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Paper title: Before, Now and Then: Czech refugees in Vienna after 1968

Abstract: After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which ended up Prague spring in August 1968, thousands of Czech (and Slovak) citizens went into exile. Out of estimated 162 000 people, who came to Austria within the next few weeks, some 12 000 refugees decided to stay in Austria. The majority of them chose Vienna to be their new home. My paper deals with this group of Czech refugees and analyses a process of their integration into Austrian majority and how the process, which they had to undergo, changed their national identity.

The paper is based on a field research among Czechs in Vienna, which I made in 2011. I used a method of oral history and conducted 12 interviews with 2 different exile groups. The first one was a group of people who came to the Austrian capital after the Soviet invasion in 1968 (film director Zuzana Brejchova, writer Milan Racek, etc) and the second were people, dissidents, who were forced to leave the country, during the State Security action named Asanace, after they signed the document Charter 77 (Premysl Janyr Jr., Jiri Chmel etc.). The data gathered during the research helped me to answer following research questions: How well do this people integrate into the Austrian majority? Do they feel as "insiders" after 40 years of living in Vienna? How the integration process has changed their national identity? What about their children, the new generation - are they still considering themselves to be the Czechs? And how the fall of Iron Curtain and the opening of borders have changed a situation of Czech community in Austria? Answers to these questions are contained in my paper, which represents a part of my master thesis: Viennese Czechs After 40 Years: National Identity and the Process of Integration in the Narrative of Czech Refugees after 1968.