and human trafficking) as well as promotion of entrepreneurship and modernisation of industrial infrastructure and further economic cooperation (supply of medical equipment, cooperation in the implementation of alternative energy sources). Strengthening mutual cultural, economic and social ties between the Czech Republic and Vietnam, including the promotion of cooperation between educational and research institutions, support of human resources development in the most poverty-affected areas and implementation of the principles of sustainable growth will also be of a great importance. (<http://www.businessinfo.cz/cz/clanek/vietnam/rozvojova-spoluprace-cr-vietnam-06-10/1000667/45791/>).

2.3.2 Agreement on Cooperation between MoLSA and MOLISA

This is an agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on cooperation in the field of industrial relations, employment and social security. It is a mutual support economic and social progress in both countries. (<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/4400>)

The cooperation will cover the following areas: (<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/4400>)

- ✓ Pension and health security (insurance), state social support benefits for families,
- ✓ Organisational and institutional set up of state social support system,
- ✓ Advisory services of social security administration,
- ✓ Amendment of the labour relations in legal documents, collective agreements and employment contracts,
- ✓ Working conditions, safety and hygiene,
- ✓ Dealing with problems of unemployment, consulting and retraining
- ✓ Legislative regulations on employment (the Employment Act)
- ✓ Issues of international migration and employment of citizens of both states on the territory of both states.

Cooperation will take the form of: (<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/4400>)

- ✓ Exchanges of written documents
- ✓ Mutual expert consultations, experts participating on conferences, seminars and other international events organised by both parties,
- ✓ Placements in institutions of the other Contracting Party,
- ✓ Training of staff of the partner state institutions.

3 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Czech and Vietnamese cultures are very different. Therefore, when a Czech encounters a Vietnamese, misunderstandings or even conflicts may arise. What both the Vietnamese and the Czech side should keep in mind is the fact that national culture and traditions are very different from each other, which is quite logical, and that they should seek to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and incorrect interpretations. For that reason, some cultural specifics of Vietnamese society are depicted below.

3.1 Peculiarities of Vietnamese Community

Vietnamese in the CR are not an officially recognised ethnic minority. The Vietnamese community is often characterised as being very closed, separated and isolated community with no significant need to integrate into the life of the Czech population. Vietnamese minority is strongly based on a distinct internal coherence. Closeness and secretiveness of the community is often perceived by Vietnamese themselves. Some of them characterise it as a strategic advantage ("the majority cannot see them"), some, on the contrary, as a barrier to a greater convergence with the majority and thus an obstacle to a better life. (Kocourek 2003)

The head of the Vietnamese community is mostly the owner of the market hall who rents sales space for minor vendors - they may as well run restaurants, casinos, gaming clubs, etc. As Pechová explains: *"Big market halls present a separated world some Vietnamese may never even come out of: In here Vietnamese can find shops with Asian food, a hairdresser's, ticket sales, legal services, magazine editors, business partners, etc., meaning that some Vietnamese are not motivated to learn Czech or to understand the Czech environment at all."* (Pechová 2007, 24)

What makes the Vietnamese community unique is their living under provisional measures. This state of living in makeshift homes influences everyday life of Vietnamese in the CR, since the majority of Vietnamese immigrants have come to CR with the intention to return back to Vietnam after a few-year stay. Although the number of those who have opted for the permanent stay in the CR has been rising, the phenomenon of "temporaries" has had a significant impact on their motivation to learn the Czech language, to explore their new country more deeply, to build long-lasting and strong social ties and the like. Brouček states that this temporary solution is furthermore intensified by their impression that the difference between the Czech and Vietnamese society is far too great. Only a few Vietnamese realise the fact that a gradual adaptation is their only chance to leave the

marginal environment and thus join the normal life of the majority. However, they still "occupy" their wholesale or retail market halls, where opportunities for integration are minimal (Brouček 2003, 14). Pechová states that it is often not an exception when a part of the family is left behind in Vietnam (wife, children), hoping that they will soon return and reunite, but after a few years the Vietnamese establish a new "unofficial" family in Bohemia which provides them with a supportive background. (Pechová 2007, 26)

The Vietnamese create their own self-service within their community, which specialises in mediating contacts between other Vietnamese and the majority. Vietnamese language interpreter boards are the main part of these services (official court interpreters and self-appointed interpreters). They cooperate either with the authorities of the CR, such as the Prosecutor's Office, the police, medical facilities, etc. and perform services for the Czech law firms, or work directly for Vietnamese people who need these kinds of services. There is also a service for the exchange of information of any kind between the Vietnamese and the majority. (Kocourek 2003)

Emphasis on personal self-sufficiency, with which the Vietnamese have come on the territory of the Czech Republic, is manifested when enumerating the areas where the Vietnamese would like to improve their relations with the majority society. Their needs and aspirations are repeatedly aimed at revoking bureaucratic obstructions (Czech laws) that complicate their private enterprise. Apart from cultural and linguistic differences, administrative barriers associated with securing residence in the CR can also be considered one of the biggest obstacles to successful integration of newly arrived Vietnamese to the CR. Vietnamese do not usually publicly declare other major problems that impede their stay in the CR. Instead, they are more accustomed to sorting all the problems on their own or through community services. However, research results show that Vietnamese citizens regard the bureaucratic barriers in conducting business and administrative barriers to employment as the major negative aspects of living in the CR. Coping with the sense of cultural alienation and the loss of traditional family ties, relationships and traditions, sometimes even with the hostile behaviour of the majority population, are difficult for them as well. (Kocourek 2003)

3.1.1 Chinese Calendar

The Chinese calendar is one of the oldest dating systems. The Chinese calendar is still used in China, Korea and Vietnam. At present, it is used in combination with the Gregorian

calendar, which is called the Western or Jang calendar. The traditional Chinese calendar is called the agricultural calendar, or also the Jin calendar.

The Chinese calendar (or Vietnamese) is a lunar calendar. One year of the Chinese calendar comprises 12 months of 29 or 30 days and therefore it has 354 to 355 days altogether. To balance the calendar with the solar year, additional months are inserted. This was very popular in China, because during such a year the Chinese were paid wages for thirteen months worked. The additional month is inserted after some of the regular months and is indicated by the same number. Such a year has 384 to 385 days. (Müllerová 2004)

3.1.2 The Most Prominent Holidays Kept by Vietnamese in the Czech Republic

Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic have brought part of their culture with them. Their national holidays and important calendar dates are different from Czech ones. Vietnamese Holidays emphasise the importance of the family. (Müllerová 2004)

The following are the most prominent ones: (Müllerová 2004)

- ✓ Death anniversaries of ancestors and immediate family members.
- ✓ On the first and the fifteenth of each month, Vietnamese worship their ancestors.
- ✓ Tet Nguyen Dan - Lunar New Year falls sometime between the last days of January and mid-February and is associated with the largest family celebrations.
- ✓ On the 23rd of 12th month of the lunar calendar - the day of Changing Family Guardian Spirits.
- ✓ Children Day is celebrated on the 15th of 8th month of the lunar calendar.
- ✓ Many Vietnamese families in Czech, in addition to their traditional holidays, celebrate some Czech feast days as well - birthday parties, New Year's Eve and even Christmas Eve.

3.1.3 Vietnamese Names

Most Vietnamese names are usually composed of three syllables – a surname, a name and a connecting syllable inserted between them (e.g. Nguyen Văn Trung). The word in the first position can be marked as a surname. The following last names are the most common ones: Nguyen, Tran, Le, Vu, Ngo, Do, Hoang, Dao, Dang, Dugong, Dinh, Phu, Nhu, Hua, Cung, Ho, Kim, Manh. The second position in the name is a word that can help a non-Vietnamese speaker to determine the gender of a person. To mark a woman, Thi is used. On the other hand, Văn Huu, Lien, etc. are used to indicate a male. Finally, the first name is situated in the third (last) place. This often differs by a gender as well. Women are often given the names of plants or of something beautiful: Cuc (Chrysanthemum), Loan

(Phoenix), Lieu (willow), Suong (rose), etc. Men are often called by various human virtues and heroic qualities - Duc (virtue, honour), Khieu (modest), Tot (good), Tuan (hero), etc. (Müllerová 2004)

When addressing a Vietnamese in Bohemia, the Czech way of addressing Mr., Mrs., Miss, and his/her first name, i.e. the syllable at the end of the name should be used. In addition to the official name, Vietnamese children often receive Czech names as well. These are often chosen due to phonetic similarity to their Vietnamese names, e.g. a boy named Anh gets the name Adam, Hung is Honza, etc. Vietnamese parents give their children Czech names because their Czech friends hardly ever learn to pronounce their Vietnamese names properly. (Müllerová 2004)

3.1.4 Family Traditions

In Vietnam, family is the fundamental, basic element of society. Close family ties with emphasis laid especially upon children are prominent. These rules also apply to Vietnamese families living in the CR. The traditional respect for education and teachers still dominates in Vietnamese families as well. Teachers in Vietnam are highly respected people and parents always spend a lot of money on their children's education. Both great respect for elders and care of the elders for the young and inferior people are also of a great importance. Vietnamese families hold together. During the daytime, the parents are very busy thus their children are taken care of by Czech women. Nevertheless, the whole family meets at a family dinner in the evening where traditional Vietnamese dishes are served.

Always one of the children takes care of the parents (mostly the eldest son in the family). The family is often composed of three generations (retirement homes are inconceivable for Vietnamese). The role of women by "tam tông": when she lives with her parents, she must obey her father, when she gets married, she must obey her husband. When her husband dies, she lives with her son, whom she also must obey. (Müllerová 2004)

Ancestor worship is a national characteristic, which shapes the relationship to homeland, home and family. In every home, there is an altar with aromatic sticks, pictures, fruit and other decorations. In Vietnam, birthdays are not celebrated. On the other hand, anniversaries of deaths of the closest ancestors and family members are commemorated: the family sacrifices the traditional meals on the altar, which the family eats up after the ceremony. Vietnamese people also worship their ancestors by praying to them on the fifteenth of each month (depending on the shape of the moon in the sky). (Müllerová 2004)

Intimate expressions of affection of couples or kissing in public are unacceptable. However, touching and hugging friends is very common and frequent. Vietnamese are generally in constant need of a social contact. They are used to paying visits to each other regularly, without prior notification. Strong family ties are maintained even among more distant relatives. (Müllerová 2004)

3.1.5 Vietnamese Children

Vietnamese children must obey their parents, no matter whether they are 5 or 50 years old, there is nothing like equivalent exchange of views between the two generations. Vietnamese do not stroke children's hair – it is disrespectful. Instead, they are usually patted on their shoulder or back.

The older generation still considers Vietnam their home and hopes to be able to return there once again. They stay here only because of better living conditions, better conditions for their children's education. On the contrary, the younger generation perceives the CR as their home. They talk among each other in Czech because most of them does not have a good command of Vietnamese and uses it only when talking to their parents. They know only a little about Vietnam, Vietnamese culture and traditions (their parents do not have time to talk about Vietnam with their children, being busy, dealing with everyday concerns). However, there are still many Vietnamese children living in the CR, whose command of Vietnamese is very good and who are educated by Vietnamese rules. Some children have already forgotten Vietnamese and travelling to Vietnam is just like visiting an exotic foreign country to them. (Müllerová 2004)

3.1.6 Food, Eating and Table Manners

For Vietnamese, one of the most important rules of conduct is hospitality, under which it is considered proper to offer treat and refreshment for everyone at any time. Czech food is very different from Vietnamese and it sometimes takes a long time for the Vietnamese to get used to it. They also have problems with digesting things such as milk and certain dairy products (cheese) because they lack the enzymes for milk processing. (Müllerová 2004)

Meals are served simultaneously, but each in a separate bowl, from which everyone then takes his/her bit. A soup comes as a last course. No phrases like "Enjoy your meal." are used. Instead, the youngest prompts the oldest to help himself/herself. When they are full, a little rice is left in the bowl. Soiling the tablecloth or munching is not seen as an offense against the manners but as a compliment to the host. It is always allowed to speak over the meal, because it is traditionally at lunch when all family and business matters are

discussed. That is why they are used to eating slowly, addressing important issues as they eat. Throughout the whole day, the Vietnamese keep sipping warm green tea from small cups. Like in Czech, adequate clothing plays an important role in Vietnamese society - it is totally unacceptable, for example, for an adult person to wear short pants. Vietnamese women would hardly ever wear a skirt (their festive costume is composed of long and tight tunics cut along the sides and loose silk trousers). (Müllerová 2004)

3.2 Differences in Communication

Here are a few other characteristics that are quite typical for Vietnamese. What is quite important is the fact that there is no use of the second person singular or plural as the familiar/formal form of addressing people. On the contrary, various phrases are used to express the degree of respect. The language barrier, especially among older people, also plays a vital role (however, most of young generation can speak Czech and many children often have to interpret for their parents). (Müllerová 2004)

Employing Vietnamese people

An outspoken criticism of an individual in front of the collective is a complete contradiction of Vietnamese traditions. It is considered employer's harshest penalty for his/her employees. Therefore, when it is apparent that the Vietnamese does not understand what he/she is supposed to do, it is important to meet him face to face and explain the particular problem in detail to him/her. Moreover, concrete suggestions should be made to him/her so that the situation is resolved. If a problem is discussed before other employees, the Vietnamese may "lose face". However, should someone start shouting at a Vietnamese before other people, he/she can "lose face" as well. (Müllerová 2004)

Vietnamese people also have a habit of not looking into your eyes when they talk to someone. This is often because of shyness, but one of the main reasons is that traditionally they do not look into the eyes of those they respect or those higher in rank when talking to them. This is to indicate politeness.

Speaking in general terms, Vietnamese people are very modest and hard-working, used to working up to fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. As stated by Kocourek, there are many Vietnamese in the CR living under relatively difficult circumstances: long working hours, frequent work at weekends, often below standard working conditions common for the Czech Republic. Usury or exploitation in the community is no exception. Vietnamese people also work in illegal factories (for tobacco products), in sewing workshops or

factories producing illegal alcohol. They are often used to work in wealthier Vietnamese households in CR under unsatisfactory conditions. (Kocourek 2003, 12)

Meeting people

In Vietnam, both hands are shaken, not just one. First, the right hand is held out as usual and then other one is used to cover the two already joined hands of both individuals. This activity of using both hands symbolises respect for the other person. Respect for the other person can also be expressed by holding out an object with both hands. When calling other person, the gesture similar to Czech waving, waving with an outstretched hand in front of yourself or moving your palm from the horizontal position downwards signals "Come to me" to a Vietnamese. On the other hand, the Czech gesture to call someone using an index finger is seen as offensive in Vietnam. Direct eye contact is also considered impolite. (Müllerová 2004)

Smiling

The smile of a Vietnamese can be very confusing to an outsider and causes misunderstandings since smiling has many different meanings in Vietnam: reflecting either a joy or gladness, but also an uncomfortable feeling, sadness or anger, nervousness or apology. A smile can also mean sorrow, worry, or embarrassment. A very sad issue can be expressed by a Vietnamese smiling "happily" – he/she does so in order not to trouble those who would listen so as to alleviate the situation. Czechs can mistakenly explain such behaviour as being cruel. On the other hand, the Vietnamese regard the lack of smiles among Czechs as being rough and negative behaviour. Vietnamese also smile when they do not understand speaker's utterance. In Vietnam, smiling may indicate a polite, but perhaps sceptical reaction to something, compliance or toleration of a blunder or misunderstanding or on occasion represents submission to judgment that may be wrong or unfair. (Müllerová 2004)

Expressing negative emotions

In Asian cultures, the principle of social behaviour is NOT to express negative emotions; it is not decent to express one's disagreement, disapproval or rejection eye to eye. Therefore, instead of using simple "no" what can often be heard is something like: "This issue needs more consideration" etc. Sometimes a Vietnamese may say "yes", not meaning that he/she would agree with us, but the fact that he/she is listening carefully to what the other person

has to say. Anyone who is furious, screams or otherwise displays negative emotions loses respect and reputation among others. Since the Vietnamese consider impolite to disagree with the opinion of another person, it is nearly impossible to find negation in Vietnamese language. On the contrary, there are numerous ways of expressing agreement, approval or consent (depending on greater or lesser degree of respect). Standing with arms folded across one's chest is a sign of embitterment over the content of the dialogue. Sitting with crossed legs is a sign of superiority. (Müllerová 2004)

3.3 Organisations, Associations and Media

Work effort and the nature of the relationship to the majority population in the CR is a barrier to a greater integration of Vietnamese cultural identity. Yet there are several associations and organisations whose aim is to promote Vietnamese culture, integration of the Vietnamese population and establishment of mutual relations.

During a relatively short period during which members of Vietnamese community have lived on the territory of the Czech Republic, the Vietnamese community and their sympathisers have formed a range of organisations and associations. Here are some of the most important ones:

- ✓ *Svaz Vietnamců v České republice* (Association of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic) – along with the Czech-Vietnamese Society organised the event called "Days of Vietnamese Culture in Slaný 2006" in cooperation with Slaný town and under the auspices of the Vietnam Embassy. This activity should have elucidated the cultural identity of Vietnamese people to the inhabitants of the town, where the major business force is represented by the citizens of Vietnam. The event included projection of films, exhibitions of paintings, books and photographs, lectures and discussions.
- ✓ *Česko-vietnamská společnost - CVS* (The Czech-Vietnamese Society) Czech-Vietnamese society, led by a successful entrepreneur Marcel Winter, publishes a bilingual magazine called the *Czech-Vietnamese Rapporteur* (*Česko-vietnamský zpravodaj*). This magazine informs about the events in Vietnam as well as about the events in the CR in relation to the Vietnamese minority and provides advice and recommendations to facilitate life of Vietnamese living on our territory. Moreover, it is a partner of an integration project of health insurance (along with the Association of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic). The society also acquaints the wider public with the culture, history and economic situation in Vietnam through

different events: photo exhibitions, discussions and seminars. (<http://www.cvs-praha.cz/>)

- ✓ *Svaz vietnamských podnikatelů* (Association of Vietnamese Entrepreneurs),
- ✓ *Klub Hanoi* (Hanoi Club). Klub Hanoi arose from association of former Vietnam Studies students studying at Charles University. Since 2004, this civic association has been open to all who are interested in Vietnam and the Vietnamese community living in the CR. One of the objectives of this association is to perceive cultural diversity and dissimilarity of the community as a beneficial aspect that could enrich the Czech society and at the same time help to affect the perception of the Vietnamese community. Other goals include promoting Vietnamese culture and Vietnamese integration into society. (<http://www.klubhanoi.cz/>)
- ✓ *Občanské sdružení vietnamsky hovořících občanů ČR "Klub Bambus"* (Civic Association of Vietnamese-speaking citizens of the Czech Republic – "Bamboo Club"). This civic association, which is located within the informal Vietnamese centre in Prague - SAPA, has similar goals as Klub Hanoi. Mr. Tung, the founder of the Club, is a very active man who manages publishing of a bilingual magazine for Vietnamese students in the CR. He also organises courses of Vietnamese and Czech language. The association also organises theatre performances and other activities. The most significant achievements include publishing of Mr Tung's script "Czech - basic course for the Vietnamese." In addition to this publication, Mr. Tung also wrote "Vietnamese in Prague." (<http://www.klubhanoi.cz>)

Compatriotic media play a crucial role in the integration of Vietnamese in the CR. They are (as is apparent from various studies) the most frequent source of information about the CR for most of Vietnamese people. Three media are currently being published in the CR: Van Xuan, Tuan tin moi and Vuon Dao.

(<http://www.socioweb.cz/index.php?disp=temata&shw=199&lst=108>)

4 RECRUITING FOREIGN NATIONALS

The new Vietnamese immigrants often come to the Czech Republic via unofficial intermediaries. As stated by Pechová: *"The vast majority of Vietnamese who have arrived in the Czech Republic in the past ten years used Vietnamese intermediary agencies for handling their visa applications and securing other issues."* (Pechová 2007, 27) These agencies which provide so-called business services, but some of them also arrange trips to the CR, are well known and widely discussed phenomenon of the Vietnamese community in our country. A great significance is attributed to these services in all the current major theoretical works dedicated to the community (Kocourek 2003, Brouček_2003).

Vietnamese intermediary employment agencies usually work without a license. Almost all the Vietnamese who have arrived in the CR lately got a job through an unofficial mediation agency. *"In recent years, it has been mostly the poor and less educated people who have been recruited. Moreover, excessive service fees may be regarded as being comparable to debt bondage. Besides, migrants are also tragically ill-informed about the living and working conditions in the target country. Employment agencies emerged mostly from the generation of migrants who stayed in the CR before 1989, i.e. generation that is socially well-established and dispose of sufficient knowledge of the Czech law, cultural and economic situation as well as social contacts at crucial places"*. (Pechová 2007, 28) Prices for tickets, visas and work permits mediation services vary, they are mostly around 6000 - 8000 USD, the price is usually dependent on the "acquaintances" and often includes a bribe to authorities. What often happens is that Vietnamese immigrants who arrive in the CR are jobless, with no housing facilities, no money and highly indebted.

Vietnamese who have chosen to work in the factories as labourers are fresh phenomenon in the Czech Republic (leaving aside the period until 1989). There are job advertisements in most Vietnamese magazines issued in the Czech Republic, on labourer positions in Czech companies, which recruit Vietnamese employees. At present, Vietnamese are working in production of electronics, china, the food industry, automotive industry, tobacco industry. Interest of Czech companies in Vietnamese workers is likely to continue and grow, mainly due to significant labour shortages in the labourer positions. *"According to information from the police, living and working conditions of Vietnamese workers in the Czech factories differ. A very important link in the whole system may be the Vietnamese leader who creates a different atmosphere and different living conditions, or a person who stands in for the mediation agency"*. (Pechová 2007, 31)

If the employee has lost his/her job or has no job for other reasons and is seeking one, he/she is entitled, when unemployed, to job mediation or re-training necessary for future employment and to unemployment relief. If an employer is interested in employing a foreigner or if a foreigner is looking for a job in the CR, there are various options to choose from. Here are the most frequent ones.

4.1 Labour Offices

Jobs for unemployed Czech citizens (and foreign nationals enjoying the same position as Czech citizens) are procured by Czech Labour Offices competent at the place of the citizens' or foreign nationals' permanent (or reported) residence. Information on vacancies and advisory services are provided by any Labour Office.

Labour Offices mediate employment in the entire Czech Republic. If bound by international treaties to do so, the Labour Offices mediate employment abroad or mediate employment for foreign nationals in the Czech Republic.

If foreigner's employment is terminated (without his/her fault) and the validity of his/her work permit expires, he/she can be a subject to 60-day protection period to look for new employment. The protection period is calculated from the first day after the termination of employment. During this 60-day period a foreigner does not lose legal residence status.

A perspective employer may contact its territorial competent Labour Office to find out information about foreigners who are available for a certain position (foreigners listed in Job Seekers Registry).

4.1.1 Job Seekers Registry (<http://www.en.domavcr.cz/advices-for-living-in-the-czech-republic/employment/job-centres-unemployment-relief-re-training>)

A citizen (or a foreign national enjoying the same position as a Czech citizen) not being employed or similarly engaged for work and not being a self-employer and not being a student, will be registered with the job seekers registry based on a written application.

The citizen (or a foreign national enjoying the same position as a Czech citizen) applying for mediation of employment must attach a certificate verifying his/her identity, citizenship and permanent residence to the application. In addition, he/she must present a proof of termination of his/her employment, self-employment or studies, documents on his/her professional skills (school-leaving exam, traineeship certificate, diploma etc.);

Once the job seeker is registered with the Job Seekers Registry, the state pays his/her health insurance and social security premiums, until he/she is deleted from the registry.

Foreign nationals with a residence visa for over 90 days (for the purpose of employment or business) or a long-term residence permit may not be registered with the Job Seekers Registry (unless they are citizens of a state being a party to a bilateral treaty on employment signed by the Czech Republic).

Job seekers registered with the job seekers registry are entitled to be mediated a suitable employment, i.e. employment corresponding to their health, age, professional skills and capabilities, previous work experience and accommodation opportunities. The job seeker must notify the Labour Office of all changes in facts decisive for the registry of job seekers (e.g. if he/she finds a job him/herself) within seven calendar days.

The job seeker may be deleted from the register if he rejects a suitable job (offered by the Labour Office and fitting his/her qualification or skills) without a reason or if he/she intentionally hinders co-ordination with the Labour Office in its efforts to mediate employment; in such a case, the job seeker may be registered with the registry after three months.

Retraining

A labour office can offer retraining if this is essential for the job seeker's future employment. The content and scope of the retraining depend upon the qualifications, health, abilities and experience of the natural person that is to be retrained in the form of new theoretical knowledge and practical skills as part of the job seeker's further professional education. The labour office pays the retraining costs on the job seeker's behalf and can give her/him a contribution towards necessary retraining-related costs. By agreement with the labour office, retraining may also be performed at the employer's premises with a view to her/ his employee's further employment. Employers may receive full or partial compensation for retraining-related costs. (<http://www.mpsv.cz/en/1604>)

4.2 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Integrated Portal

If a foreigner is interested in working in the Czech Republic, he/she may acquire information on job vacancies at the following web page, which is an integrated portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic: <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/obcane/vmjedno>. Job seekers may choose from a wide range of full-time and part-time jobs according to different categories (with respect to their profession, highest education attained, vacancies in different municipalities and districts, job opportunities for school-leavers and graduates, handicapped persons, etc.)

4.2.1 EURES

EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area (EEA includes all EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein; Switzerland is also involved). After accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, the Employment Offices were integrated with the EURES network. Partners in the network include public employment services, trade union and employers' organisations. The network is coordinated by the European Commission. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/sit_eures)

The basic task of the EURES network is to provide services useful to workers, job seekers as well as employers, generally to all citizens who wish to use their right of free movement of persons. The main objectives of EURES are: (http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/sit_eures)

- ✓ To inform, guide and provide advice to potentially mobile workers on job opportunities as well as living and working conditions in the EU/EEA;
- ✓ To assist employers wishing to recruit workers from other countries;
- ✓ To provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions.

EURES uses the following two basic methods to provide its services to citizens and employers: (http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/sit_eures)

- ✓ *EURES - European Job Mobility Portal* - database of job vacancies in 31 European countries updated in real time, CVs from interested candidates, information about living and working abroad.
- ✓ *EURES advisers and EURES contact personnel* - trained specialists who provide information, consulting services, guidance and placement to both job seekers and employers interested in the European job market (Czech EURES advisers operate at Czech Employment Offices).

Primarily, EURES provides a database of vacancies in all its member states. To browse complete databases of job opportunities in all the EU/EEA member states, job seekers shall visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=482&acro=job&lang=cs>

The applicants can also use the CV database to type in their professional CVs. This database is available to thousands of registered employers in all member countries who are interested in motivated applicants from other EU/EEA member states. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/sit_eures)

A very useful source of information is the *Database of the Living and Work Conditions* in the EU/EEA countries. This database contains details on a number of important issues of a specific country such as legislation, social scheme, living conditions, taxes, employment

contracts, usual ways of finding jobs, measures related to transitional periods, finding accommodation, finding a school, cost of living, health, social legislation, comparability of qualifications, useful links, etc. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/sit_eures)

For the list of EURES advisers and EURES contact persons operating at the Employment Offices in the Czech Republic, job seekers shall visit: <http://portal.mpsv.cz/eures/kontakty>

4.3 Employment Agencies

A foreigner may also acquire information on vacancies from job agencies seated in the Czech Republic that have been granted permit to mediate employment from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Employment agencies are engaged in the direct placement into jobs, serve as advisory and information centres and "lend" their employees to other employers. The new Employment Act should ensure that a person who is an employee of an employment agency and works for another company is guaranteed the same employment conditions as other employees of the relevant company (working hours, wage, etc.). Children below the age of fifteen are not allowed to work.

Many companies use the services of employment agencies only when recruiting new employees. Therefore, some vacancies are not to be found anywhere else. Services of employment agencies are free of charge, applicants are only asked to fill in a questionnaire with his/her job requirements and hand in curricula vitae. After the registration, the agency enters the job seeker into its database and contacts him/her when a vacancy corresponding to the requirements and capabilities of the candidate has become available.

However, recruitment agencies are only an intermediary between potential employers and job seekers, the final choice is usually made by the employer himself. A job seeker can therefore count on going through multiple rounds of interviews (the consultant of the recruitment agency makes a pre-selection of candidates only).

For a list of these accredited job agencies, go to: http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zamest/zpr_prace

4.4 Internet

Job portals

There are also specialised websites advertising job vacancies – job portals. These sites work much like advertising in newspapers and are used by many major employers. On these websites, job seekers may find many offers sorted by type of occupation or its geographic distribution. In addition to the precise description of the position, applicants will also find contact details of a person in charge. Moreover, these websites offer other

specialised services as well. For example, jobseekers can include their CVs into the database and thus make it available to the personnel departments of many other companies. This way, applicants look for a vacancy both actively and passively. Nevertheless, applicants are very likely to go through a personal interview as well. Therefore, they should be well prepared. The list of the major job portals and HR servers specialising in mediation of employment in the Czech Republic is available at: <http://www.workline.cz/Nabidky/Pracovni-portaly-a-servery.aspx>

Job offers of individual companies

If an applicant knows exactly what kind of work he/she wants to do, it is advisable to find a company specialising in a certain field or industry that could actually offer such a vacancy and contact it. It is advisable for the applicants to check "job vacancies" links on the websites of particular companies in which the jobseeker would like to work (not every company can afford to pay a commission to recruitment agencies for procuring suitable candidates and offering job vacancies on company's websites is the easiest way how to recruit new staff). If a jobseeker applies directly for a vacancy in a particular company, he/she should put great emphasis on his/her letter of motivation, which is to be attached to the CV.

4.5 Direct Addressing

Apart from advertising on job portals or company's own websites, an employer may address his/her potential employees directly by publicly advertising in variety of mass media (paid advertisement in local or national press, in radio broadcasting, TV promotion etc.) or by local business representatives operating in different towns).

As far as advertising job vacancies in press is concerned, most currently printed media contain employment-dedicated supplements specialising in supply and demand for employment. Such supplements are issued by Mladá Fronta DNES, Deníky Bohemia, Hospodářské noviny, Lidové noviny etc. Section employment is offered by printed media advertising complex vacancy promotion, such as Anonce, Inzertin, Progesstisk. These prints are designed primarily for advertising blue-collar and craft positions. A company may also use advertising through radio broadcasting.

5 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL FINDINGS

Not many countries have shared such a rich common historical background with the Czech Republic (and former Czechoslovakia) as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This mutual relationship goes back to the late 1950s when the first Vietnamese children came to Czechoslovakia as a part of an international help to a war-stricken country, starting a wave of migration that had never been experienced before. From that moment on, tens of thousands of Vietnamese have arrived, replacing their home country with a new one in prospect of better lives and brighter future.

However, being absolutely different country with culture and customs very much unlike, language so dissimilar to Czech, the integration seemed to be rather unrealizable. However, with the advent of a new generation of Vietnamese who were born and have grown up in the Czech Republic, the integration into the Czech society is much more likely to go smoothly, not causing any substantial trouble. To understand the differences between both cultures more easily, a detailed description of the most prominent ones is given in this Bachelor thesis.

As far as employment of foreigners in the Czech Republic is concerned, the Czech legal system has undergone certain changes which should simplify the procedure of both finding and offering a job vacancy. The most important law being the Czech Labour Code - Act no. 435/2004 Coll., on employment, there are still many duties both the employer and the jobseeker have to adhere to. The most significant rulings are stated in this thesis as well.

The future of the Czech-Vietnamese relationship also looks bright, with both nations being keen on continuing the mutual cooperation. Hopefully, this extraordinary relationship will never cease to exist.

II. ANALYSIS

6 COMPANY PROFILE

6.1 Basic Information about TON a.s.

The private Czech company TON a.s. - the manufacturer of a wide assortment of chairs, barstools, armchairs, tables, coat stands and outdoor furniture - is the largest manufacturer of furniture in Europe as far as the amount of bentwood production is concerned. Annual production reaching up to one million pieces (70 % of which is meant for export) is being exported to more than 50 countries of the world: mainly to Europe, United States, Japan and Australia. The equal distribution among the markets of North America - Europe - Asia enables the company to successfully deal with fluctuations of the global economic system and to focus on expansion into these highly developed markets.

TON a.s. is also engaged in custom manufacturing, in which furniture-making skills particularly stand out. Furnishings for the Czech Parliament, Prague's Palace of Culture, Music Hall of the Liechtenstein Palace, seating furniture of the Stavovský Theatre, folding chairs in the historic building of the National Theatre - these are just a few examples from a wide range of contracts undertaken. As far as number of employees is concerned, there were 1,234 employees in 2008. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

6.1.1 History

A cabinet maker, inventor and furniture designer Michael Thonet (1796 - 1871), originally from Boppard in the Rhine Region, settled in Moravia, where he founded manufacturing facilities to produce bentwood furniture in Koryčany (1856) and in Bystřice pod Hostýnem (1861). The factory in Bystřice pod Hostýnem was the largest factory of its kind, Gebrüder Thonet, and became the centre for development and export of products all over the world. Thonet's bentwood furniture became a household name soon and German businessman was awarded a number of medals for its production; The Golden Order of Merit or The Franc Joseph Knighthood Cross among others. He was treated as a reputable furniture manufacturer in the autumn of his life. He died 3rd March, 1871 in Vienna and the control of the company was taken over by his sons.

The original THONET company was succeeded by a joint-stock company THONET-MUNDUS after World War I and since 1946, as a result of a merger of several major furniture manufactures, by THONET; in 1953 it was renamed TON (abbreviation of "bentwood furniture factory") with the place of business in Bystřice pod Hostýnem. The manufacturer has been in continuous operation over a century without any break in

production. Today TON is one of the major European manufacturing centres of quality bent wood furniture. (<http://www.ton.cz/historie-technologie-vyroby.html>)

6.1.2 Technology

The technique of wood bending in a steam bath has been practised in Bystřice pod Hostýnem for almost 150 years already. It concerns production technology of beech wood furniture, which is based on steaming a piece of wood (prism) by saturated steam in order to allow its easier bending. The hand-made bend of a backrest part of not only the most famous chairs No. 14 and No. 18 is executed by means of a mould, a shape of which copies a special flange preventing the bent wood from cracking. The steam technique is also used for seat bending, which is more automated at present. (<http://www.ton.cz>)

Thanks to TON, the unique manufacture of Thonet chairs is nowadays like an excursion from the 19th century till today. The world's best selling chair is produced the same way as 150 years ago. A hard job of workers in the bending shop results in the No. 14 Thonet chair, a timeless and elegant chair that ranks among the design icons.

In times of robots and computer-controlled machines, photographs and shots from the beech wood bending shop can remind visitors of a live museum. However, even the best machine cannot cope with the ingenious invention of Michael Thonet, who was born on July 2, 1796, exactly 214 years ago. (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

Bending a piece of steamed solid wood at an angle of as many as 180°, which is attached to a mould by clamps and steel flanges prevent the wood from cracking (while bending pressure does not affect surface of the wood but a place under the steel flange) – a job that human hands can only manage. In addition, these hands are strong and very skilled due to long-time experience. (<http://www.ton.cz/historie-technologie-vyroby.html>)

The experienced workers of the bending shop, who gain work experience for a number of months, then represent a guarantee that no mistake occurs. They do the physically demanding job in pairs, whereas 150 years ago even 3-worker groups did the same job.

Even today the products are created with the greatest attention to the details that make difference in terms of comfort and usability. All the TON's seating collections are functional, sturdy and features ergonomic details and beautiful forms and lines, blending manual craftsmanship and cutting-edge production processes.

In line with No. 14 (the first chair that has been designed for mass production, which is nowadays an inspiration, and a timeless design symbol within the furniture-making history), today TON is interested in creation industrial design products, simple and

innovative, elegant and durable at the same time, with high level of comfort and safety, certified to international standards and sold at a reasonable price.

An important milestone in the historical development of the company is January 1st, 1994, when the joint stock company TON a.s. was established. Within a short period of time, after the change of economic system in 1989, the company succeeded in bringing the focus of the exportation to the demanding markets of economically developed countries and in extending the range of existing production. (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

6.1.3 Present Situation

In today's highly globalized market, the company has to face increasingly stronger competition. There are more and more furniture manufacturers entering the market. It is mainly Asian producers expanding to foreign markets, whose biggest competitive advantage are low prices of goods offered, the manufacturing quality of which, moreover, is year by year getting closer to European standards. Thereby they compete with traditional producers particularly in the segment of cheaper mass-produced furniture. Therefore TON concentrates mainly on design and quality custom-made production.

Neither TON nor many other Czech companies evaded the consequences of the global economic crisis. As a result of the depression, contracts of the company have fallen by about 20 %. For illustration, this means that today's weekly production of chairs has fallen from 16 000 to 10 000, which is a decrease by nearly 40 %. Furthermore, the number of employees has been reduced due to the crisis. At the end of 2008, there were 1200 employees, the required number as to May 1st, 2009 was 850. Vietnamese workers were also struck by the consequences of this massive economic depression, with lots of them having been made redundant. TON a.s. employees were no exception. All in all, 22 foreigners were dismissed by the end of 2008 (including 15 Vietnamese and 7 Mongolians). (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

Another problem a major Czech exporter has to face is the strong Czech crown (up to 70% of the production is meant for export), which causes the company significant foreign exchange losses. In addition to this, continuous fluctuation of the exchange rates is very demanding as far as accounting operations are concerned, which entails significant administrative costs. The early adoption of Euro would be a solution. (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

The current mission of TON a.s. is based on company's vision of: (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

- ✓ Consolidating its position as a major European manufacturer and supplier of chairs and tables made of bentwood, which offers its customers a collection of models which fully meet the most demanding requirements for seating furniture.
- ✓ Allowing customers to benefit from nearly 150 year-long experience in the manufacturing of chairs and exceptional craftsmanship of workers.
- ✓ Using the ability to combine the classic 'thonet-like' methods of bending wood with modern technologies to create a wide range of both classical and modern furniture that would meet the requirements of a modern man for the current lifestyle, who prefers, besides high quality, a unique and inimitable design.
- ✓ Promoting environmental protection as one of the most important standpoints when selecting materials and technologies used. Preferring wood as the main production material that meets not only the high environmental requirements, but also provides excellent utility and aesthetic qualities.
- ✓ Looking for equilibrium between tradition and cutting-edge design.

One of the major objectives of 2008 was a substantial innovation of an existing assortment. During 2008, the company extended its collaboration with other external designers from the Czech Republic, Italy, USA and Denmark (the most important being Zdeněk Pudil, Mojmír Ranný, Tom Kelley or Mads K. Johansen). New collections were presented at numerous international trade fairs. Those in Dubai, Cologne and Milan were traditionally amongst the most prominent ones. The company also took part in a number of specialised fairs focused mainly on hotel and restaurant furnishing. At the Pragomedica fair TON introduced its Senior Program comprehensive collection aimed – due to its ergonomics and utility parameters - at retirement and nursing homes. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

The company also focused its activities on expanding business into new territories. An increase in trade has been reached in the Middle East region. The company strengthened its position in Europe by extending its network of company stores abroad. In the last quarter of 2008 TON opened its outlets in Sofia and Budapest. Early in 2009, company outlet stores were opened in Berlin and Vienna. All in all, TON has its direct sales representation in six European countries (including Bratislava and Kosice in Slovakia and Belgrade, Serbia). The company expects further expansion in the following years. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

Presently TON proposes special collections suitable for both residential and commercial premises with various wood finishes and upholstery materials: fabrics, vinyls and leather. The infinitive combination of various accessories is the specialty of the company. Existing assortment of seating furniture supplemented with tables and floor racks to form comprehensive collections is designed to fit domestic and public spaces, mainly hotels, restaurants and cafés. (TON a.s. Annual report, 2008)

With the accession of the CR to the EU, new environmental requirements have been introduced. At present, it is possible to say that the company's products fully meet the strict criteria of the EU and in some cases even surpasses the specified environmental limits. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

6.1.4 Organisational Structure

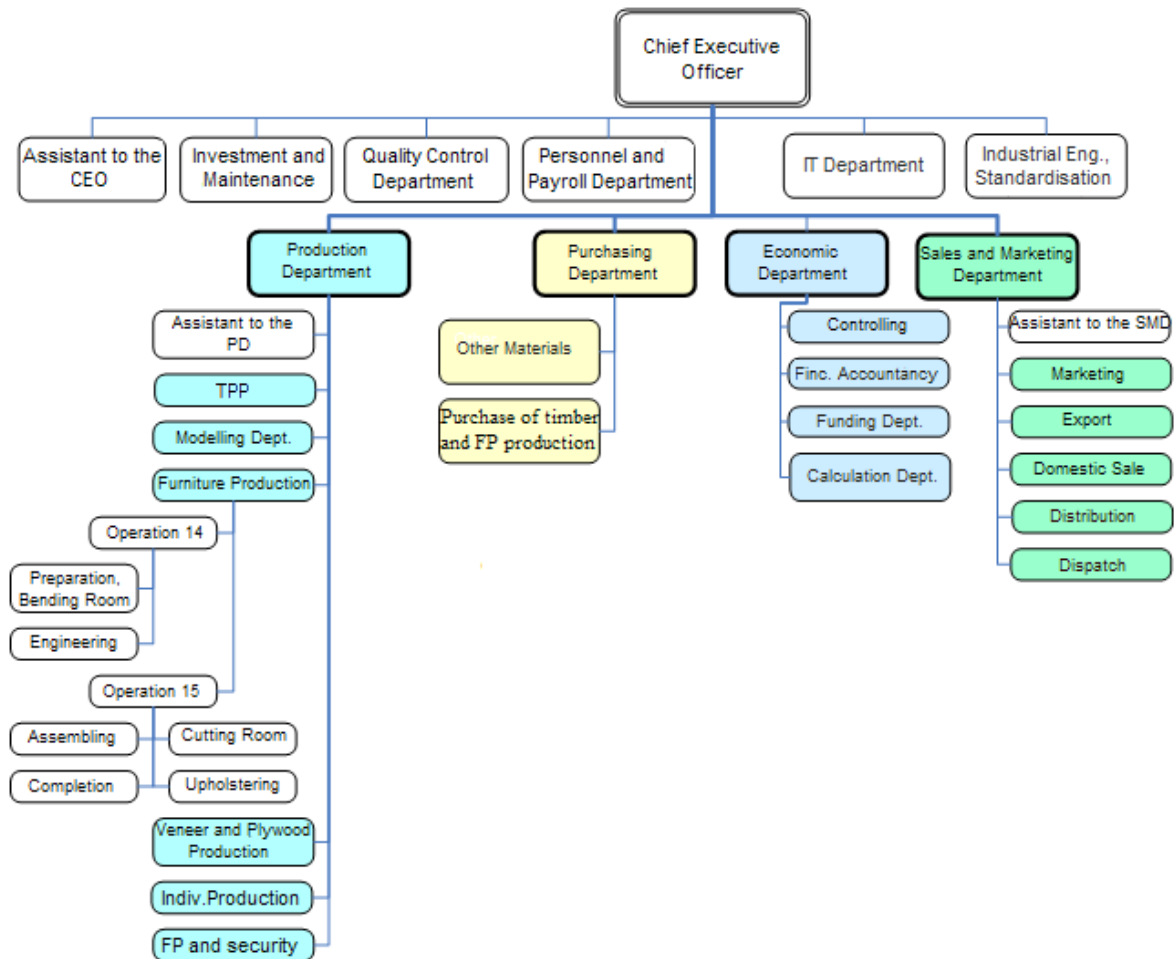


Figure 1. Organisational Structure of TON a.s. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008).

Legend: TPP - Technical Production Preparation, FP - Fire protection, FP - Furniture prism, PD – Production Department, SMD – Sales and Marketing Department

In the spring of 2008, the Company's Board decided to change the top management structure. Above all, the task of the new management was to simplify the organisational structure and improve communication throughout the company. Other important objectives were significant delivery time reduction, production efficiency improvement, innovation of existing production, quality enhancement as well as strengthening the position in the European market. All the assigned targets have been met. One level of management has been removed from the organizational structure of the company. The company now has a much flatter structure (Figure 16), which allows direct communication between the sales, production and purchasing departments and improves information flow from the top management to the work teams and vice versa. Having changed the organisational structure of production as well as production orders planning resulted in reducing lead times from eight to four weeks. Guaranteeing shorter delivery times and production quality enhancement enabled TON to obtain many contracts in the most demanding markets. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

6.1.5 Basic Economic Indicators

Employee details

As far as the figures regarding company employees are concerned, the latest ones are from 2007 and 2008.

	2007	2008
Average number of employees	1,417	1,234
Personal expenses (in CZK thous.)	331,082	310,083
Labour expenses (in CZK thous.)	240,085	224,404
Remuneration of Board members (in CZK thous.)	5,124	5,033
Social security expenses (in CZK thous.)	84,907	79,586
Other social expenses (in CZK thous.)	966	1,060

Table 1. Employee Details and Expenses. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

Increased productivity and implementation of all measures helped the company to double their profits as compared with 2007. Although the first signs of global financial crisis had started to come through at the end of 2008, the firm was optimistic in its outlook for 2009. The management is aware of the real possibility of a partial decline in sales due to decreased global demand. Therefore, the objective for 2009 was to ensure the financial

stability of the company and in particular to increase market share at the expense of weaker competitors. In the future, the company wants to keep enhancing the quality of its production, to maintain a high level of innovation of their products and to optimise all its business processes in order to defend its market position of a branded chair and table manufacturer and to further consolidate this position. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

Revenues	From own Products	From Services	From Goods	Material + TA Sold
Inland	233,983	9,746	48,958	26,279
EU Member states	321,405	15,121	21,143	2,080
Abroad	228,453	12,289	7,463	354
Total	783,841	37,156	77,564	28,713

Table 2. Revenues from Ordinary Activities as per Company's Principal Activities in 2008 (Inland and Abroad) in Thousands of CZK. (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

	2007	2008
Profit (loss) as per 31. 12. of each year	8,272	16,847
Creation of reserve fund out of profit	413	842
Transfer of undistributed profit of previous years to next year	7,859	16,004

Table 3. Profit (Loss) Settlement of Previous Accounting Periods (in Thousands of CZK). (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

Sales revenue	741,884
Value added	295,680
Operational profit (loss)	24,876
Profit (loss) after tax	18,078

Table 4. Expected Development of Trade and Production Plans for 2009 (in Thousands of CZK). (Annual Report TON a.s., 2008)

6.2 Vietnamese Workers in TON a.s.

All in all, 22 foreigners were employed in TON a.s. until the end of 2008, including 15 Vietnamese and 7 Mongolians. They worked for the company for four months, from September to December 2008. All of them worked as laborers of timber production in the

Production Department. According to the Personnel Director, in autumn 2008, TON a.s. had relatively a lot of orders. In compliance with company's method of production (4-week delivery time), the company was forced to make its employees do overtime work. As the September and October overtime quota for category D were exhausted, the company was forced to introduce other measures - either recruit new staff or use workers from recruitment agencies, which was a much more flexible option for the company. A decision to cooperate with the recruitment agency providing employment for the citizens of Vietnam had been made on account of an undisputed perseverance and diligence of these people.

Other employees were informed through their immediate superiors that these agency workers were going to take up the particular position. Supervisors were also informed about cultural differences of Vietnamese employees. No conflicts whatsoever regarding cooperation with Vietnamese people arose, but the union tipped the employer off to provide the foreign employees with equal pay conditions, which was respected and complied with. Later on, there were some anonymous comments that "Vietnamese take jobs from our people" - this was talked over directly at the production site and again through the union.

As far as remuneration of Vietnamese employees was concerned, evaluation criteria were the same as for the existing employees. Remuneration was established on the tariff rate of a worker's position. A further 20% bonus for implementation of performance indicators is to be added. Vietnamese staff, which were paid by piecework, fitted in tariff rate 2 of the 3rd class representing 50, 10,-CZK + 20% bonus if standards of performance were met at 97-100 %. In the event of implementing standards at 92-96 %, bonus was reduced by 5% and should the implementation of performance standards fall below 92 %, it was agreed that the agency would exchange the particular workers.

7 ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE WITH EMPLOYING VIETNAMESE CITIZENS IN TON A.S.

7.1 Objectives of Analysis

When discussing various topics to choose from regarding the Bachelor thesis, the very first one the author and TON a.s. Personnel Director agreed on and were quite enthusiastic about was the theme of recruiting and employing foreign nationals. Since TON a.s. was one of the major employers of Vietnamese citizens in the region, it has been concurred that the primary attention of the thesis would be devoted particularly to this minority. Unfortunately, by the end of 2009 all fifteen Vietnamese employees (along with seven Mongolians) were dismissed, the fact which is to be attributed to the impact of a world-wide crisis on the Czech labour market. These cost-cutting measures were unavoidable for the company to endure the depression, with foreigners being made redundant in the very first place as they had been working for the company for the shortest time. However, with the crisis being over, the Personnel Director's intention is to renew this cooperation. That is why the author was asked to carry out a survey among company employees to find out what their notion of their Vietnamese colleagues was.

Being on familiar terms with Mr. Nguyen Cao Son, Vietnamese representative of ST.CZPLUS07, the recruitment agency with whom TON a.s. Personnel Department has been closely cooperating as far as recruitment of Vietnamese workers is concerned, the Personnel Director himself was very satisfied with the staff and services provided by this agency. Not only did he want me to assess staffs' personal observations and experience, but he was also keen on finding out what employees' recommendations, suggestion, ideas and proposals would be as regards improvement of relations between ordinary employees and Vietnamese staff. Therefore, the aim of the survey is to analyse employees' needs and wants, to assess their experience of working with Vietnamese colleagues and to put forward potential solutions and recommendations for the future.

7.2 Methods of Analysis

To obtain required information and necessary statistical data, the form of thorough questionnaire has been chosen by the author as the most appropriate means. As for additional information regarding operation of recruitment agencies and the current situation of Vietnamese migration to and out of the Czech Republic, an interview with Mr.

Nguyen Cao Son, the representative of ST.CZ PLUS 07 recruitment agency, has been carried out.

7.2.1 Questionnaires

All in all, 33 questionnaires were handed over to company employees by the Personnel Director himself, 20 of which returned completed to him in the period of two weeks time (the rate of return in this case reaching 60 %). Questions had been carefully chosen with the assistance of the Personnel Director, whose pieces of advice were really helpful (total of 20 questions - 11 multiple choice questions, 5 open ones and 4 questions regarding basic personal information). The actual survey period lasted from October 6th to October 21st, 2009 (*the English version of the questionnaire is listed in Appendix PVI*).

The respondents were both company's ordinary employees from different departments (70 % of questionnaires) and staff from the management of the company (30 %). As promised by the Personnel Director, he would only pass the questionnaires to those employees who got in touch with Vietnamese people at the workplace. Although approximately 200 employees got in touch with Vietnamese co-workers at the workplace, the vast majority of them only did so marginally, so the representative sample should be sufficient enough for the purpose of this thesis.

The aim of the questionnaire survey was to assess company employees' attitude towards their Vietnamese colleagues so that the TON a.s. Personnel Department could decide whether to renew the cooperation in the future and possibly make proper arrangements suggested in the thesis.

7.2.2 Interview

For the sake of finding out the other party's point of view, the author decided to contact Mr. Nguyen Cao Son of ST.CZ PLUS 07 s.r.o. recruitment agency, specialising in providing employees for Czech companies from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The agency has permission from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to mediate employment for foreigners on the territory of the CR. The form of mediation (as stated on official MoLSA web pages) is employment of natural persons who would carry out employment for another legal or natural person who assigns this employment and supervises its implementation. For the sake of saving time (the company's registered seat being in Chotěboř), it was agreed that the interview be carried out via Skype online application. The interview itself was conducted on January 15th, 2010, took more than 40 minutes and comprised 32 questions (*the transcription and literal translation of the interview is listed*

in appendix PIII). The author feels obliged to say that Mr. Nguyen Cao Son is a very nice, helpful person, whose answers were really supportive in writing this thesis.

The aim of the interview was to help the readers get a deeper insight into the problems of migration of Vietnamese people into and out of the country, their way of living, cultural differences as well as learn some basic facts about the ST.CZ PLUS 07 recruitment agency, which TON a.s. has been closely cooperating with.

One of the primary objectives was also getting in touch with those Vietnamese who used to work for TON a.s. in order to find out their point of view on the whole matter. However, this has turned out to be quite an impossible task since most of them are scattered all over the country and rather difficult to trace. Moreover, the fact that none of them can speak Czech makes the task almost unrealizable.

7.3 Interpretation of Survey Results

Being the principal and the foremost part of the thesis, this chapter interprets the main findings of the research. The outcomes of the research are interpreted in the form of numerous figures accompanied by verbal descriptions in which author's own observations and remarks are reflected. As far as some of the figures are concerned, the author decided to treat men and women separately so that the readers could get the picture of how these opposite sex perceive their Vietnamese colleagues. The results of the interview are interpreted separately as they do not deal with company's staff but with the Vietnamese community in general. In any case, let the results of the questionnaire survey be inspiration and possibly stimulation for the company's Personnel Department in re-recruiting Vietnamese citizens in the near future. Hopefully, the nature of the interview as well as its message will help to prevent the Czech society from making unreasonable prejudices against Vietnamese community or any other foreign community living on the territory of the CR, which is in presumably a deeply-rooted phenomenon among the xenophobic Czech society.

7.3.1 Structure of Respondents

All in all, twenty respondents took part in the survey, seventeen of which were men, the rest being women. There were only members of two age groups; 25 - 40 and 40 – 60 (two respondents failed to state their age). As far as education of respondents is concerned, the majority of answerers reached secondary education (eleven persons), five respondents were trained, two trained with GCSE, followed by 2 persons with university education

(members of the management). As for the length of employment, the majority of the respondents had been working for TON for more than ten years (fifteen respondents), the rest (five) from five to ten years. The author strongly believes that this representative sample should be sufficient enough for deducing full-value conclusions and recommendations.

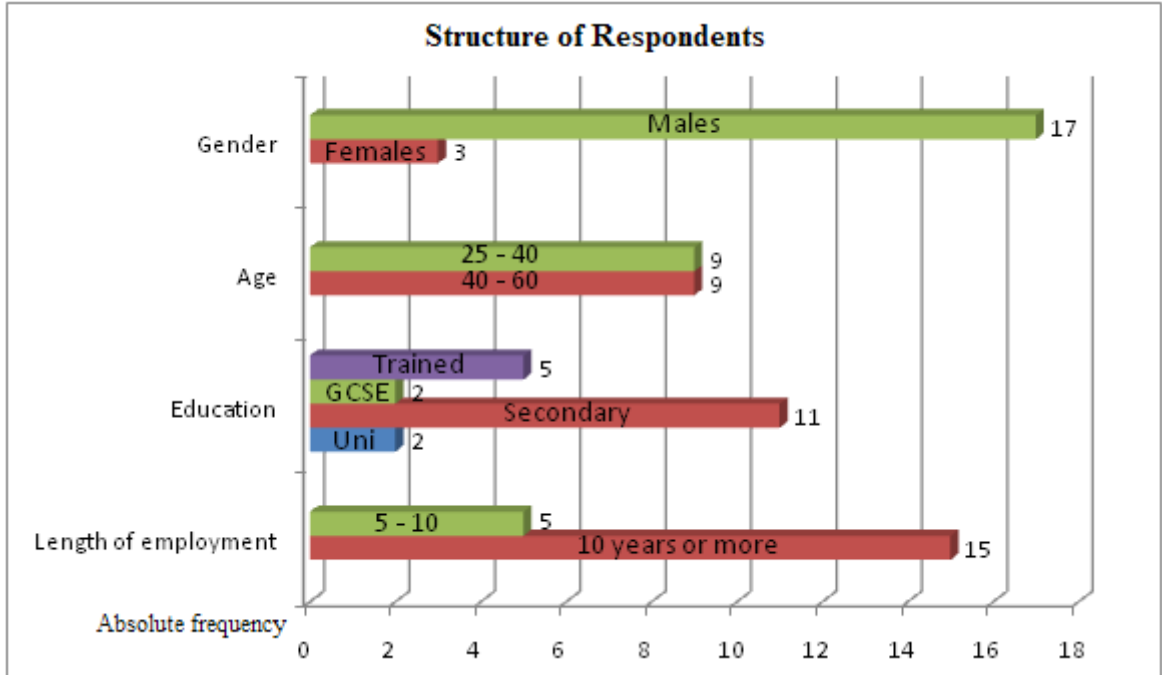


Figure 2. Structure of Respondents (own calculation).

7.3.2 General Approach to Vietnamese Community

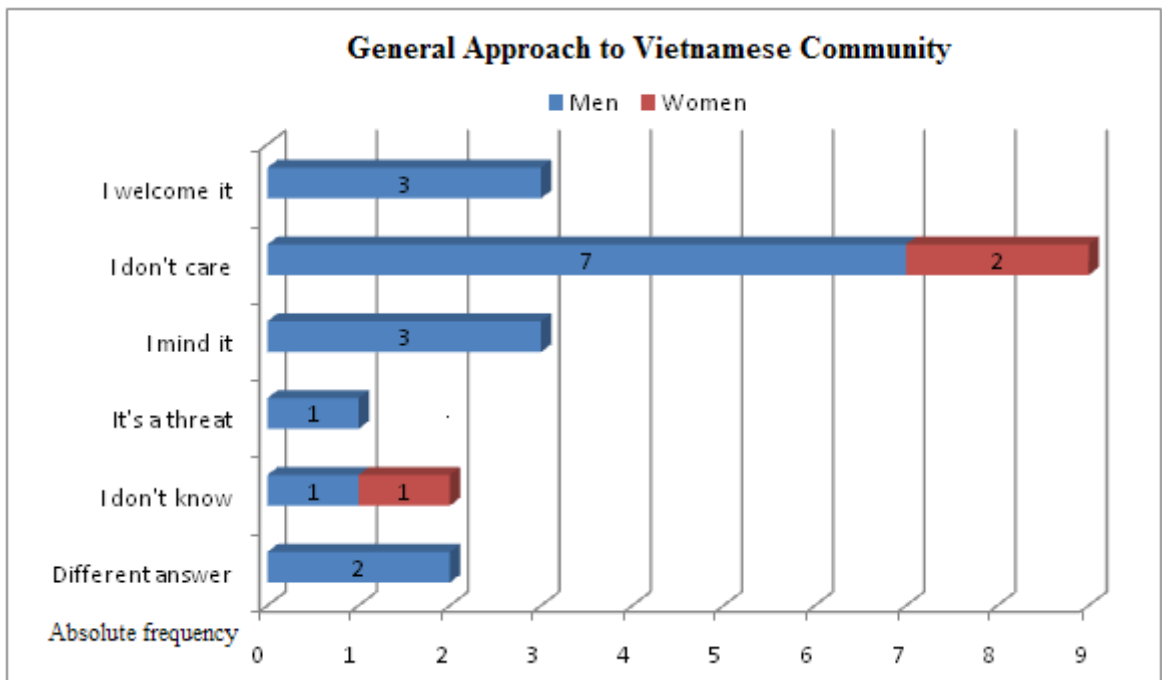


Figure 3. General Approach to Vietnamese Community (own calculation).

What can be clearly seen from *Figure 3* is the fact that the vast majority of respondents are not concerned with Vietnamese people living in the CR at all (nine out of twenty respondents). The negative point of view was represented by two possibilities; three respondents mind the presence of Vietnamese people in the country whereas only one respondent considered the Vietnamese minority a threat. On the other hand, there were three respondents who regard Vietnamese minority as a beneficial factor and a real contribution to the Czech society. Two respondents had no opinion. As far as different answers were concerned, these included statements like "I don't appreciate it" and "I don't mind it."

Generally speaking, the company staff had in most cases no particular prejudices against Vietnamese people. Apart from four people who showed a strong dislike and antipathy towards the Vietnamese citizens, the rest seemed to be more or less neutral or even favourable to the Vietnamese minority. Speaking of the antipathy, what may actually happen is that the mindset of these people may in fact be negatively affected by their generally negative approach towards Vietnamese (whatever it may have been caused by), regardless the actual contribution of Vietnamese to the company or their work performance. Hopefully, the results of the survey will not be too affected by this kind of prejudices, since there were only four such people.

7.3.3 Personal Experience of Working with Vietnamese Citizens

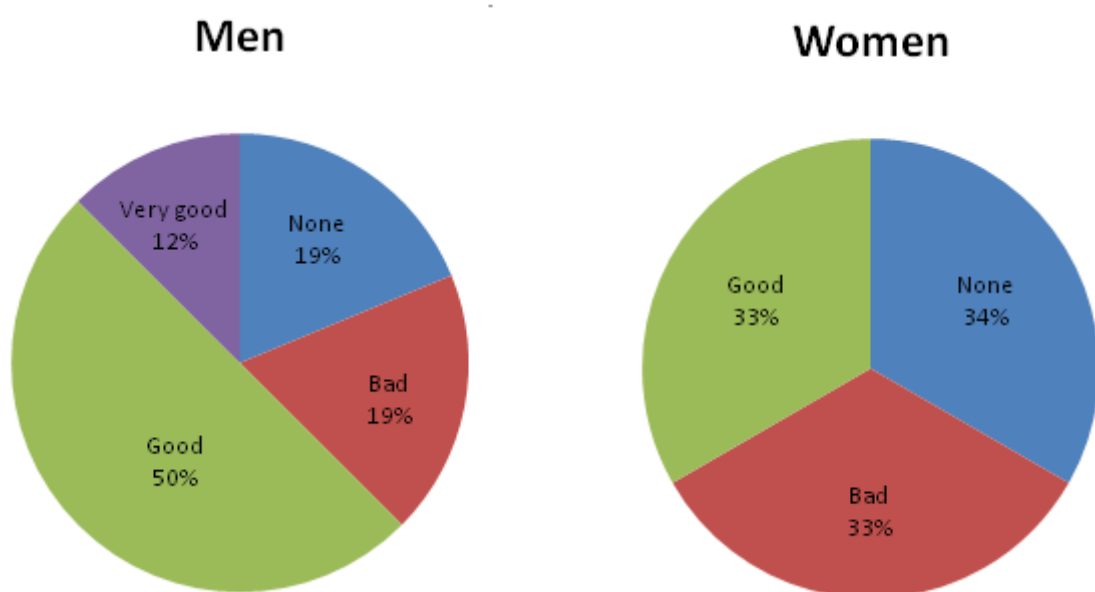


Figure 4. Personal Experience of Working with Vietnamese Citizens; Proportion of Men and Women (own calculation).

Focusing on personal experience of working with Vietnamese citizens, the outcomes seem to be relatively positive. Even though the Personnel Director promised to hand the questionnaires over only to the staff that got in touch with Vietnamese people, there were altogether four people (three men and a woman) who claimed not to have encountered Vietnamese citizens at the workplace at all and thus had no experience whatsoever. Not taking these workers into account, the total of eleven out of sixteen employees (69 %) has had positive personal experience with Vietnamese co-workers, which is definitely a convincing result.

What was quite interesting was the fact that those who claimed to have encountered Vietnamese co-workers on a daily basis (only two men) were the only ones to tick the option "Very good" experience. Presumably, it needs longer time and more intensive contact to get to know Vietnamese people since they tend to be rather withdrawn when it comes to opening out to "foreigners" (Czech people). The more often one gets in touch with them the more they would open out to the person. The same goes for becoming friends with Vietnamese colleagues (*Figure 5*). Those who encountered Vietnamese colleagues very often at their workplace (either every day or 3-5 times a week) were the only ones to become friends with them.

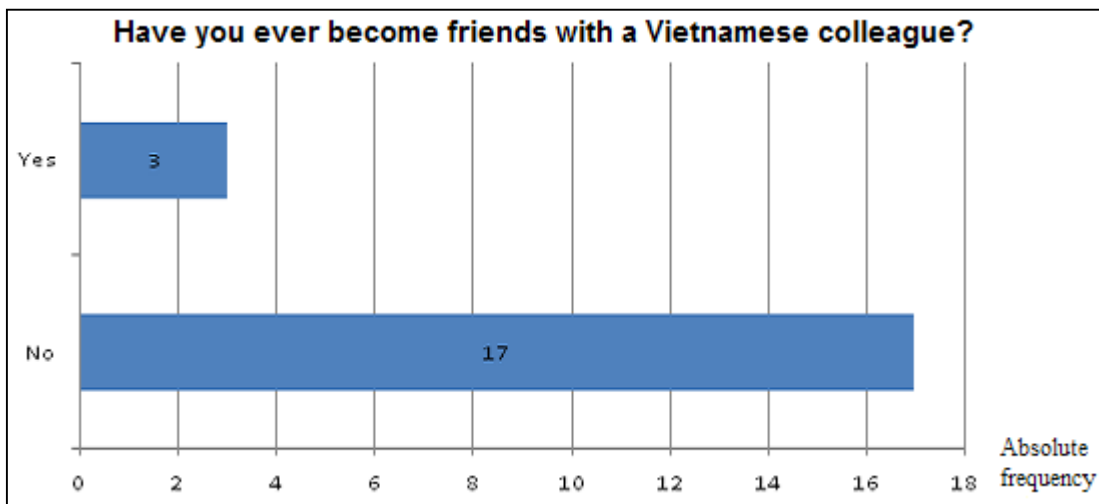


Figure 5. Establishing a Friendly Relationship with Vietnamese Co-workers (own calculation).

However, those who felt general aversion towards Vietnamese minority (ticked "I mind it" as far as general approach to Vietnamese community was concerned) were the only ones to tick the option "bad" concerning their own experience at the workplace (as opposed to

those who welcome Vietnamese minority living in the CR – these employees ticked either the options "very good" or "good"). These results may imply that prejudices and intolerance towards foreigners in general could in fact have a very negative effect on one's perception of foreign co-workers no matter what the real working experience had been.

7.3.4 Performance of Vietnamese Citizens in Different Areas of Work

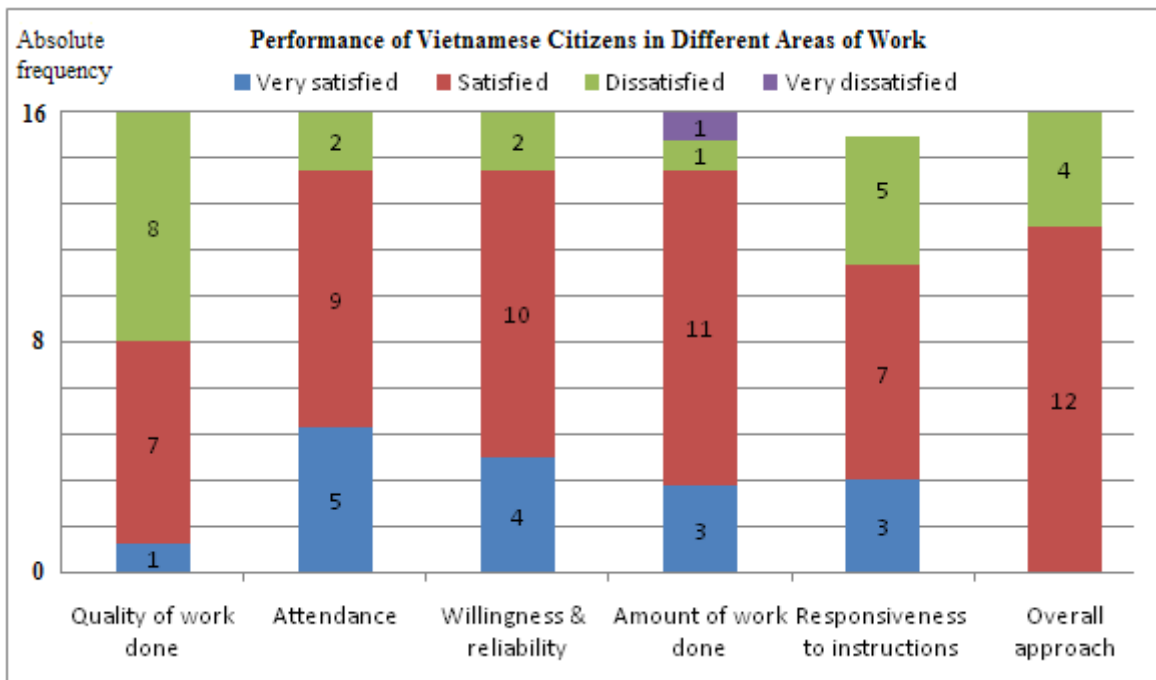


Figure 6. Performance of Vietnamese Citizens in Different Areas of Work (own calculation).

As far as performance of Vietnamese citizens at work is concerned, the respondents were to assess the performance of their Vietnamese co-workers in six different work areas. Regarding every work area, there were four options to choose from ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied."

As for the outcomes of this survey, what can be clearly seen from the Figure 6 is the fact that most respondents were *satisfied* in all the aspects of work performance of their Vietnamese colleagues (the only exception being the one regarding quality of work done). Speaking of the dissatisfied employees, in most cases they were those whose general approach towards Vietnamese community was very negative (with one of them even having ticked "very dissatisfied" option concerning the amount of work done). On the other hand, those employees who welcome Vietnamese minority were in all the cases either very satisfied or satisfied with the work performance of the Vietnamese co-workers,

none of them having ticked "dissatisfied" option. Once again, these results suggest that people's prejudices may negatively influence their general point of view as far as perception of foreigners is concerned.

On the whole, in most cases, more than three quarters of staff were pleased with their Vietnamese colleagues. As for the attendance, willingness & reliability and amount of work done - these accounted for more than 87 % of satisfied or very satisfied staff. Speaking of the overall approach of Vietnamese co-workers, 75 % of respondents were again contented or very contented with their Vietnamese colleagues. As far as quality of work done is concerned, the proportion of satisfied staff reached 50 %. This can be attributed to the fact that Vietnamese workers were not as experienced as their Czech colleagues, all of them only having worked for the company for four months (from September to December 2008). With some more experience, it is likely that the quality would get better in the end. As for the Vietnamese responsiveness to instructions, the results were not as bad as one would have expected (owing to the obvious language barrier). Ten out of fifteen respondents found the reactions of Vietnamese colleagues adequate and satisfactory. With some company internal language courses and with the the course of time the results would certainly improve.

7.3.5 The Most Problematic Work Issues in Relation to Vietnamese Citizens

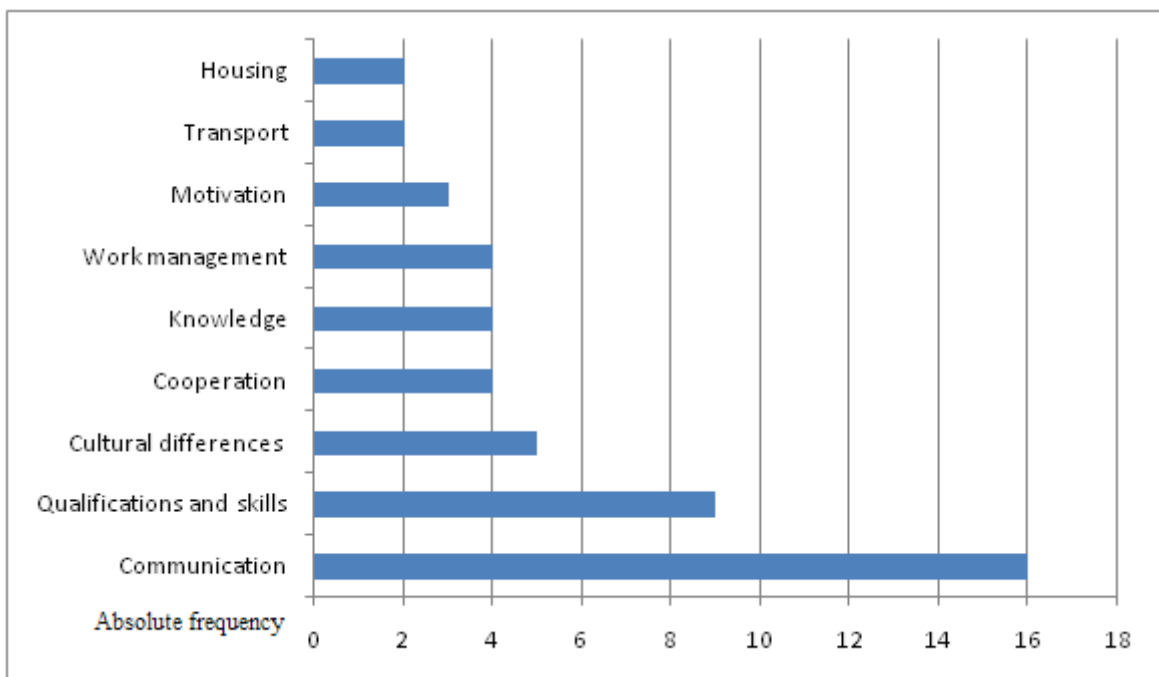


Figure 7. The Most Problematic Work Issues Regarding Vietnamese Co-workers (own calculation).

This part of the questionnaire survey was to cover the most problematic issues as regards collaboration with Vietnamese citizens. The respondents were to tick at most four work issues which they considered problematic as far as cooperation with Vietnamese colleagues was concerned.

The results were rather obvious. Communication issues were the most problematic aspect of cooperation. This is quite obvious due to the language barrier. However, according to Mr. Son, there was a Vietnamese interpreter employed in TON. Nevertheless, communication with a foreigner who cannot speak Czech is always more difficult and more time consuming than with a native speaker even with the presence of an interpreter. The respondents also complained about the lack of qualifications and skills of Vietnamese co-workers. Again, this can be attributed to the fact that that Vietnamese labourers lacked experience, which can only be gained by the course of time. Cultural differences were also among the most troublesome issues. However, what exactly was it that the respondents had in mind remains unknown, since none of them stated concrete reasons. In any case, cultural differences are such comprehensive issues that can probably be only dealt with by the Vietnamese themselves. Four respondents also pointed out some cooperation issues (which are likely to be connected with communication problems as such), lack of necessary knowledge and work management issues (these can be attributed to the lack of experience of Vietnamese workers). Motivation, transport and housing were marginal issues of not too great a concern.

7.3.6 Virtues of Vietnamese Citizens

This part of the questionnaire survey was a multiple answer question. Respondents were to tick as many options as they wished in which they described the positive qualities of their Vietnamese co-workers.

The respondents acknowledged above all the perseverance and diligence of Vietnamese people, thus appreciating their hard work and dedication to work. A significant number of respondents also appreciated their skilfulness and ability to learn very fast, which are, in any case, essential qualities not only in furniture-making industry. All these virtues together with discipline and low absence make the Vietnamese a versatile, quick-learning and reliable labour force.

Some of the respondents also acknowledged the productivity of Vietnamese people, which is rather a surprising fact since they lacked experience. However, being very skilful and capable of learning fast suggests that the productivity and quality of work done by

Vietnamese people would keep increasing with the course of time. What is definitely worth noticing is the fact that all the options in the questionnaire were ticked at least once (except for intelligence, which is hard to prove otherwise anyway), indicating a great versatility and flexibility of Vietnamese people. One of the respondents also ticked the option "other" claiming that she really appreciated their effort to learn new things. Only one respondent failed to complete this part of the questionnaire survey.

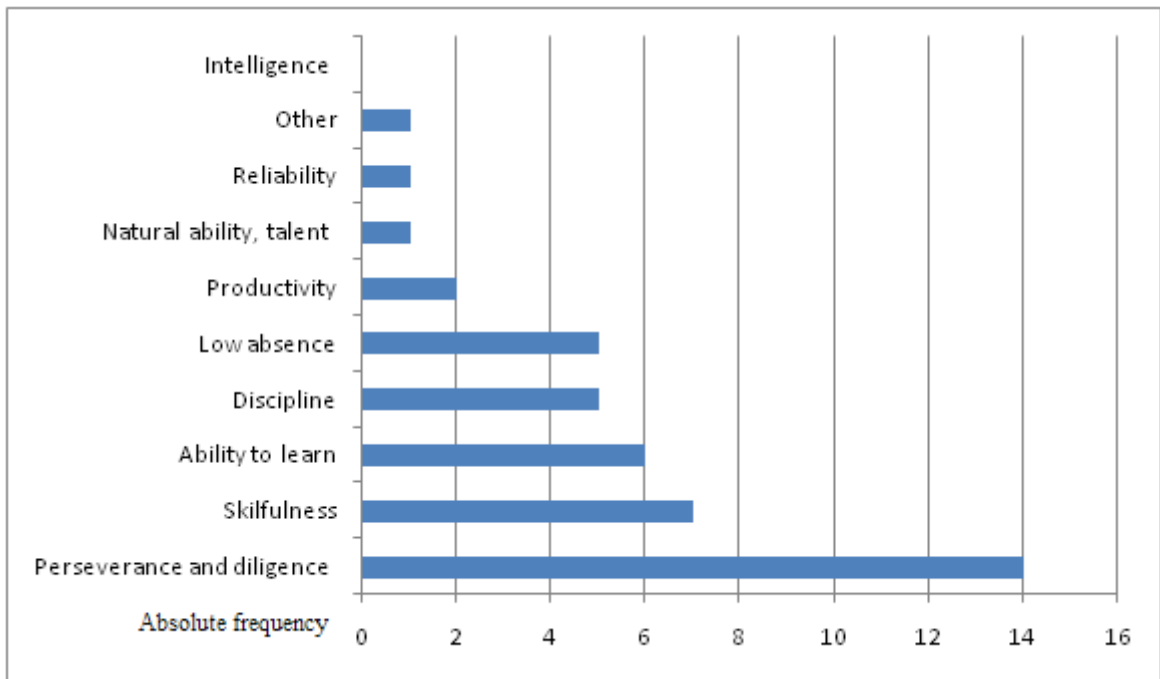


Figure 8. Virtues of Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens (own calculation).

7.3.7 Cooperation with the Citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Suitability of Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens



Figure 9. Suitability of Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens (own calculation).

As far as suitability of collaboration with the Vietnamese was concerned, the results were really convincing. All in all, more than 73 % of respondents (eleven out of fifteen) found the cooperation with Vietnamese citizens suitable for them (five of them failed to give their opinion on this matter), which is quite a compelling evidence of a positive attitude of company employees towards Vietnamese citizens and towards their work performance in general. Those who found the cooperation unsuitable referred either to the consequences of a global financial crisis and the lack of job vacancies, the language barrier or the quantity of work done at the expense of the quality.

7.3.8 Negative Aspects of Collaboration with Vietnamese Citizens

This was the first of the total of five open questions incorporated in the questionnaire. The respondents were to define the issues that bother them most regarding cooperation with their Vietnamese colleagues. As far as the answers are concerned, they can be further divided into the following three groups.

- ✓ *Communication problems* - the respondents complained mostly about the inability to make themselves understood with their Vietnamese colleagues and about the language barrier in general (all in all four respondents).
- ✓ *Prejudices and intolerance* – the respondents' answers ranged from statements like "They take job opportunities away from Czech citizens" or "I don't mind foreigners as such, but I do mind cosmopolitan society" to "I only welcome foreigners-tourists" or "I have heard they don't pay taxes" which is an absolute nonsense showing general narrow-mindedness of the respondents towards Vietnamese community. Withdrawnness of the community was also mentioned.
- ✓ *Personality flaws* – above all, the participants criticised expediency and self-interest of Vietnamese co-workers as well as their obtrusiveness or impudence.

7.3.9 Positive Aspects of Collaboration with Vietnamese Citizens

As far as positives of cooperation with Vietnamese citizens were concerned, these outnumbered those negative ones (some respondents failed to mention the negative sides of the collaboration, however they managed to state the favourable ones). The respondents appreciated Vietnamese diligence, patience, persistence and endurance as well as their humility, discipline, perfect attendance and their effort to excel. Two respondents also mentioned the excellent spirit of enterprise of Vietnamese people and their business-related abilities and skills. These are definitely qualities worthy any business. At the same time, the answers only prove and confirm the fact that Vietnamese people are generally a

hardworking, very resilient and persistent nation. In addition to this, one of the respondents aptly noted down that "Never having any troubles with Vietnamese citizens, I don't judge people by their nationality but by their personality and behaviour."

7.3.10 Benefits of Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens

Thirteen out of twenty respondents (65 %) considered the cooperation with Vietnamese citizens beneficial as opposed to five who found the collaboration pointless (two respondents were not sure). Once again, those who felt aversion towards Vietnamese minority were the ones to tick the options "disagree" and "strongly disagree." On the other hand, all of those who welcome Vietnamese people ticked the option "agree."

The Cooperation with Citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was Beneficial

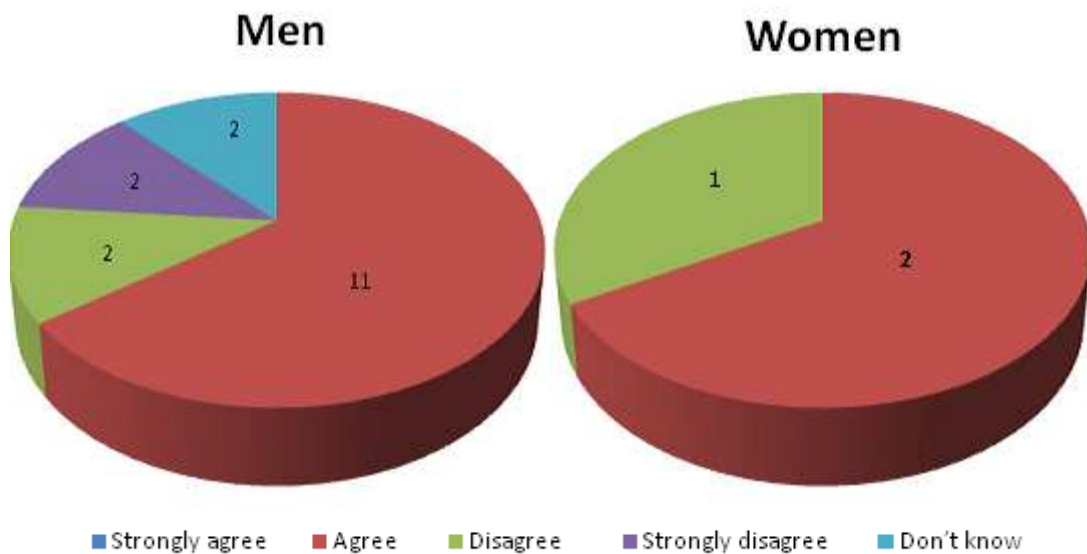


Figure 10. Benefits of Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens (own calculation).

7.3.11 Prospects of Future Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens

In this part of the questionnaire the respondents were to answer the question whether they would consider further cooperation with the Vietnamese citizens in the future. Although most of the respondents (thirteen out of twenty) agreed that the collaboration with the Vietnamese was beneficial and suitable for them, not all of them were enthusiastic about the renewal of the cooperation in the future. The reasons and arguments for this were understandable. Most of the respondents referred to the financial crisis and its consequences not only on the domestic labour market. With the high rate of unemployment and Labour Offices overflowed with job seekers, many respondents found it pointless for the company to take up foreigners. Nevertheless, all in all eight respondents were keen on

renewing the collaboration (nine were against and three were not sure). Once again, all the respondents who dislike the presence of Vietnamese citizens in the CR ticked the option "strongly disagree" or "disagree."

In the Future I Would Consider Further Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens

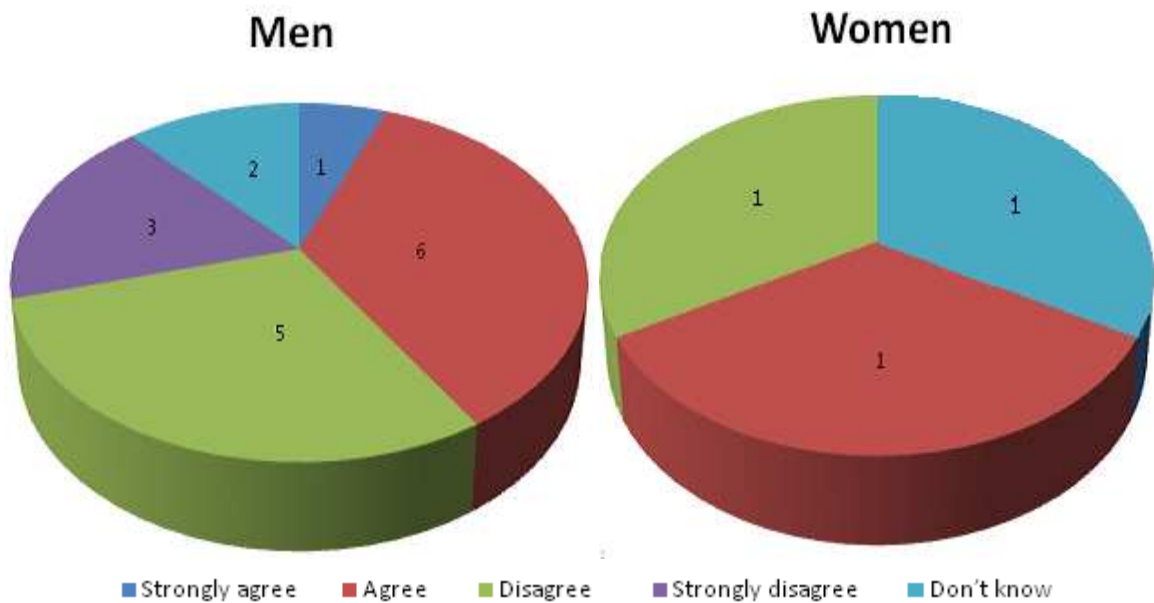


Figure 11. Cooperation with Vietnamese Citizens in the Future (own calculation).

7.3.12 Better Integration and use of Vietnamese Citizens in the Company

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were to express their suggestions and recommendations for better and easier integration of Vietnamese people into the company as well as better making use of their potential within the company's structure. All in all, the overwhelming majority of recommendations suggested improvement of communication. According to the respondents, the Vietnamese should definitely improve their knowledge of the Czech language so that they could communicate with their Czech colleagues freely. Some of the other suggestions included improving expertise and qualifications of Vietnamese people. Two of the respondents claimed there was no need to integrate or make use of foreigners since there were not enough job vacancies for Czech people.

7.3.13 Other Comments

As for the final part of the questionnaire survey, the respondents could add any other personal comments and insights they considered important as far as cooperation with Vietnamese colleagues was concerned. As for the outcomes, three respondents, having referred to the world economic crisis resulting in labour force surplus, found it pointless to

employ other nationalities but Czech. One of the respondents claimed that when producing in bulk, contribution of Vietnamese people to the company is indisputable.

7.4 Analysis of the Interview

Author's intention was to cover and discuss all the major topics stated in the theoretical part with someone who is directly involved in the problematic of employing Vietnamese citizens, and Mr. Nguyen Cao Son, being a Vietnamese himself, was a perfect choice. His responds should help to bring deeper insight into the context of Vietnamese immigration, employment, impacts of the crisis, Vietnamese habits, and their way of life, thinking, and differences between generations as well as understanding the way how recruitment agencies work (*transcription and translation of the interview is listed in Appendix PVI*). Generally speaking, what was quite obvious from the interview was the fact that Mr. Son Nguyen Cao is very satisfied with living in the CR, even planning for his children to stay here for good and never coming back. This only proves the fact that the Vietnamese come here because of economic reasons, to improve their standard of living, willing to make sacrifices – leaving their country and family behind, giving up (at least partially) their culture, habits, traditions. All of this in prospect of better future for them and especially for their children, whom they value most.

As far as employment and recruitment of Vietnamese people are concerned, the global financial crisis has had a devastating impact on both. According to Mr. Son, even the migration from Vietnam has practically ceased to exist. With lots of Vietnamese having lost their jobs, some of them decided to leave the country (even taking advantage of Voluntary Returns Project). However, there are still plenty of those who decided to stay, believing that the crisis should be over soon and the situation would sooner or later improve, so they would find employment again. Respectably, Mr. Son and others involved take care of those who had been made redundant and decided to stay, helping to provide them with food and a roof over their heads. Mr. Son also supports the idea that the terrible situation should one day improve, believing that the Vietnamese are hard-working, diligent people in whom Czech employers will always be interested.

Apart from seeking an employment through a job agency, Vietnamese people often rely on their fellow-citizens when looking for an employment. Working or helping in a shop or snack bar owned by a Vietnamese acquaintance is without doubt the easiest way of finding employment. Vietnamese people also occupy those jobs which are not attractive for Czech workers and hence the employer is forced to take up foreigners.

Speaking of the ST. CZPLUS 07 recruitment agency itself, Mr. Son's job is negotiating with customers and putting together contract details as well as securing a suitable accommodation for agency workers. The agency has its workers in companies all over the Czech Republic. Business contacts are vitally important in this profession. However, with the advent of the global economic crisis, the agency has for now ceased to bring new labourers from Vietnam as Labour Offices are rather reluctant in issuing new work permits to foreigners.

All in all, the biggest problem concerning nearly all the Vietnamese citizens seems to be the language barrier, which prevents the Vietnamese from exploring the Czech culture more deeply and thus, in the eyes of Czech people, seemingly not being interested in greater integration into the Czech society. According to Mr. Son, the Vietnamese are far from being a closed community. On the contrary, Vietnamese people are very friendly, sociable and outgoing people who often pay visits to each other as there are strong social ties among the community members. However, not being able to speak Czech prevents them from socialising and further integration. The only solution, as seen by Mr. Son, would be for the Vietnamese to learn the Czech language. Nevertheless, the new generation of Vietnamese who were born and grew up here are thought to have a much better future, being in far greater extent integrated into the Czech society. Not being limited by their unknowingness of Czech, they will surely prove the fact that all the prejudices concerning their separateness are simply unjustified.

The inability to speak Czech also causes difficulties at workplaces. Mr. Son seemed to have resolved this thorny situation by placing at least one Vietnamese who can speak Czech with other Vietnamese who cannot. When necessary, this person would act as an interpreter. However, such a pragmatic solution is only possible when a larger group of Vietnamese is taken up. In other cases, it is mainly over the phone that the problems are dealt with. However, as proved by the survey results, this approach seems to be inadequate and the communication issues still cause difficulties at the workplace.

Moving on to the problematic of Green cards, Mr. Son's opinion was that it is not so important for Vietnam to be removed from the list of Green Card countries. As he said, both a work permit and a green card are issued for a specific job with a specific employer, which means they are equivalent to each other. What really matters is whom the employer is willing to take on or what kind of staff he/she is looking for.

As for the Vietnamese – trade licence holders, Mr. Son confirmed that the vast majority of them only got one in order to get a work permit and a permit to reside in the country. In

fact, most of the trade licence holders are ordinary employees who lack capital to conduct business on their own.

As far as criminal activities of Vietnamese citizens are concerned, Mr. Son strongly denounced all the illegal activities carried out by his fellow-citizens that damage the reputation of Vietnamese people (i.e. growing marijuana or selling fake brand clothes). He also pointed out the fact that for the better future of all Vietnamese living in the CR, it is vitally important to prevent these criminals from doing unlawful activities. Nevertheless, Mr. Son admitted that it is impossible for the Vietnamese community to stop these things from happening.

To sum things up, Mr. Son is very optimistic about the future of Czech-Vietnamese relations. With the advent of new generation of Vietnamese who were born here, the language barrier will no longer be an obstacle, helping Vietnamese people to socialise with their Czech fellow-citizens which will hopefully lead to establishing a deeper relationship between both nations. Times have changed and so have Vietnamese people and their way of life. Former stallholders have turned into snack bar, restaurant or store owners. Despite the fact that the competition is growing stronger and stronger (with new supermarkets, department stores, restaurants, chain store wholesaler and retail companies being opened literally every day), the Vietnamese are very good entrepreneurs whose remarkable business skills are likely to help them survive or even profit in these difficult times.

7.5 Summary of Analytical Findings

All things considered, the results of the questionnaire survey seemed really favourable to the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In particular, the outcomes of the most important part of the questionnaire - performance of Vietnamese citizens in different areas of work – were really convincing, supporting the assertion that Vietnamese people are in general exceptionally diligent, reliable, skilful and willing workers with outstandingly good attendance, the facts that were also supported by the interview with Mr. Son. The essence of their effort to excel in every respect stems from their living in a different country and thus being forced to literally survive or even stand out under any circumstances. In many cases, it is an absolute necessity for the Vietnamese to prove they are equally good, if not even better than Czech people. Frequently, they need to prove they are even far better and more valuable if they want to succeed, for the foreigners always have it more difficult when it comes to employment. Their constant living under these

conditions only makes them stronger and more resistant for, as the saying goes, the weak hardly ever survive.

Not only were the respondents generally satisfied with productivity of Vietnamese co-workers, they also often pointed out their exemplary discipline, perseverance and ability to learn new things very fast, which are among other prerequisites of a continued existence in a foreign country. Presumably, Vietnamese workers often outdo their Czech counterparts in many such aspects. Moreover, the employees themselves expressed their view clearly by stating that most of them (eleven out of fifteen respondents) find the cooperation with Vietnamese citizens suitable and two thirds also found the collaboration beneficial for the company. However, as the outcomes of the survey suggest, prejudices and intolerance towards aliens are still deeply rooted among some of the Czech natives, preventing them from clearly distinguishing what is right and what is not.

As far as downsides of cooperation with Vietnamese citizens were concerned, what bothered the employees most was Vietnamese' poor knowledge of the Czech language. Apart from cultural differences, other troublesome issues regarded difficulties in cooperation and lack of expertise of Vietnamese citizens – qualifications, skills and necessary knowledge. Nevertheless, most of these issues can be handled with no substantial trouble at all if approached appropriately and with care (aside from cultural differences). The question of different cultures, habits and way of living is not so much a concern of the employer, but rather a matter that Vietnamese people have to deal and cope with themselves. All the suggestions and recommendations for the future are summed up in the *Recommendations* chapter.

As regards the possibility of renewal of cooperation with Vietnamese citizens, the respondents seemed to be a bit reserved (half of them were in favour of the renewal, and half of them against it), even though respondents' answers to previous questions clearly showed that most of them were keen on working with their Vietnamese colleagues. Nevertheless, such a contrasting view is understandable, being justified by the impact of the global financial crisis on the economic system as such, causing permanent increase of unemployment rate. As a matter of course, employees, being afraid of losing their jobs themselves, find taking on foreigners in such harsh times pointless and unreasonable. However, once the crisis is definitely over, it is very likely that these concerns should finally cease to exist.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The crucial part of the thesis - recommendations and suggestions for the future, are based on the survey outcomes as well as on several meetings with the Personnel Director, and should serve as guidance for TON a.s. Personnel Department. Having analysed the results of the survey and assuming that the cooperation with Vietnamese citizens will sooner or later be renewed, the recommendations are as follows:

Czech language courses – being the most problematic and troublesome issue, the inability to make oneself understood with Vietnamese co-workers is definitely a concern that needs more attention. Dealing with this problem should be company's primary target as far as improving communication among company employees is concerned. Despite the presence of a Vietnamese interpreter, it is obvious from respondents' answers that communication remained generally at an unsatisfactory level. What is suggested is for the company's Personnel Department to organise Czech language courses for their Vietnamese employees. These could be either evening language courses or other that would fit the needs and demands of both parties (preferably on company premises, during or outside working hours). To speed up the process of learning, the courses could be aimed at teaching particular vocabulary concerning the furniture making industry. In addition to this, the company may provide the Vietnamese workers with the textbook *Čeština – základní kurz pro Vietnamce* (Czech language – the basic course for Vietnamese) issued by "Klub Bambus" civic association. Even though this should imply additional costs, the company should presumably have no trouble seeing to this and in the end it would certainly benefit from doing so.

Understanding cultural differences – in order to truly comprehend the cultural differences between both cultures, it would be a great idea for the company to organise a "theme welcome party" for both foreign and native workers. This could be held either on suitable company premises or in the local town house, in a restaurant etc. In here, the management of the company would explain to the existing employees why the cooperation with Vietnamese citizens is of such an importance, pointing out its benefits. To get the employees acquainted with the foreign culture, the Vietnamese would deliver a presentation about their home country, their culture, history etc. To overcome the language barrier, a bilingual Vietnamese should be delivering the presentation (Mr. Son Nguyen Cao, of ST.CZ PLUS 07 recruitment agency would be a great choice). The theme evening could be accompanied by serving typical Vietnamese food, playing characteristic

Vietnamese music, projecting photos, so that the existing employees would understand and accept their foreign colleagues.

Coaching, job rotation – to improve the quality of work done, it is necessary for the company to constantly keep developing qualifications and skills not only of Vietnamese employees, but of the entire workforce. However, with Vietnamese citizens being relatively inexperienced, they should be devoted more attention. As far as On the Job Training Methods are concerned, it is advisable (apart from the classical job training where the new employee observes and imitates a more skilled and experienced worker who then provides continuing direction, checks novice's work and gives further advice) to introduce the method of coaching at the workplace. Coaching is an effective and quick way of developing one's work skills and skills concerning self-management and self-motivation. Moreover, it is aimed at addressing specific tasks, issues and situations. Not only is it a great tool for improving performance but also a means of enhancing motivation – this way, most of the downsides of cooperation with Vietnamese people (i.e. lack of qualifications and skills, poor work management, cooperation and lack of motivation) would be settled. The coach shall be an experienced company representative. The length of the coaching period would be dependent on the progress the Vietnamese would be making. Other option would be job rotation. Since the Vietnamese worked in various different parts of production, it would be highly advisable for all of them to make a "round", going through all the different departments so that they would familiarise with the new job. By doing this, the executives would find out what each of the novices suits best and what kind of job they should assign to each of them.

Demonstration – as far as Off the Job Training Methods are concerned, demonstration might be a wise choice. Carrying out an effective demonstration of a work procedure using a model and describing what to do at the same time is definitely a very effective way of training. Since it is a visual display of how something works or how to do something, the language barrier would not be of such a concern. In addition to this, video demonstration would be another option. In this case it would be advisable to make two copies, both in the Czech and Vietnamese language. Not only could the recording depict the precise way the concrete work procedure is meant to be done, it could also contain some basic facts about the company, its history, the technology used, organisational structure etc. Upon commencing the employment, the video tape would be played to new employees so that they could get the complex picture of both the company as well as job description. Moreover, the new employees could be given on the first day at work an "information

package" – including some general information about the company, internal regulations, collective labour agreement, safety at work, information about the unions etc. This would serve as guidance, so that the new staff could go through all the new information carefully back at home. Once again, two versions in both languages should be printed out.

Catering – after sever meetings with the Personnel Director, he also mentioned some troubles that arose in connection with Vietnamese cuisine and eating habits. The Vietnamese found it very difficult to get accustomed to Czech canteen meals, TON a.s. cafeteria being no exception. The solution might be for the company to extend the existing menu by adding one Asian food. This would imply either starting cooperation with some local Asian snack bar, which would deliver the meals to TON a.s. or employing an Asian (Vietnamese) cook who would see to preparation of typical Asian meals, so that the Vietnamese could have their meals in the canteen. However, this measure would only pay off when employing a larger number of foreigners.

As far as costs of these recommendations are concerned, it is arguable what the actual costs of these suggestions would be. As the company is extremely large, it is likely to be offered individual prices and individual approach.

Hopefully, all the recommendations and suggestions will help the Personnel Department to make the right decisions and, should the company decide to renew the cooperation with ST.CZ PLUS07 recruitment agency in the future, it will make use of the analysis in taking concrete steps and making certain arrangements so as to take full advantage of the potential that employing Vietnamese citizens certainly has to offer and hence strengthening company's position as one of the major furniture manufacturer in Europe.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to assess the benefits and drawbacks of employing Vietnamese citizens in the furniture manufacturing company TON a.s. Having contacted Mr. Ladislav Drozd, Personnel Director of the company, his desire was to make a survey among the employees so as to assess their approach to Vietnamese colleagues and their work performance in general.

As for the theoretical part, the thesis covered the topics of legal regulations on employing foreign nationals as well as a detailed description of the historical background of the Czech-Vietnam relationship and immigration of Vietnamese people into the county. In addition to this, cultural differences as well as various ways of recruiting foreign nationals were also dealt with in this part of the thesis.

As far as the practical part was concerned, a thorough questionnaire survey among company employees had been conducted, the results of which, along with their graphic interpretation in the form of numerous graphs, are to be found in the analytical part.

Taking all the facts into consideration, the author is strongly convinced that the cooperation of TON a.s. with Vietnamese citizens was certainly a beneficial one. According to the survey outcomes, in most cases, company employees expressed themselves clearly in a positive way towards their Vietnamese colleagues. Taking into account the premise that Vietnamese workers are skilful, quick-learning, reliable and self-disciplined workers (the statement which has also been proved right by the survey results), they are an excellent choice not only as far as furniture-making is concerned. If the company eliminates the drawbacks of employing foreigners (the Vietnamese, Mongolians or other), i.e. deals with the language barrier, provides its foreign staff with proper training so as to improve their skills and qualifications, Vietnamese workers are in the frame to become an indispensable part of the team of people whose production of bentwood furniture is the biggest in Europe.

Had it not been for the global financial crisis and hence resulting lack of job vacancies as well as a consecutive surplus of labour force, the cooperation would surely never have ceased to exist. The Personnel Director himself was very satisfied with performance of Vietnamese workers and, should the demand for the bentwood furniture increase, he is looking forward to re-establishing the cooperation once these cost-cutting measures are no longer needed. At present, TON a.s. are starting to recruit new employees. Hopefully, some of the Vietnamese will (re)join the company staff.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CR	Czech Republic
CSO	Czech Statistical Office
CSR	Czechoslovak Republic
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EU	European Union
EEA	European Economic Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDC	International Development Cooperation
LO	Labour Office
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
USD	United States dollar
VSR	Vietnam Socialist Republic

APPENDICES

- PI Model application of a foreigner for a work permit
- PII Model declaration of the employer that it will employ the foreigner
- PIII Model application for a permit to acquire employees from abroad
- PIV Model notification concerning the premature termination of the employment
- PV Statistical data – foreigners in CR
- PVI Transcription and translation of the interview
- PVII TON a.s. employee survey questionnaire (English language)

APPENDIX P I: MODEL APPLICATION OF A FOREIGNER FOR A WORK PERMIT/FOR AN EXTENSION OF A WORK PERMIT

4.

Place for attaching a
government stamp ^{2/}:

APPLICATION OF A FOREIGNER for a work permit ^{1/} – for an extension of employment ^{1/} in the Czech Republic

LO registration number:

Photograph
(not more than 2 years
old)

Fill out legibly in Czech or mark:



Surname:	
First name:	
Date of birth:	Gender : male <input type="checkbox"/> female <input type="checkbox"/>
Birth number ^{3/} :	Place of birth:

Country of citizenship:	Highest education achieved (according to KKO ^{4/}):
Address in country of permanent residence (country, district, town, street, number, postal code):	
Travel document number:	Name of issuing authority:
Mailing address:	

I apply for a permit to be employed in the Czech Republic from..... until.....

In the KZAM (ISCO) profession ^{5/}

KZAM (ISCO) numeral code ^{5/}

Classification according to OKE (NACE) ^{6/}

Education required for the carrying out of the job (KKOV) ^{4/}

With the employer ^{1/} - with a legal or natural person who has signed a contract with a foreign entity ^{1/}:

Employer – name:	ID no.:
	Birth no. ^{7/} :
Employer's registered seat (address - country, district, town, street, number, postal code):	
Name and contact address of legal or natural person in the Czech Republic (district, town, street, number, postal code) ^{8/} :	ID no.:
	Birth no. ^{7/} :
Place where employment will be carried out in the Czech Republic (address):	
Name and contact address of user (district, town, street, number, postal code) ^{9/}	ID no.:
	Birth no. ^{7/} :

This is my first employment in the Czech Republic yes no

Date: Signature of the applicant: /.

4.

Enclosures :

- 1) Declaration of the domestic employer that it will employ the foreigner, or
- 2) A photocopy of a page of travel document containing the basic identification information about the foreigner (to be returned to the applicant upon verification);
- 3) Copy of a certificate of professional competency for the sector in which the foreigner is to work in CS;
- 4) A medical certificate of the state of health of the foreigner, not older than one month
- 5) Other documents, if required by the nature of the job
- 6) Copy of the contract ^{10/}
- 7) Copy of a document authorising the business entity to engage in the activities which constitute the subject of the contract ^{10/}
- 8) Employment contract signed with a foreign employer ^{10/}

In the case of an **extension of employment**, the applicant shall only present enclosures required by numbers 1) and 2)

Enclosures issued in a foreign language shall be presented in their original wording or as notarised copies with their official translation into Czech

Notes and information about the Labour Office in

Date of application receipt:	This is employment under Act no. 435/2004 Coll., the Employment Act, as amended ^{11/} Sec. 92 par. 1, Sec. 94 par. 1, Sec. 95 par. 1, Sec. 95 par. 4, Sec. 96 lit. a), Sec. 96 lit. b), Sec. 97 lit. a), Sec. 97 lit. b), Sec. 97 lit. c), Sec. 97 lit. d), Sec. 97 lit. e), Sec. 97 lit. f), Sec. 97 lit. g)
Application processed by (first name, surname, and signature) :	
Date of processing:	

Notes:

- 1/ check off the applicable option
- 2/ attach bottom part of a government stamp here, without detaching the upper part, and send to the labour office. The administrative body will attach the upper portion of the government stamp to the written document of its administrative decision;
- 3/ only fill out if a birth number has been assigned;
- 4/ KKO V = classification of root educational fields (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification - classification of the basic educational sectors - structure of the classification of basic educational sectors")
- 5/ KZAM = employment classification - state the name and number of the profession being carried out (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification");
- 6/ OKEC = sector classification of economic activities (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification")
- 7/ only fill out if this concerns a natural person not engaged in business
- 8/ fill out in the case of an implementation of a contract
- 9/ fill out in the case of a temporary assignment of a work agency employee to perform work with the user.
- 10/ only attach for applicants sent out on the basis of a contract to perform work in the Czech Republic; only one copy of a contract and a copy of a document of the business entity is required for all applications relating to the given contract;
- 11/ the Labour Office shall mark the employment type

APPENDIX P II: MODEL DECLARATION BY AN EMPLOYER THAT IT WILL EMPLOY THE FOREIGNER

6.

DECLARATION BY AN EMPLOYER (Sec. 91 par. 2 of Act no. 435/2004 Coll., the Employment Act)

The Employer

Name :		ID no.:
Registered seat: /address – district, town, street, number, postal code/:		Birth number ^{1/} :
Responsible officer:	Telephone:	Fax:
		E-mail:

hereby declares that it will employ the following foreigner in the Czech Republic

Surname:	
First name :	Country of citizenship:
Date of birth:	Gender: male ^{2/} <input type="checkbox"/> female ^{2/} <input type="checkbox"/>
Birth number ^{3/} :	Place of birth:
Address in country of permanent residence:	
In the KZAM (ISCO) profession ^{4/}	KZAM (ISCO) numeral code ^{4/}
Classification according to OKEČ (NACE) ^{5/}	Education required for the job (KKOV) ^{6/}
Place of performance of work (address):	
Name and contact address of user (district, town, street, number, postal code) ^{7/}	ID no.:
	Birth number ^{7/} :

Planned duration of employment from until

Employment type:

Full-time employment ^{2/}	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part-time employment ^{2/}	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement on carrying out work activity ^{2/}	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement to perform work ^{2/}	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date: Employer's seal:

Signature of the responsible officer

.....

Notes:

- 1/ only fill out if you are a natural person not engaged in business
- 2/ check the applicable option with an "X"
- 3/ only fill out if a birth number has been assigned;
- 4/ KZAM = employment classification – state the name and number of the profession being carried out (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification")
- 5/ OKEČ = sector classification of economic activities (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification")
- 6/ KKOV = classification of root educational fields (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification)
- 7/ fill out in the case of a temporary assignment of an employee of a work agency to perform work with the user,

APPENDIX P III: MODEL APPLICATION OF AN EMPLOYER FOR THE PERMIT TO ACQUIRE EMPLOYEES FROM ABROAD

3.

APPLICATION OF AN EMPLOYER for the permit to acquire foreign employees for vacant work position (Sec. 85 of Act no. 435/2004 Coll., the Employment Act)

LO Registration number:

Employer

Name :	ID no.:
Registered seat: /address – district, town, street, number, postal code/:	Birth number ^{1/} :
Responsible officer:	Telephone:
	Fax: E-mail:

Specification of the employer's vacant work positions

Name of requested profession in KZAM ^{2/}	KZAM number ^{2/}	Classification in OKEČ ^{3/}	Qualification required by KKOV ^{4/}	Planned duration of employment		Number of persons t/w ^{5/}	Gross wage (in CZK /hour or CZK /month)
				from	Until		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total							

Place of the performance of work (address):	Address of accommodation in CS (district, town, street, number, postal code):
Other requirements of the employer:	
Rationale for the application:	

Enclosure: notarised copy of a document authorising the employer to engage in business

Date: Seal of the employer:

Signature of the responsible officer:

Notes and information about the Labour Office in

Date of application receipt:	Place for attaching a government stamp ^{6/}:
Application processed by (first name, surname, and signature) :	
Date of processing:	

Notes:

- 1/ only fill out if you are a natural person not engaged in business
- 2/ KZAM = employment classification – state the name and number of the profession being carried out (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification")
- 3/ OKEČ = sector classification of economic activities (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification")
- 4/ KKOV = classification of root educational fields (classification overview available on the internet pages www.czso.cz - classification)
- 5/ total, of that, women
- 6/ attach bottom part of a government stamp here, without detaching the upper part, and send to the labour office. The administrative body will attach the upper portion of the government stamp to the written document of its administrative decision. If you have more than one stamp, attach them to the reverse side of this form.

APPENDIX P IV: MODEL NOTIFICATION CONCERNING THE PREMATURE TERMINATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT

8.

NOTIFICATION BY AN EMPLOYER Concerning the premature termination of the employment

of a foreigner in the Czech Republic
(Sec. 88 of Act no. 435/2004 Coll., the Employment Act)

Foreigner

Surname :	
First name :	Country of citizenship:
Date of birth:	Gender : male ^{2/} <input type="checkbox"/> female ^{2/} <input type="checkbox"/>
Birth number ^{3/} :	Place of birth:
Address in the country of permanent residence:	
Mailing address:	

Work permit has been issued by the Labour Office in
on File no.:

Employer

Employer – name	
Registered seat (address – district, town, street, number, postal code)	
ID no.	Birth number ^{4/}
Date of termination (failure to take up) of employment:	
Reason of termination (failure to take up) employment:	

Date : Employer's seal:

Signature of the responsible officer:

<u>Notes of the Labour Office in</u> Date of delivery to the Labour Office.....

Notes

- 1/ check of the applicable
- 2/ check the applicable option with an "X"
- 3/ only fill out if a birth number has been assigned
- 4/ only fill out if you are a natural person not engaged in business

Excerpts and citations of sections of Act no. 435/2004 Coll., the Employment Act

- Sec. 88 par. 1 the employer shall inform the relevant labour office in writing should the foreigner to whom a work permit has been issued
- lit. a) failed to take up employment
 - lit. b) terminated his employment prior to the expiration of the period for which the permit was issued
- par. 2 The employer must comply with the information duty under par. 1 within 10 calendar days of the date when the foreigner was to take up employment or of the foreigner terminating his/her employment

APPENDIX P V: STATISTICAL DATA – FOREIGNERS IN CR

According to the estimates of the *Czech Statistical Office (CSO)*, there are about 436 thousand foreigners currently living in the Czech Republic, 61 thousand of which are represented by the citizens of Vietnamese. This classifies the community as being the third most numerous one, with Ukrainians being at the top, followed by Slovaks. However, should the estimates of illegal immigrants also be taken into account, the number of Vietnamese in the country may as well reach 90 thousand. Despite being one of the largest communities, it is not currently recognized by the Government (there is no Vietnamese representative in the Government Council for National Minorities) nor does this minority have any significant political representation. (Czech Statistical Office)

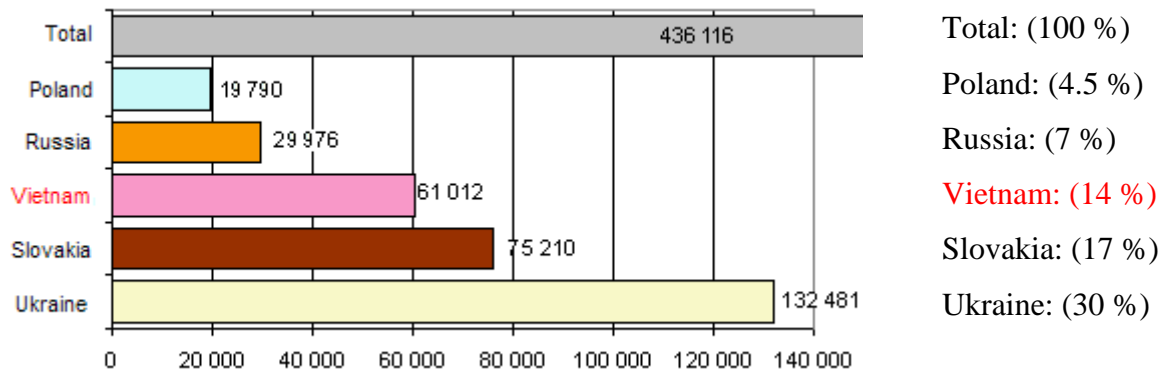


Figure 12. The Five Most Numerous Foreign Nationalities in the CR as per October 31st, 2009 (Czech Statistical Office)

External and Internal Migration of Foreigners

The latest available statistics are from 2007. In this year, more than 100 thousand foreigners immigrated to the Czech Republic from abroad (mainly citizens of Ukraine – 39% of all immigrants, 39.6 thousand persons, Slovaks – 14 %, 13.9 thousand persons and Vietnam – 12 %, 12.3 thousand persons). The number of foreign immigrants increased over the previous year by more than 35 thousand people. On the contrary, 18,424 foreign nationals emigrated from the CR abroad. Compared with 2006, the number of emigrant foreigners decreased by less than 15 thousand. Almost half of the emigrants were citizens of Ukraine (8.7 thousand); other nationalities were represented in far lower numbers. (Czech Statistical Office)

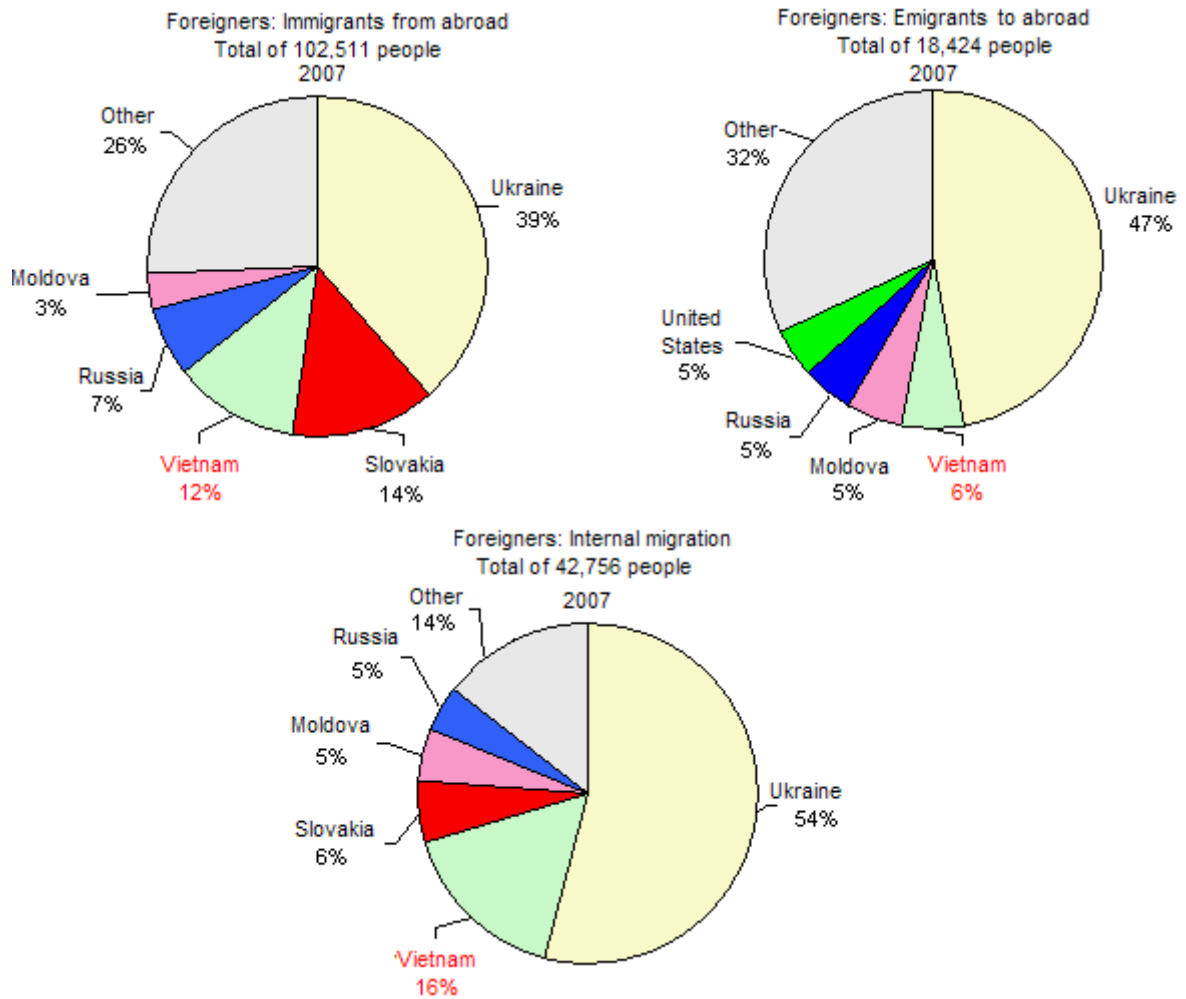


Figure 13. External and Internal Migration of Foreigners in the CR in 2007 (Czech Statistical Office)

In 2007, the total external migration of foreigners (the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants) achieved a significant positive migration balance, almost 2.5 times higher over the previous year (slightly exceeding 84 thousand people). The highest positive migration balance is attributed to the foreigners from Ukraine (30.9 thousand), followed by Slovakia (13 thousand) and Vietnam (11 thousand). The total migration turnover was also greatest among the citizens of Ukraine (almost 50 thousand people), followed by Slovakia and Vietnam (less than 15 thousand people). The total migration turnover (immigrant and emigrant foreigners) was 120,935 people. Most foreigners moved traditionally to the central part of the country, i.e. Prague (30 % of all immigrants in that year) and Central Bohemian Region (16 %). Relatively high proportion of immigrants was also registered by Ústí nad Labem Region and South Moravian Region (both 10 %). Prague also dominated in the numbers of foreigner emigrants (41 % of all persons). (Czech Statistical Office)

As far as the internal migration is concerned, 42,756 foreigners moved their homes within the borders of the CR, which was approximately 20 thousand more than in the previous year. Nearly 35 % of the migrants moved within their region. Approximately a quarter of all internal migration was represented by foreigners migrating between Prague and Central Bohemian Region. Approximately 4.9 thousand foreigners moved from the Central Bohemian Region to Prague in 2007, while 2.5 thousand foreigners moved in the opposite direction. Prague was also the region into which most foreigners moved (total of 11 thousand). The citizens of Ukraine were responsible for most movements inside the CR (more than half of all cases), followed by citizens of Vietnam (16 %). (Czech Statistical Office)

Illegal Migration of Foreigners

Illegal migration can be divided into two major groups:

- ✓ Illegal migration across the state borders, or
- ✓ Illegal migration on the territory of the CR - cases of illegal stay.

As for the former one, total of 2,837 foreigners illegally came to the CR in 2007 (mostly from Vietnam – 418, Germany - 345 and Ukraine – 336). As far as the cases of illegal stay are concerned, the total of 4,712 foreigners stayed illegally on the territory of the CR in 2007, the top 3 nationalities being Ukraine – 2,904, Vietnam – 345 and China – 176. (Czech Statistical Office)

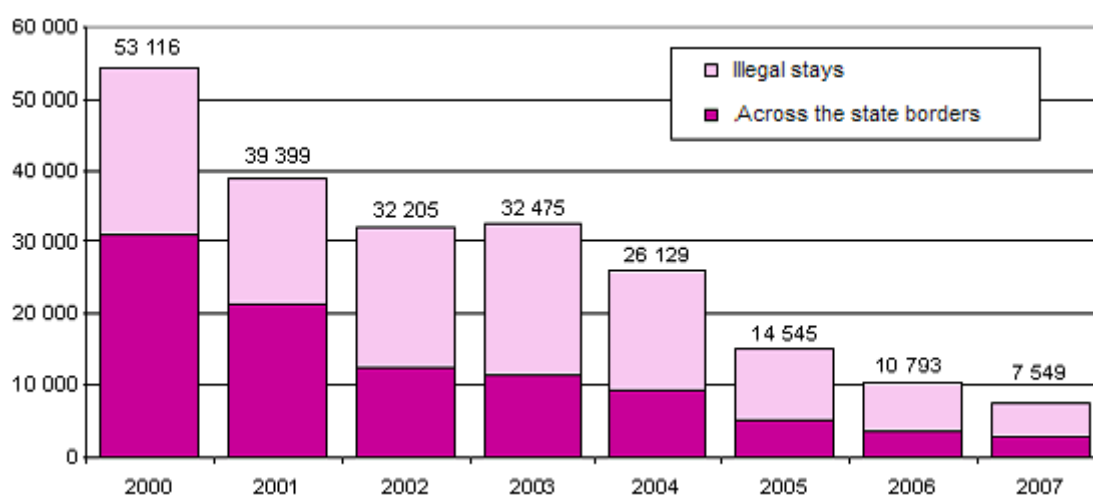


Figure 14. Trend in Illegal Migration of Foreigners in the CR 2000-2007 (Czech Statistical Office)

Foreigners with Permanent Residence Permit

As far as numbers of foreigners with permanent residence are concerned, the Vietnamese are even the second largest group. A permanent residence is the second highest attainable level of a foreigner's integration in the Czech society (after Czech citizenship). Foreigners who have permanent residence in the Czech Republic, enjoy, for employment purposes, the same rights as the citizens of the Czech Republic, i.e., they are in no way limited in their choice of employment (with the exception of certain professions which require Czech citizenship) and they do not need to hold a work permit. (http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zz_zamest_cizincu/zz_vymezeni_pojmu)

Citizenship	Foreigners, Total	Permanent stay			Other types of stay		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Total	436,116	179,436	95,161	84,245	256,680	162,702	93,978
Ukraine	132,481	43,121	21,541	21,580	89,360	55,998	33,362
Slovakia	75,210	26,272	12,789	13,483	48,938	30,274	18,664
<i>Vietnam</i>	<i>61,012</i>	<i>35,636</i>	<i>20,073</i>	<i>15,563</i>	<i>25,376</i>	<i>16,493</i>	<i>8,883</i>
Russia	29,976	12,846	5,834	7,012	17,130	8,061	9,069
Poland	19,790	11,006	3,291	7,715	8,784	6,781	2,003
Germany	14,156	4,407	2,899	1,508	9,749	8,281	1,468
Moldova	10,315	2,313	1,285	1,028	8,002	5,305	2,697
Bulgaria	6,346	3,063	1,909	1,154	3,283	2,156	1,127
Mongolia	5,924	1,645	563	1,082	4,279	1,835	2,444
United States	5,803	2,668	1,762	906	3,135	1,749	1,386

Table 5. Foreign Citizenships According to the Type of Residence and Gender as per October 31st, 2009 (Czech Statistical Office)

While the strategy of the Vietnamese in the CR seems to be the strategy of rapid acquisition of wealth and subsequent return to Vietnam (according to their own assertion and on the basis of available surveys), in fact, the migration is starting to take a longer-term nature. Of the total number of Vietnamese currently living in the CR, about 60 % hold a permanent residence permit. The proportion of Vietnamese with permanent residence has increased significantly in recent years. (Kocourek 2005)

According to the available statistics, there are about 40 % of women among Vietnamese nationals. Most Vietnamese living in the CR fall within the economically active age group of 20-50 years old. The proportion of children under 10 years has also increased. Therefore, the problem of so-called second generation of migrants has often been discussed recently in connection with the Vietnamese community living in the CR.

Contemporary Vietnamese children and students who were born here or have lived here all their lives are very important group, which will undoubtedly affect the mutual relationship of both nations in the very near future. According to experts on this issue, the younger generation differs substantially from older migrants, particularly as far as the intensity of attachment to the Czech society is concerned. In this context, talks about intergenerational and intercultural conflicts within the Vietnamese community have emerged. (Kocourek 2005)

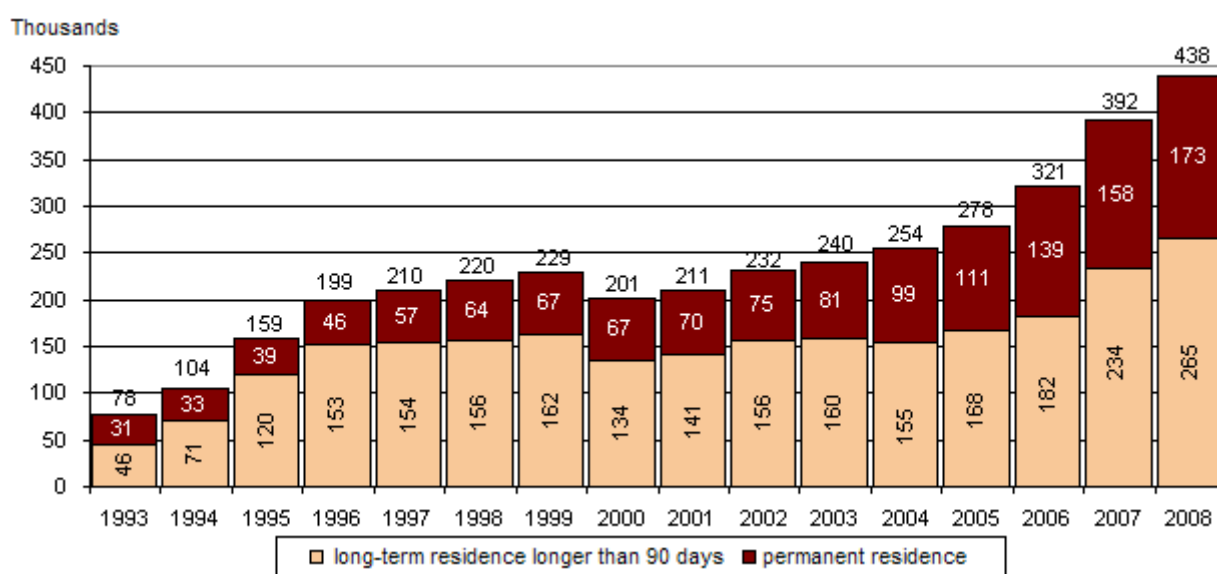


Figure 15. Trend in the Number of Foreigners with a Permanent and Long-term Residence Longer than 90 days in CR: 1993–2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

Acquisition of Czech Citizenship

Czech citizenship is the highest attainable level of a foreigner's integration in the Czech society. Czech citizenship can be granted at the request of a natural person who meets all the following conditions: (<http://cizinci.wordpress.com/category/cizinci-v-cr/udeleni-statniho-obcanstvi-ceske-republiky>)

- ✓ At least five years of permanent residence in the Czech Republic. The foreigner is required to remain in the Czech Republic for the most part of this period,
- ✓ Proof that the applicant has lost his/her previous citizenship status or that he/she will certainly lose the same on acquiring Czech citizenship, unless it is a homeless person or a person granted asylum in the Czech Republic,
- ✓ Clean criminal record for the past five years (the applicant has not been convicted of a deliberate crime in the last five years),

- ✓ Knowledge of Czech language (proved by an interview at the office where the applicant files his/her application).

Compared to a permanent residence permit, which guarantees the majority of political rights, Czech citizenship offers the following benefits: (<http://www.en.domavcr.cz/advice-for-living-in-the-czech-republic/citizenship/czech-citizenship>)

- ✓ Voting right (both active and passive),
- ✓ A Czech citizen may not be sentenced to administrative deportation,
- ✓ A Czech citizen may not be refused access to the Czech Republic,
- ✓ The Czech Republic provides its citizens with diplomatic protection,
- ✓ Free travel abroad (a foreigner remains subject to the visa regulations of his/her home state: for instance Vietnam, Ukraine etc.).

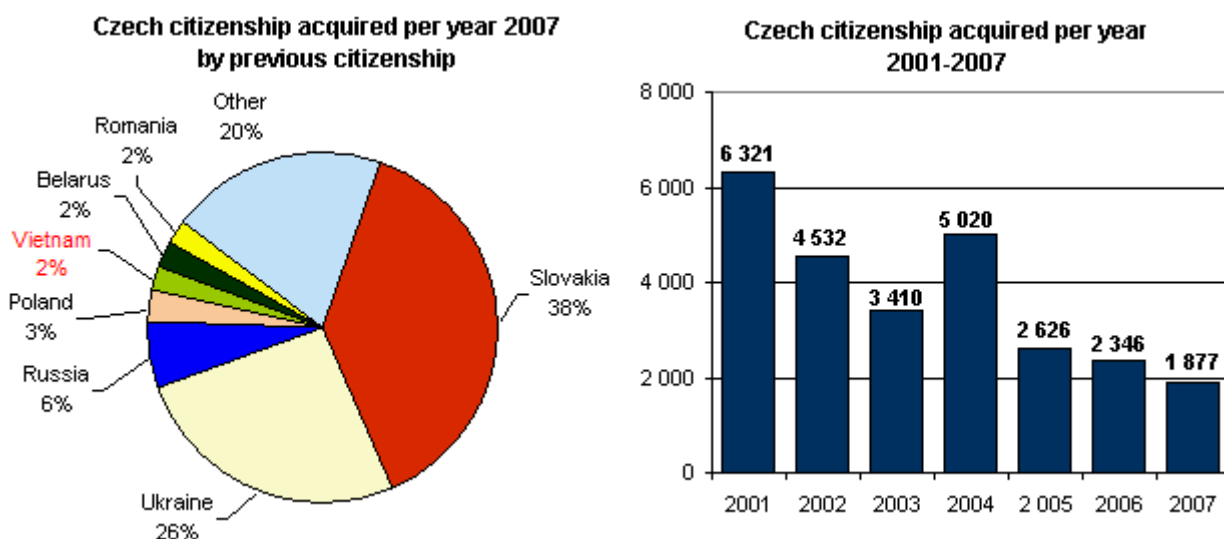


Figure 16. Czech Citizenship Acquired by Foreigners in 2007, Trend 2001-2007 (Czech Statistical Office)

In 2007, 1,877 people obtained Czech citizenship. It was granted to 1,158 persons, 494 former Slovak citizens acquired citizenship through a declaration. Moreover, 225 former Czechoslovak citizens acquired Czech citizenship. (Czech Statistical Office)

Entrepreneurs-foreigners vs. Employees

For the purpose of this work, foreigners holding trade licence are referred to as entrepreneurs-foreigners, whereas individuals with a formal job attachment (single job holders and multiple job holders – main, secondary) are referred to as employees.

Focusing on Vietnamese nationals, the vast majority of Vietnamese people are entrepreneurs conducting their business on the basis of an official trade license certificate (unlicensed trades mainly for purchasing and selling goods), regardless of their original profession or education. In most cases, Vietnamese entrepreneurs sell cheap imported textiles, footwear and electronic goods, tobacco and spirits. In the border areas, they additionally sell petty goods. Recently, a large number of Vietnamese snack-bars and restaurants have emerged along with grocery stores and many others. This might be attributed to the growing price war within the textile market and within the market of cheap products. The scope of business of the Vietnamese community is gradually and significantly diversifying. (Kocourek 2005)

"A frequent phenomenon among the Vietnamese community is the fact that Vietnamese get a trade license, but the nature of their activities and working conditions in these businesses correspond in fact to those of an employee. In fact, there are only a few Vietnamese employees here." (Kocourek 2005)

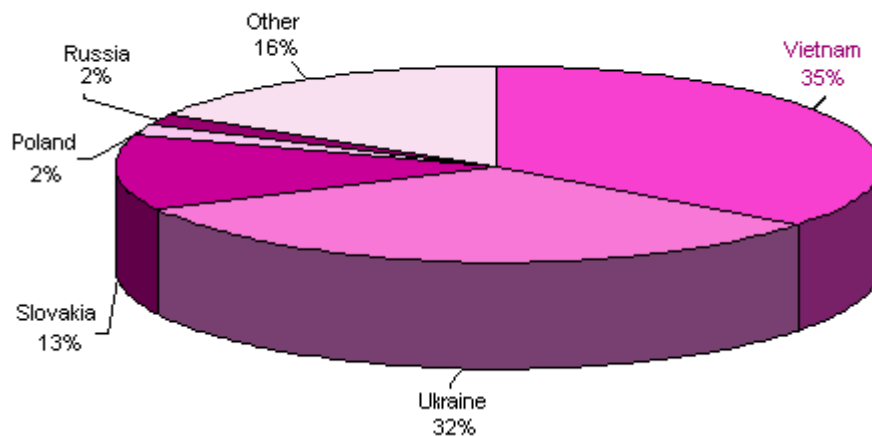


Figure 17. Foreigners Holding Valid Trade Licence as per December 31st, 2007 (Czech Statistical Office)

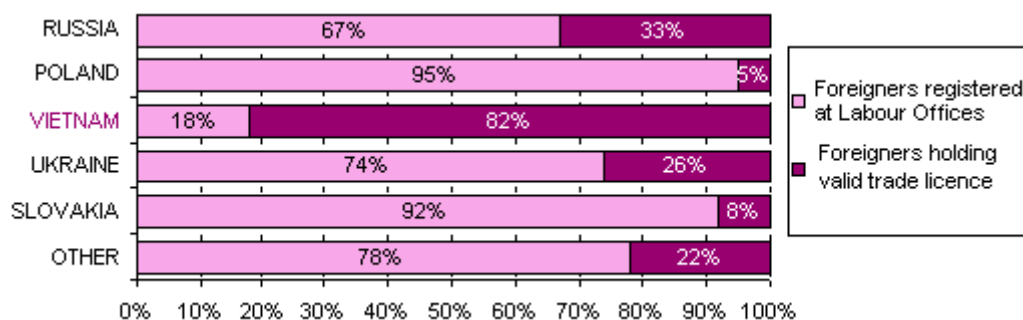


Figure 18. Selected Citizenships by Status in Employment as per December 31st, 2007 (Czech Statistical Office)

As far as foreigners from the EU Member States with valid trade licence are concerned, majority of foreigners are Slovak nationals (8.7 thousand). Unlike working foreigners registered at labour offices, the share of the EU member states makes only one fifth of all foreigners with trade licence. The total number of entrepreneurs is influenced especially by citizens of Vietnam (24.4 thousand) and citizens of the Ukraine (21.6 thousand). Citizens of Vietnam are more interested in doing business on the territory of the Czech Republic, which is clearly attributed to the entry of the Czech Republic to the Schengen area and benefits resulting from that for entrepreneurs. (Czech Statistical Office)

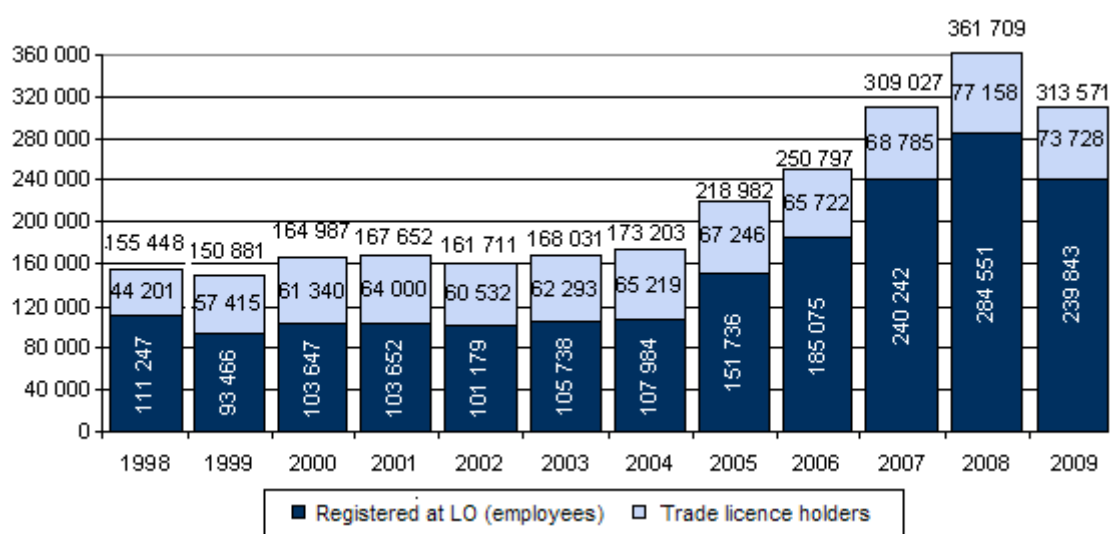


Figure 19. Trend in the Number of Foreigners by Status in Employment 1999 – November 31st, 2009 (Czech Statistical Office)

Classification of Employment

According to the statistics of the *Czech Statistical Office*, the vast majority of Vietnamese work in factories as machine operators, craftsmen, skilled manufacturers and repairmen, as well as auxiliary staff and unskilled workers. On the other hand, only a very few are involved in services, trade, or as technical, medical or teaching staff. Insignificant number of Vietnamese works in other types of occupation.

As far as economic activities of Vietnamese citizens living in the Czech Republic are concerned, the vast majority (85 %) are involved in processing industry (engineering, metallurgical, chemical, textile industry, tobacco industry, production of electronics, china, automotive industry and the like). However, these estimates involve foreigner - employees only. Since the majority of Vietnamese are entrepreneurs (trade licence holders) conducting business, the statistical results may be slightly inaccurate and misleading.

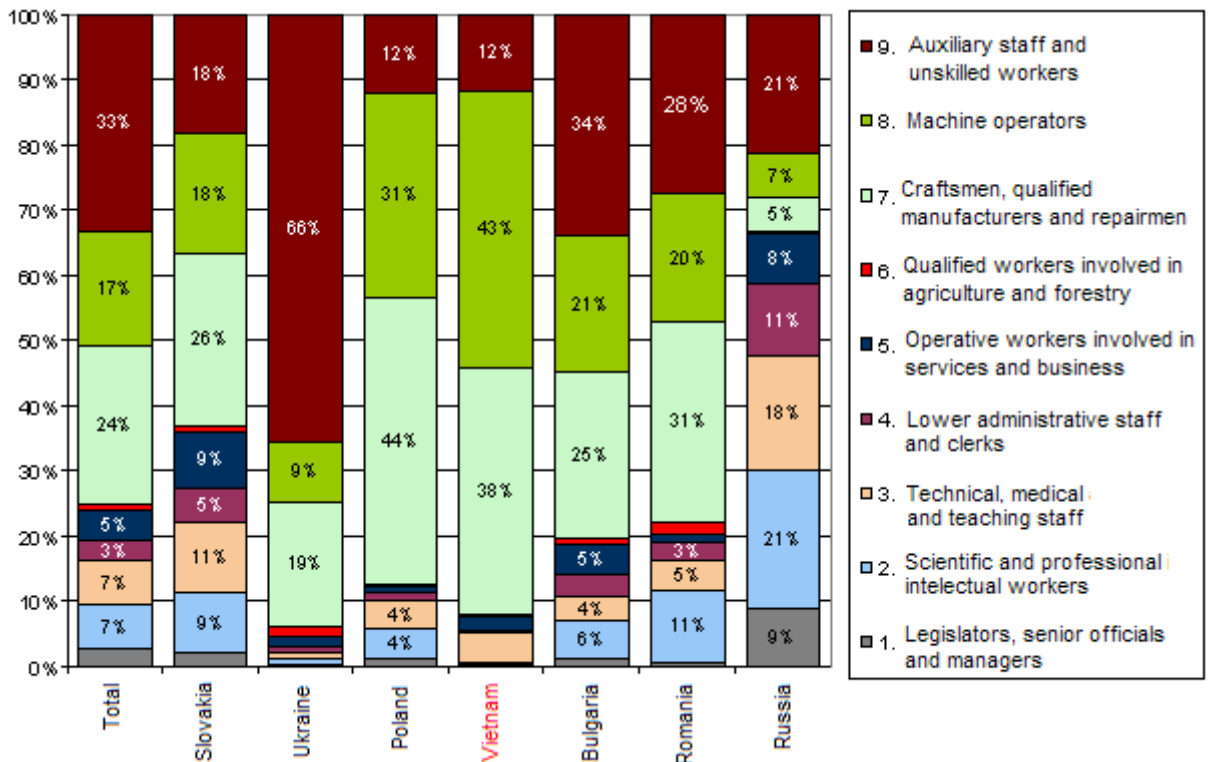


Figure 20. Proportion of Foreigners by Classification of Occupations as per December 31st, 2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

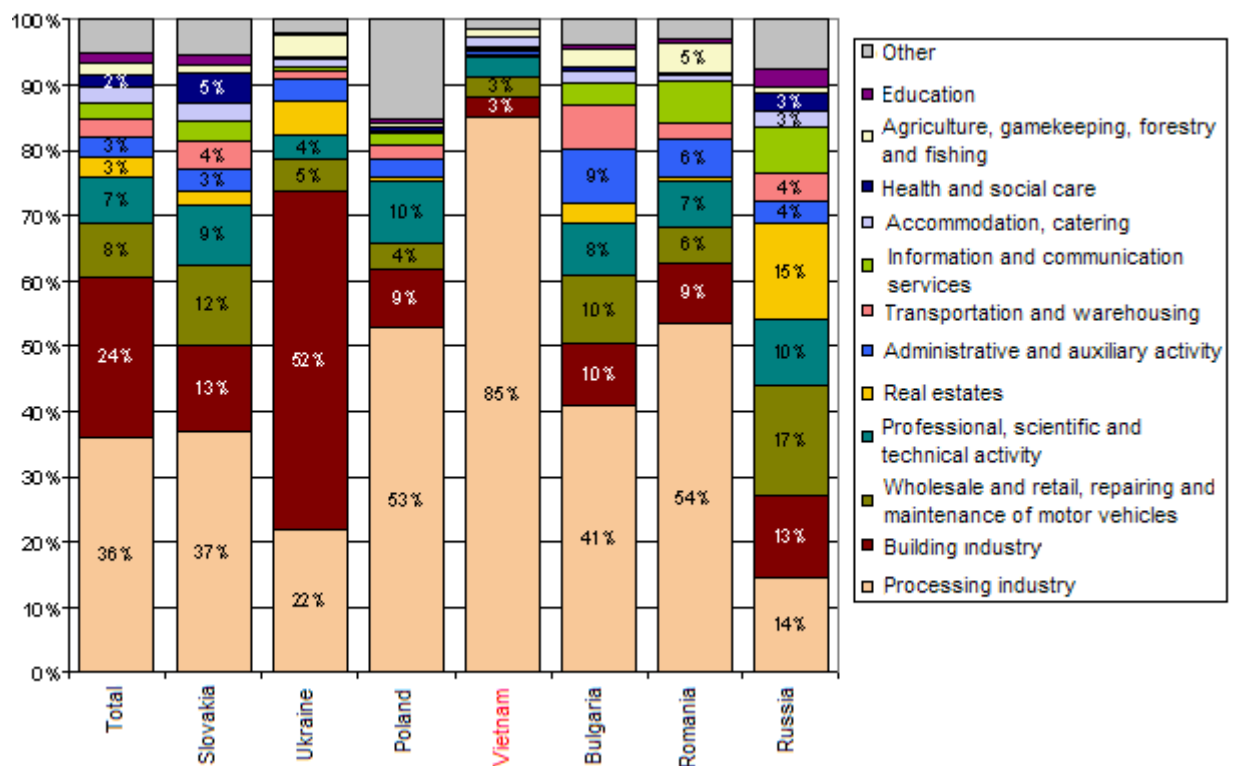


Figure 21. Proportion of Foreigners by Different Economic Activities as per December 31st, 2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

Education of Foreigners

In the 2007/08 school year, 50,366 children, pupils and students - foreigners attended schools in the Czech Republic. More than half of them (27.6 thousand) were university students; more than a quarter attended elementary schools, 6 % nursery schools and 13 % attended high schools. In comparison with the Czech students, significantly higher number of foreign students studied at university, yet far less attended secondary schools. The opportunity to study at universities in the Czech Republic is in particular taken up by students from Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam and the United Kingdom. The fact that so few foreigners attend secondary schools can be interpreted in the context of high numbers of children-foreigners in nursery and basic schools: these are probably children of foreigners with long-term or permanent residence – they are still in lower types of schools, not old enough to go to secondary schools (a slow increase in the number of foreign students in these schools since 2002/03 proved this fact). (Czech statistical Office)

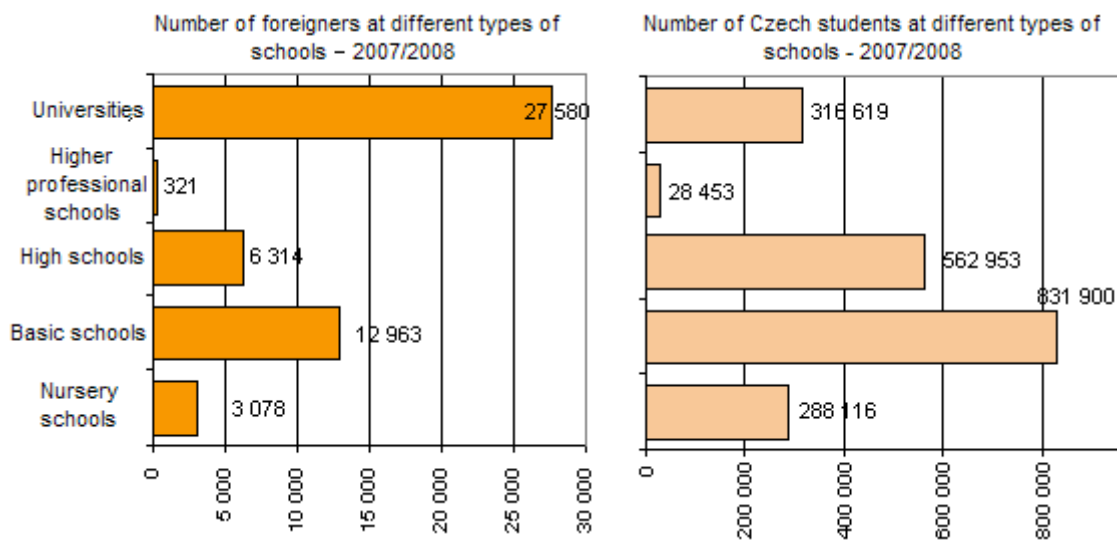


Figure 22. Number of Foreigners and Czechs at Different Types of Schools 2007/2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

The vast majority of children - foreigners attending nursery and basic schools come from Vietnam (33 % of all foreigners at nursery schools, 26 % at basic schools). 19 % of children in nursery schools and 23 % of basic school pupils were the citizens of Ukraine. Higher numbers of children and pupils were also among Slovaks (15 % of children, 19 % of pupils) and Russians (6 % of children, 7 % of pupils). On the whole, the share of foreigners at nursery schools was 1.1 % of all children and 1.5 % of pupils at basic schools in the Czech Republic, respectively. (Czech Statistical Office)

As far as secondary education is concerned, the share of foreign students is 1.1 %. The Vietnamese are also the most numerous group of foreigners at secondary schools (25 %, 1605 persons), followed by citizens of Ukraine (22 % of all foreigners at secondary schools, 1375 persons), Slovaks (16 %) and Russians (10 %). (Czech Statistical Office)

However, only 321 foreigners studied at higher professional schools. The foreign pupils are mostly enrolled in initial study (63 %) and a little more than a third take distance study courses. Foreigners accounted for 1 % of all students at higher vocational schools, most often they were citizens of Slovakia (61 % of all foreigners) and Ukraine (15 %). Most of them go to higher professional schools in Prague (36.1 %) and in the Moravian-Silesian Region (19.6 %). The foreigners study most frequently economic subjects and health services. (Czech Statistical Office)

Most foreigners study at universities. Since academic year 2003/04 their number at Czech public and private universities has doubled. Nowadays, they make up 9.0 % of all students first enrolled at public and private universities. Of the total number of university graduates, 6.3 % are foreigners. They take Bachelor's and Master's education programmes full-time and in academic year 2007/2008 accounted for 8 % of all public and private university students. Most foreign students come from Slovakia (18,350 people, 67 % of foreigners at universities), Russia (1,375 persons, 5 %), Ukraine (844 persons, 3 %), Vietnam (626 people, 2 %) and the United Kingdom (416 persons, 2 %). Most foreigners study at universities in Prague, Brno, Ostrava and Olomouc. (Czech Statistical Office)

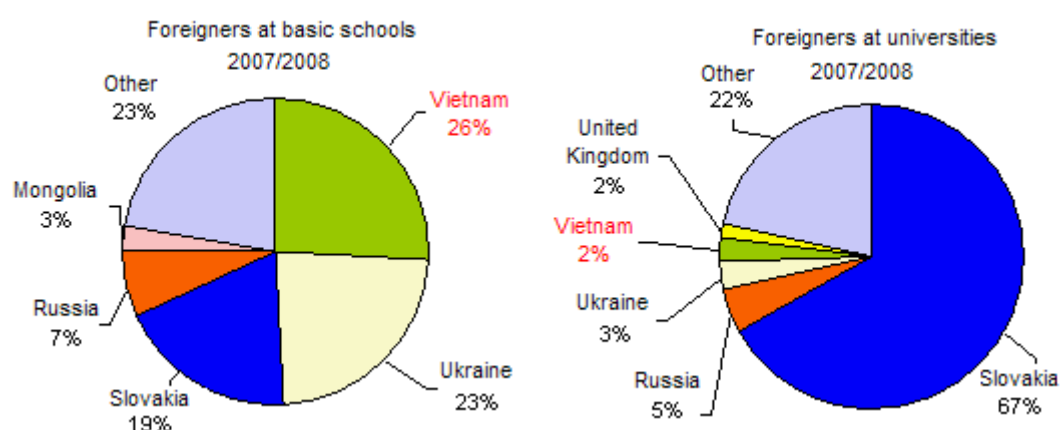


Figure 23. Proportion of Foreigners at Basic Schools and Universities 2007/2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

As far as education among Vietnamese people is concerned, educational attainment of children strongly reinforces the prestige of the whole family. Therefore, parents want their

children to study at university. They put hopes into their children and they are willing to sacrifice their lives in order to provide their children with as good an education as possible.

Foreigners in Different Regions of the Czech Republic

Compared to the period before 1989, when the largest numbers of Vietnamese were concentrated in close proximity to major businesses and training institutions, today the significant numbers of Vietnamese, like most other foreigners, have settled down in major cities like Prague, Brno, Plzeň or Ústí nad Labem and in the border region around Ostrava, Cheb and Karlovy Vary. Here, they often focus on foreign tourists when selling their products. Their marketplaces and stalls where German and Austrian neighbours go shopping are highly visible phenomenon in the border regions. (Kocourek 2003)

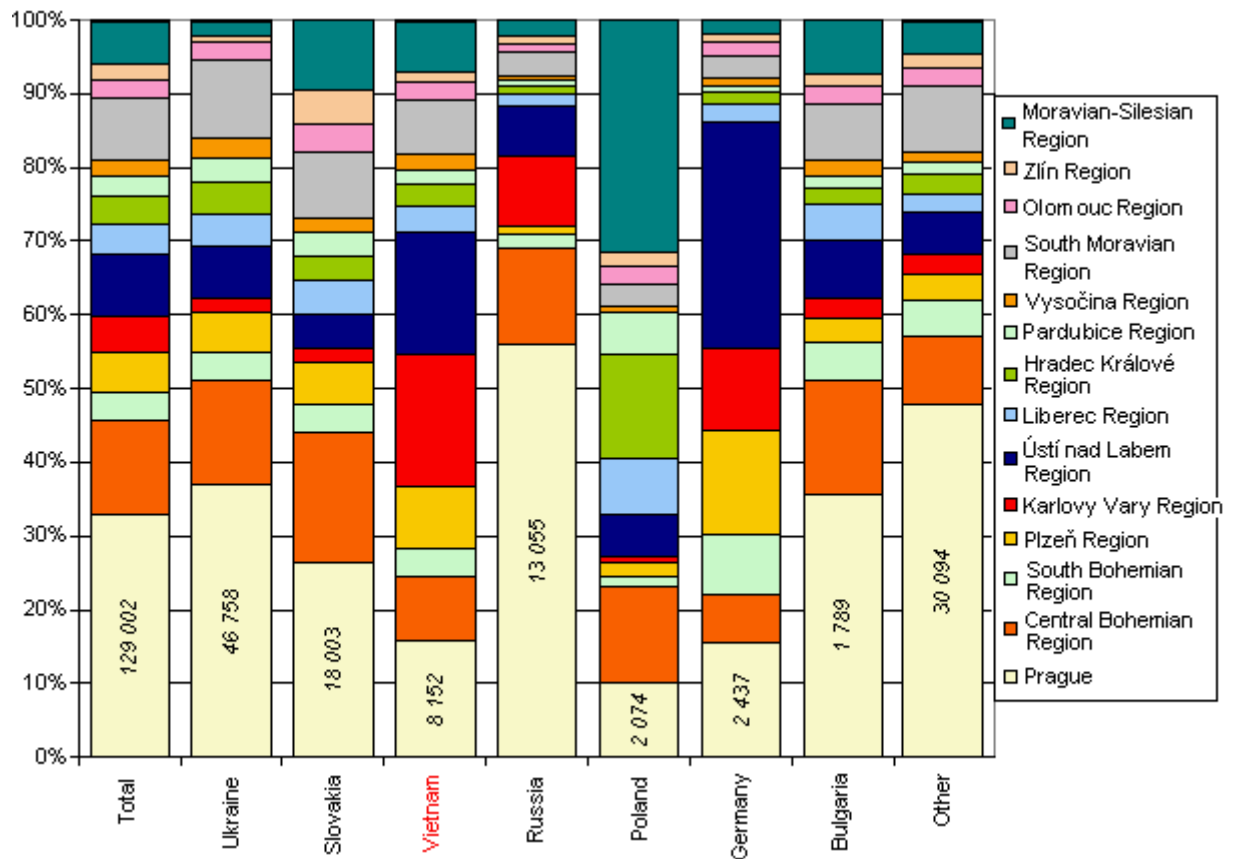


Figure 24. Proportion of Foreign Citiznships by Region as per 31.12.2008 (Czech Statistical Office)

Crime of Foreigners

The most common type of crime in the Vietnamese community is economic crime, especially tax evasion, counterfeiting of trademarks, smuggling. Drug trading (especially growing marijuana) is becoming a new phenomenon.

Organized crime and various types of gangs do not dodge Vietnamese minority either. As stated by Němec, the organisation of Vietnamese criminal gangs in the CR has achieved three levels so far, leading to the development of three types of gangs. The first type consists of a fixed group of people, where a gang boss is the highest up person (usually the person who studied here in the late eighties of the twentieth century or who became wealthy as a result of uncontrolled smuggling of cigarettes, textiles, alcohol and people during the first half of the nineties. Family gangs are the second type of gangs, where only family members play a part, hiring some additional people. There are also so-called street gangs, with relatively loose organisation. Comprising usually about five to ten members who typically live together, these gangs move together and are bound with territorial or kinship ties. (Němec 2004)

Economic crime committed by the Vietnamese is particularly associated with their business activities (mostly selling low-quality textile, footwear, electronics, CDs, videos, alcohol and cigarettes, passing these off as genuine leading brands, which are sold in stalls almost in any profitable location). These forms of sales are connected with operating marketplaces, huge market halls and warehouses where the goods are kept in vast quantities and then supplied to individual retailers. While in the early nineties most market stalls and warehouses were only leased to Vietnamese, many of these objects are at present in their exclusive possession, with the original landlords having been forced out either by "overbidding" them or by threats imposed by Vietnamese mafia. Many lucrative properties thus came into the possession of Vietnamese criminal gangs, not only in major Czech cities, but also along the pedestrian areas of most spa towns. (Němec 2004)

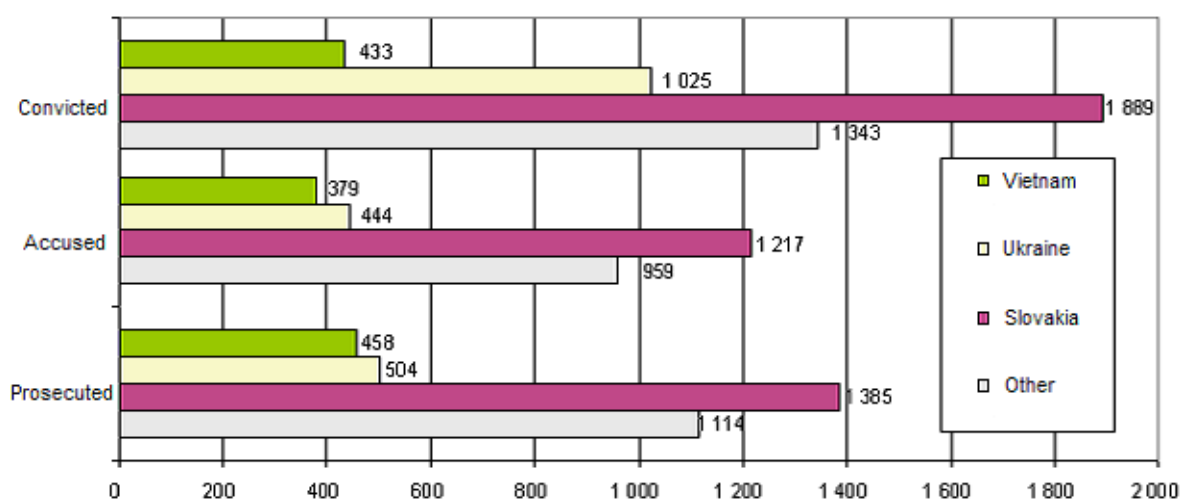


Figure 25. Selected Foreign Citizenships: Prosecuted, Accused and Convicted Persons in 2007 (Ministry of Justice of the CR)

APPENDIX P VI: TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF THE INTERVIEW

1. Once again, let me wish you a very nice evening and thank you very much for your time and helpfulness. Could you please tell me your whole name and occupation?

Good evening. My name is Nguyen Cao Son and I am a representative of ST.CZPLUS0 recruitment agency.

2. How long have you lived in the CR? Do you have a family here?

I came before the revolution. I experienced the Velvet Revolution and I have my whole family here – my wife and two children. The girl attends the grammar school and the boy goes to primary school.

3. Have you stayed in Jihlava ever since, or did you live somewhere else too?

I'd lived in Prague for five years. Otherwise we have lived here in Jihlava the whole time.

4. Are you planning to go back to Vietnam or do you intend to stay here for good?

Our children will remain here, that's for sure, because they were born here. We have not decided yet. Maybe when we grow older, we might feel the urge to go back home. However, if we have grandchildren, we will probably stay here with them. I can't tell.

5. How did you get to work for ST.CZ PLUS 07 agency and what is your job all about?

Before I used to have a different job - I traded goods and I ran a kind of a travel agency. Then I found out that there were a lot of companies looking for new people and I knew that there was still labour export going on from Vietnam. I said to myself, why not, helping both companies here and people in Vietnam. Especially people from rural areas do not have a job and if they do, they earn lower wages. So why not. But we don't help everyone. I've been in the agency since 2007. I am the representative. My job is dealing with companies, setting up contracts - how, who for, what kind of job, under what conditions and so on.

6. Could you describe how the agency actually works and what companies do you provide workforce for?

Concretely, I won't tell you. But let me tell you this. In most cases, some of my acquaintances give me a call. For example, I have a business here and the company has in turn contacts to other companies and I have their confidence. Companies would call me of their own accord, so I do not have to advertise that much. It's all about trust. We need to apply for a work permit at the Labour Office. I heard that some construction companies employed people without permission. But the papers must be okay, otherwise it is unacceptable.

7. As you acquire workers from Vietnam, do you arrange the trip formalities, procure plane tickets, permits, etc.?

Formerly, we had to apply for the permit at the Labour Office and apply for a visa at the Czech embassy in Hanoi. Today it is impossible, it is prohibited. We no longer recruit new people as a result of the crisis. We try to sustain the people we have. The trip from Vietnam – there are two options. Either they are our employees, who work for the agency, so we buy plane tickets for all of them, or employees meant for a company, so the company must pay for the tickets. We receive some remuneration from those companies we provide staff with.

8. Do you provide Vietnamese with accommodation?

All of them. If we are to set up a contract with a company, what I do first is that I take a look at what kind of job we are offered, then we can agree on a price, and then I get the right people for the job. I get accommodation, everything.

9. Do you cooperate with companies all over the country or just within the region?

I travel across the country. It depends on who calls me. They find information either from an acquaintance or on the internet.

10. What do you think is the fundamental difference between the life in Vietnam and here in the Czech Republic?

From the economic point of view – the standard of living here is generally much higher. However, for some people in Vietnam, there's 85 million people there, some people enjoy on the contrary higher standard of living than here. But mostly the people who have lower living standards are those living in the country. They constitute 60 % of such population.

11. What are the most difficult cultural differences the Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic have to cope with. What bugs them most about living in the CR?

The Vietnamese nation is quite open. More than Czechs are. If someone has a wedding in Vietnam, or someone dies, the entire street comes, there's more people. There are only a few here, it's smaller. Here, when a celebration takes place, a smaller number of people. But in Vietnam, there's more friendship I think. In Bohemia, what bothers them most I don't know. Racism, but it is unlikely ... That is a question. I don't know what they mind here. Well, it's more their fault because they didn't learn Czech. When somebody somewhere is kind of fooling around and they don't understand they might be angry without a reason because they just misunderstood it. But racism, or when someone curses, that's a larger number of Czechs. It's everywhere like this. There's different people everywhere. But I cannot say that the Czechs are bad. They are nice people.

12. What about Vietnamese and Czech traditions? Do you cherish any?

Single or young Vietnamese, they don't maintain Czech traditions, but there are families like mine where the children were born here, so now we cherish all the customs, like the Czechs do, we make no distinction, we buy presents at Christmas, Christmas tree, like the Czech family. But there are Vietnamese who live here alone and they don't celebrate holidays. They are people who go to work and celebrate holidays at the hostel. That's not much for them.

13. Do you think that the Vietnamese are closed, isolated community? Why is this so?

I don't think it is a closed community. Because they want to have Czech friends or mates too, but the problem is that they cannot speak Czech. They are be afraid to say something maybe. But our community is not as closed as everyone thinks. It is a mistake. They (Czechs) don't keep in touch with them and anyone who sees a Vietnamese, so he says it must be another stallholder. And moreover the Vietnamese doesn't understand and if he can't speak Czech, he can't come to visit anybody or when they are together it's offending for them that they can't speak Czech. But we already have been here a bit longer, normally we have at any moment someone visiting us. We pay visits to someone quite often. It is not a closed community, like everyone says.

14. What do you think of the huge Vietnamese market halls like SAPA in Prague, where the Vietnamese live in a very isolated way?

It is isolated because there are Vietnamese, at these Vietnamese marketplaces, or somewhere in Brno, in Olomouc street, because they mostly trade among themselves. Other Vietnamese come and meet them there in order to trade goods. Well, they are there from morning till evening, but I think that in the evening after work, they come to visit their neighbours. It is not completely closed community like everyone thinks.

15. How does the younger generation of Vietnamese who were born and grew up here differ from the older one?

The younger generation, our children, they are Czechs, they won't be the real Vietnamese. They will be something like Czech citizens with Vietnamese nationality. The older generation is different, because they left (Vietnam) as adults. So they remember and keep Vietnamese culture and Vietnamese language, everything. So they still feel the urge to come back home. But for the younger generation, they were born here, know nothing about Vietnamese culture and literature or poem, do not speak Vietnamese, or don't know what it means. They were born here, have attended kindergartens, schools, they have command of literature, culture... They will be of Vietnamese nationality so it is probably better for them to stay here. I don't know, we will see. It's different for everyone. But mostly they are planning to stay here.

16. In what way did the crisis affect the migration of Vietnamese to the CR and their employment?

The crisis affected the Vietnamese community a lot of. It was a hard blow for all of us. The majority does business and the sales have decreased, labourers have no jobs and those who have reduced salaries. They went down quite a bit. Much less they come in the Czech Republic. Or sometimes even stop. Only those who have a wife, husband, children, family. Otherwise, entrepreneurs stopped come here at all, because don't get a visa. Even if get a visa, what would they doing here? Unemployed. We haven't all year, since last year, we have not brought not a single worker.

17. How do you help Vietnamese who lost their job? Does the agency take care of them in some way?

I help what I can. First I take care of my own people, who I brought here and who has worked for me years. And then, if I can get some work ... before their relatives or some friends here so I rented a house somewhere, we bought the food, we bought some sort of

TV and some textbooks so they can learn Czech. So I do help, but not everyone. But as an agency, we help in Prague, who don't have clothes, the food we gave the Vietnamese community and who has the biggest problem can come by at SAPA for clothing and food. It is not a luxury clothing, but to them it is enough for the winter, it is not exceptional food, but we have such noodles for them to make them survive. And we tried, we also held a conference and several meetings at the Embassy of Vietnam to help people who lost here work.

18. How do you prepare Vietnamese who are to come here for a life in a different culture?

Well, I tell everybody that they must learn Czech. If you want to understand here and if he wants to live here, he must first learn Czech, and then learn the Czech culture and habits. Learn Czech first and then look and learn - how to behave here and live here. And if they don't want to learn Czech, that is unacceptable, no way. Learning at work or somewhere with help of acquaintances.

19. Do you think that the demand for Vietnamese workers will increase when the crisis is over?

In my opinion, when the crisis is over, there will be interest. Because I know from what I have experienced here, our people are hardworking, the problem is that they can't speak Czech. They themselves sometime on the weekend or evening finish some work and do overtime. I do not see a problem. They are usually very satisfied with our people. I think as soon as the crisis ends, I think it will not be as two years ago, there won't be so big recruitment. But some companies will surely start take on some of our people.

20. From what I have read many Vietnamese have been complaining about bureaucratic obstacles that hinder their business, employment or securing their stay in the country. What do you think of it? Is it such a big problem?

Well it depends. Who and where. Sometimes Vietnamese are used, they are not experienced, and some officials can do problems. But I think they mostly don't have a problem. Sometimes they walk around marketplaces and deliberately make trouble. All entrepreneurs, Vietnamese and Czech, have the same troubles.

21. In your opinion, why was Vietnam excluded from the list of countries eligible for a green card?

I don't know. The Green Card. This is kind a diplomatic issue. I think it is not very important. Because if the foreigner gets a Green Card and there is no job for him, so what is it good for? Since the last year only a few - about four green cards, have been issued here. They are not important. These cards or work permits are in my opinion almost the same. If a foreigner has work permit, he can go to work where the permit is valid. And if he has a green card, he must go to work the same as stated in the green card. This is just such a diplomatic issue, where they cause problems. When the Vietnamese don't have a green card somewhere, like here, they get a work permit from the employment office so they can go to work. The fact that the Ukrainians can get these cards and Vietnamese can't, who cares. It depends on the company or the owner of the company, who they want. If the Ukrainians will have a green card, but the owner does not want the Ukrainians but the Vietnamese, so the Vietnamese gets the job, right? It is not so very important.

22. 80 % of Vietnamese in the CR are trade licence holders. What kind of business do they carry on mostly?

80 % of the Vietnamese here hold a trade license, say, but in fact, some of them are here for the sake of stay, but they don't do business so much. It is said and everyone knows that these are businessmen with no money, no capital. There are entrepreneurs, trading, doing business , but also there is a lot of those, I do not what proportion they make up, but a lot of business people who go to work. Because the law actually makes it possible. If the foreigner has a trade certificate, the employment office don't care if it is a trader or not. They get a work permit and the tradesman go to work.

23. What do you think is the biggest problem as far as employing Vietnamese in Czech companies is concerned?

I think the biggest problem is that Vietnam can't speak Czech, so they don't understand in their jobs. This is the biggest obstacle. I do it like this: If there is a larger number of people, so we place there one Vietnamese who can speak Czech. If there is only a few people, we mostly sort problems over the phone ...?? Or they have to learn the basics or when we discuss things, it is usually over the phone. There is always an interpreter or someone who can speak Czech. In TON we also had an interpreter.

24. What is the relationship of the Vietnamese towards organisations that support their community here in the CR, such as the Czech-Vietnamese Society, Club Hanoi, etc.?

Yeah, the Czech-Vietnamese Society. Mr. Winter. He travels a lot to Vietnam. The Vietnamese call him a father. I don't know him personally. But I think he helps, or let me put it this way, he writes about us, so people here view us from a different perspective. Well, everywhere in the world, if a lot of people do good, no one cares but if one does something wrong, it's everywhere.

25. How else, except via employment agencies, do the Vietnamese look for jobs in the CR?

Either somewhere via their compatriots - this is better for them. They can look after or watch over some stores or they can help somewhere in a shop or restaurant. Searching for a job in a Czech company on their own, it is harder for them, because unless someone helps them, they can't manage on their own. After the crisis began here, the employment office won't give them permit anyway. Definitely not a new one and as for the extension - it depends on what the situation is. If there is a company where the Czechs won't get or where they don't want to work and the owner claims that he can't do without Vietnamese, because nobody else will do the job, the employment office must allow this after some time, after some two months, unless the company employs some Czechs, so they will have to extend permits for Vietnamese. Work renewals I mean, not new ones, no one will get them today.

26. What about the Voluntary Returns Project. Did many Vietnamese take advantage of it?

I used to translate at the Foreign Police department. Occasionally someone wanted voluntarily go home. Who had no chance and saw that it was hopeless, had absolutely no future, so he applied and voluntarily went home. Not many, but a few hundred for sure. I'm not sure, but certainly not more than a thousand. You know, they've come to work here all the way from Vietnam, major problem was also a Czech visa, so they wanted here survive the crisis at any price and hoped that in future they should then have a job.

27. What do you think of the Vietnamese who violate the Czech law and commit crimes. Do they damage your reputation?

I myself am strongly against this. I am mostly angry and I can't stand those who grow marijuana or make unstamped cigarettes somewhere. But not everyone does this and everyone is responsible for himself. They also wrote in the Vietnamese press that this here is mustn't be done. You know, we cannot prevent this. It's sad for our community, but what can we do. It's bad. We're strongly against. Drugs or fake clothing, it is not allowed. If they want to live here and for the next generation, they must obey the law. But money can do everything, yeah ... Every day it's mentioned somewhere and for us it's sad. We also write to the embassy: Don't do this, for us it's a great shame and also for the next generation. There is nothing good about it, but we cannot stop it.

28. How do you see the future of Czech-Vietnamese relations? How will they develop?

I don't think that for the next generation it will be a problem. For the older generation it is an obstacle that they can't speak Czech. I think that in ten or twenty years it'll be different. I believe in better days. It won't be like now. Now, the older generation of Czechs looks different. Today, the whole world is kinda more open. Today, you can live here and there, for a year you can live somewhere far away. This is open world. I strongly believe that it will be better. The next generation will not have a problem with the language. They will speak not only Czech, but also German and English. There is no problem to travel today. Before that the Czechs didn't travel anywhere. If a foreigner, somewhere, comes here for a week or a month, just for a trip – who cares? But if an older Czech can see that this one person might live here for a long time, so it probably will not do a good feeling. But I think that for the next generation will not be a problem. They are a better society. You know, only a few foreigners used to be here, or even other things – Asian food, or seafood people didn't know. They see around them only Czechs, Slovaks. But there are Vietnamese, Cubans here too. Before there used to go to work here, they had contracts only for three or four years and then go home. Now it is different. Today, the children were born here, go with Czech kids to school, so it is not a problem. Something like racism there will be always, it is everywhere in the world. But it will be better.

29. How have the lives of Vietnamese living in the CR changed during the last ten years?

Well in the last ten years their lives have changed - before the stallholders earned a lot more, they had more opportunities to earn money. Today almost everyone here owns an Asian bistro, restaurant or high street stores. It facilitated their lives, but to earn money is much harder. In earlier days sales were bigger, people were more interested. They paid

somewhere in the stand less money than in the store. Now they pay a lot of money for rent, the electricity, for everything, for heating. And today the sales are declining, as supermarkets have grown everywhere, so the competition here is great. So everyone is happy that he survives.

30. Is discrimination and racism to be seen in the mediation of work for Vietnamese people?

Well as for work, someone told me that they were calling him names. I myself never experienced this. Sometime we solved it, but things like this we haven't experienced in our agency yet. Maybe someone in Prague or in the bigger city, but not here in Jihlava. I went around the hostel, where are my people and everyone said that they like him. No problem. So far, no one complained.

31. Do you know anything about the history of Czech-Vietnamese relations?

I know. Vietnamese people started to come during the Communist era. First they were poor students. They were excellent students. And then after the Vietnam War started to come apprentices. And then in the eighties started to come workers. Some came back home. Well, after the revolution some Vietnamese worked here and their contracts finished and the law allowed them to make a trade licence. So they began to do a business, and when they started to prosper here so everyone wanted to have a brother or sister here to keep the stall together. Then it started to pour other people here.

32. It is said that the Czech side abused Vietnamese as a cheap labour. Do you perceive this as a wrong?

Maybe they do somewhere else, but I do not think so. I didn't experience this.

**APPENDIX P VII: EMPLOYEE SURVEY IN TON A.S.
QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)**

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Employing Vietnamese Citizens as Seen
by Employees of TON a.s.**

Dear employees,

I am a 3rd year student of Tomas Bata University in Zlín and I would like to take up this opportunity to ask you to fill in a short questionnaire, the aim of which is to identify your personal observations and experience of working with the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and to assess the possibility of its further use and development. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and the results will be used merely for evaluation of experience with employment of Vietnamese citizens in the company. Your opinion is very important. Please, try to be as honest and as truthful as possible when responding to the following questions. Thank you very much for your time and assistance and let me wish you a pleasant day.

David Doan, a student at UTB in Zlín.

Read the following questions carefully and select the option that most closely matches your opinion:

1. What is your general approach to the Vietnamese community in the CR?

I welcome it I don't care I mind it It's a threat I don't know
Different answer:

3. How often did you encounter Vietnamese citizens while at work?

Every day 3-5x a week 1-2x a week 1x month or less Never

4. What was your experience with Vietnamese citizens in the company?

Very Good Good Bad Very bad None Different answer:

5. Have you ever happened to have established a friendly relationship with a Vietnamese citizen?

Yes No

**6. Regarding Vietnamese citizens how were you satisfied with the following:
(1 = very satisfied, 4 = very dissatisfied)**

Quality of work 1 2 3 4 Amount of work done 1 2 3 4
Attendance 1 2 3 4 Responsiveness to instructions 1 2 3 4
Willingness and reliability 1 2 3 4 Overall approach 1 2 3 4

7. Please tick up to 4 areas that were most problematic in relation to the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam:

Communication Qualifications and skills Work management Cultural differences
Cooperation Motivation Transport Housing Knowledge Other:

8. Speaking of Vietnamese citizens, what particularly captured my attention was their (you can tick multiple answers)

Perseverance and diligence Skilfulness Intelligence Natural ability, talent
Reliability Ability to learn Low absence Discipline Productivity Other:

9. Cooperation with the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam:

Suits me Doesn't suit me particularly on account of:

10. What bothers me most about the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is:

11. What I appreciate most about the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is:

12. The cooperation with the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was beneficial.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

13. In the future, I would consider further cooperation with the Vietnamese citizens.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Don't know Different answer:

14. In your opinion, how could be facilitated their integration into the company?

15. In your opinion, how could the use by citizens of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam you improve in TON a.s.?

Please fill in basic personal information:

Gender: Male Female

Age: 18 or under 18-25 25-40 40-60 60 or above

Your highest level of education completed:

Basic Trained Trained with GCSE Secondary Higher professional
University

How long have you been working in TON a.s.?

1-2 years 2-5 years 5-10 years 10 years or more

Here you can include any other information you consider important (comments, recommendations, suggestions or questions that interest you personally:

Thank you for your assistance.

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