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## **Inter-ethnic conflicts (their causes and effects with regard to theory and empirical research)<sup>1</sup>**

2002 – 2003

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### **Extended summary**

#### **Research focus and objective:**

The presented study is related to previous material<sup>2</sup> on this subject and expands it to include different perspectives. Whereas the introductory study focused on the clarification of basic terms and summarised the situation in the Czech Republic and the world, this work focuses on the following areas:

- greater attention is devoted to the reactions of law enforcement bodies for inter-ethnic conflicts (analysis of judicial records)
- schedules from police sources were supplemented and processed in greater detail<sup>3</sup> up to 2001
- greater attention has been paid to the personality of offenders for this type of crime (development of various cases based on psychological examinations of offenders in prisons)
- for the first time a section has been included examining the depiction of inter-ethnic conflicts in the media
- a survey has been conducted of the opinions and attitudes of police officers – students of the Police Academy of the Czech Republic concerning the issue related to the relevant subject.

The monitored subject allowed various methods to be employed in addressing the research goal, all of which are incomplete, although we hope that this fragmentation will be reduced in the overall aggregation. The research analyses were performed on three main levels: legal, social and psychological, and sought to elucidate the causes of this phenomenon.

#### **Theoretical section**

This seeks to outline certain theories attributable to the relevant problem. These theories also make it possible to locate the research in a broader social framework. The core of the discussion does not comprise individual, albeit essential moments influencing inter-ethnic conflicts, such as unemployment, group dynamics etc., even if these are taken into account. The aim of this section is to demonstrate how the aggregate of social relations can produce a mature subject, i.e. a free person capable of respecting the freedom of others, and the circumstances that can prevent this development, particularly in a situation where since

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<sup>1</sup> Štěchová, M., Danielová, K., Jarkovská, L., Kotulan, P., Štěch, O., Urban, L., Veverková, Interetnické konflikty (jejich příčiny a dopady z pohledu teorie a empirických sond). Praha : IKSP, 2004. 163 stran.

<sup>2</sup> Štěchová, M.: Interetnické konflikty jako důsledek rasové nevráživosti (Inter-Ethnic Conflicts as a Consequence of Racial Aversion). Praha: IKSP, 2001. 55 stran.

<sup>3</sup> Annually published Reports on extremism in the Czech Republic. Published by the Czech Ministry of the Interior since 1996.

the second world war Europe has witnessed increased emphasis on conditions for democratic participation.

The study draws in some depth upon the theories of T. Adorno, Oesterreich, E. Fromm, A. Honneth, T. Biegel, Z. Baumann, Willems, H. Lööwe and marginally also other authors working in related areas. Selected empirical research related to this issue is also presented.

The intellectual sources for the presented theories are on the one hand social psychology and on the other social philosophy. Inter-ethnic conflicts are not merely a matter of Roma and skinheads; they concern the whole of the society in which they occur. In the first section, theory seeks to explain this phenomenon from an aggregate of social, economic and political conditions, including the way in which they are reflected in family life and thus also determine the development of children's personalities and attitudes. Various distortions and lack of esteem experienced in the course of the development may also be projected on ethnic minorities (although the mechanism is the same as if political or religious opponents were involved). The chief aim of the second section is to specify and classify the problem, examine its various aspects and key factors (unemployment, group influence and other factors) in closer conjunction with empirical research. The typology of offenders shows the unclear boundary between ideological hatred and „common“ xenophobia.

The basic question remains why minorities and foreigners become victims. In a local context, the adjustment problems of victims clearly play a role. The opinion exists that minorities and foreigners are rejected because they differ in appearance and lifestyle. Fundamental problems arise with regard to tolerance in communal life – minorities and foreigners behaviour is „against local norms“. It is also the result of life in a homogenous environment which has not encountered other cultures. Openness to the world is not yet fully established and ethnic pluralism is not institutionalised. Uncertainty in contact is closely linked to attitudes of hatred towards foreigners: from a psychological perspective, antipathy towards Roma, asylum seekers and immigrants is expressed by people with low self-confidence and those who are suspicious and uncertain in their contact with others. It is also true that the more different foreigners look, the stronger the aversion against them; and the more suspicious a person is, the more he or she explains his or her motives by economic and other surrogate indicators.

The multi-layered nature of the question means that it is difficult to formulate an unequivocal opinion on the phenomenon's causes as it is presented by the literature. The widest range of psychological, social, economic and legal policy factors play a role, from those in the family and school to a nationwide context.

### **Analysis of Czech Police records:**

The comprehensive analysis was designed to produce an overview of the extent and character of the monitored phenomenon in the Czech Republic. The data for the analysis were obtained from police statistics from 1997 to 2001. These statistics include a survey of cases where there was a suspicion of an extremist sub-text to the crime or misdemeanour, including cases motivated by racial and national intolerance, regardless of their ultimate criminal-legal qualification. Cases were selected from this survey (a total of 992) which involved conflict between persons of different ethnic backgrounds and which were motivated by inter-ethnic hatred. The following characteristics were monitored in the individual cases:

**the circumstances of the crime:** region, place in which the crime occurred (public space, restaurant, gambling house, school, residential house, train or railway station, municipal public transport, prison), year, month, day (weekday or otherwise), hour at which the crime was committed,

**characteristics of the crime:** physical violence, verbal aggression, shouting of Nazi slogans, writing of Nazi slogans, use of Nazi symbols by the offender,

**consequences of the crime:** injury, fight, damage to property, death of the victim,

**characteristics of first three offenders:** sex, age, more detailed characteristics (skinhead, punk, Roma, Vietnamese, Italian,...), size of group of offenders.

**characteristics of first three victims:** sex, age and ethnicity of victims.

The aim of the analysis was to describe in detail racially motivated activity and ascertain the changes that it underwent between 1997 and 2001, to find the relation between its specific characteristics and finally to determine the relations that exist between racially motivated activities and other socio-economic and socio-pathological indicators. Statistical methods comprised the use of a correlation analysis, regression analysis and a chi-square test of independence.

We found that the number of racially motivated crimes is growing slightly year upon year. Whereas in 1997, 139 cases were recorded, over the five monitored years to 2001 this figure rose to 228. The number of racially motivated crimes has thus risen by 65 % during the period of five years. The increase in the number of registered racially motivated crimes may be explained, among other things, by the heightened vigilance of the police and its greater awareness of this type of criminal activity, as well as the change in the methodology of record-keeping for such crimes. In the context of overall crime, racially motivated crimes are not very common. They are far from comprising even 1 % of general crime. Nevertheless, it is a serious crime that creates tension in relations between ethnic groups and engenders an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among ethnic minorities.

These crimes are generally committed by a single offender, and in other cases in a small group, most often of two to three persons. The vast majority of perpetrators of racially motivated crimes were men aged between 15 and 25. Conflicts between people of different ethnic groups generally occurs in public spaces. Public spaces may be characterised by the fact that people generally meet there who do not know each other, and during such meetings the most important aspect by which to judge the other person is his/her appearance – i.e. the colour of his/her skin. The fact that most crimes which have a suspected racial motivation occur in public spaces may be partially explained by the contact theory of racism (Wallace 1999), according to which people with racist and xenophobic feelings usually do not have personal knowledge of the members of ethnic minorities or immigrants.

Contrary to expectations, only a small section of offenders belonged – according to police sources – to the skinhead movement, and the proportion of skinheads involved in these incidents continues to fall over the years. This can be partly explained by changes to their movement as a result of stricter criminal sanctions for their offences, as a result of which they are rather forced to conceal their identity. Roma were the most frequent victims of racially motivated attacks. Almost all monitored cases included verbal aggression, which is quite often also accompanied by physical violence. Local differences in the incidence of inter-ethnic violence can mostly be attributed to the number of Roma living in the region.

## **Analysis of judicial records:**

Information on the hearing and judgement of racially motivated crimes (hereinafter inter-ethnic conflicts) was obtained from criminal records lent by district and circuit courts for the purposes of their analysis. This concerned criminal cases that had been completed between 2000 and 2002. Thirty-three criminal records were analysed. According to the monitored aspects, the criminal records were analysed chiefly with the aim of determining:

- the accused's behaviour which was characterised as inter-ethnic conflict, and which was prosecuted as a criminal act, its result, causes and circumstances under which it was committed, influence of alcohol or other addictive substances,
- legal qualification used for such behaviour, concurrence with other crimes,
- sentences and protective measures imposed, or other termination of the criminal case by the district courts,
- procedural approach before the granting of court judgements and in particular the duration of proceedings before the criminal prosecution is begun, from the beginning of the criminal prosecution up to the court's judgement coming into legal force and the duration of the judicial proceedings, method by which the courts reach their decision and the form of their judgement,
- any delays in individual stages of the proceedings and their main causes,
- petition activity of public prosecutors and their reaction to variances in court judgements,
- application of proper legal remedies against decisions of courts of first instance and their outcome according to judgements of the appeal courts.

Research results: Most of those prosecuted for racially motivated crimes were male, Czech citizens of non-Roma extraction, although some Roma were also prosecuted. Their average age was very low, with a high proportion of juveniles. Offenders generally came from lower socio-cultural backgrounds, with a preponderance of unemployed people and apprentices (in the case of juveniles).

Crimes were overwhelmingly committed by a single accused or two co-accused persons. In two cases, larger groups were recorded of seven co-accused (although these crimes were not planned and organised in advance). A high level of repeat offenders was recorded, including serious cases of homogenous relapses and crimes committed in the probation period stipulated by other court judgements.

The attitude of those charged with crimes was non-critical; they placed the blame on the victims and their provocation and only in isolated cases did they express any regret over their actions. None of them admitted to belonging to or having sympathy for extremist movements (skinhead movement). Expert psychiatric knowledge for assessing criminal responsibility was often used (even overly, without evaluating other relevant facts) with regard to those accused who were under the influence of alcohol at the time the crime was committed.

The most common victims of the monitored crimes were Roma from younger age groups, with a high proportion of unemployed. On the other hand, Roma were also charged with attacks on white victims. The crimes were always unprovoked by the victims and were motivated by hatred or intolerance. Victims also included Jews, blacks and Arabs, although no yellow-skinned Asians or citizens from the republics of the former USSR were among their number.

We can be encouraged by the fact that in more than half the cases the prosecution was begun within 14 days of the offence being committed, thereby establishing one of the basic preconditions for the rapid elucidation of decisive facts and further proceedings. The duration of judicial proceedings in the monitored cases was lower than the national average for both decisive criminal acts in 2002. Any delays in the judicial proceedings were primarily the result of lack of discipline on the part of the accused and witnesses. The accused most often received a conditional prison sentence, with the option of community service sentences also often applied. Unconditional prison sentences made up 12.7 % of all sentences imposed. The monitored cases also saw alternative methods applied – conditional suspension of the prosecution, settlement and termination of the prosecution. However, in not one case was the possibility used of imposing commensurate restrictions and obligations on the accused, particularly in cases where the offence was committed under the influence of alcohol and the accused displayed a tendency to alcohol abuse.

In some cases the police can be faulted for playing down certain cases at the beginning and regarding them as minor offences and passing them on to be dealt with by the local authority's misdemeanours committees. We consider the main fault of the courts to lie in the fact that courts did not find their expression for statements insulting the victim's race, despite these being expressly stated in the judgement's summing up.

### **Findings obtained from psychological examinations and psychiatric expert opinions:**

Psychological examinations were conducted on eight perpetrators of offences with proven racial motivation. They comprised seven men and one woman. The examinations were conducted by a psychologist by means of conversations focusing on offenders' past histories and by an array of tests in 2003. In some cases, it was possible to have recourse to criminal records. Eight psychiatric opinions were also analysed (i.e. all that were available in the analysed records). It was found that all these perpetrators of crimes related to inter-ethnic conflicts were well below average intelligence and that their crimes often ensued from quite primitive motives. Most rejected any idea of guilt, or belittled it or transferred it to other people or circumstances. When asked to assess themselves, it became clear that they suffered from inferiority complexes, which they compensated for by means of self-centredness and by attaching themselves to their reference group (generally skinheads) and its ideology. These complexes clearly derive from emotional deprivation in their families, and from an inability to affirm themselves in a legitimate manner in society. Their family background was markedly heterogeneous, but in not one of the monitored cases was it „harmonious“. In half the cases they grew up in broken homes and developed problematic relationships with their mother or father. Their economic and social situation was generally on the border of the lowest level and complete underclass.

These individuals had only a superficial grasp of ideology. For some, we can say that the crime had no ideological motive whatsoever. For others this factor was present to a greater or lesser extent, on a scale of abusive comments aimed at Roma (which closely copy the general level of prejudices) up to activities within the skinhead movement and other similar organisations. Yet we cannot say that this ever involved the deliberate and consistent advocacy of this ideology. It rather involved the use of symbols, attendance at concerts and drinking bouts. Everything was subsumed within the group, and all acts implicitly contained the expectation of group acknowledgement and praise.

For supplementary purposes, we also studied expert psychiatric opinions from judicial records. Eight such opinions were available. Of this group, two crimes were committed in a group of two, while the other offenders acted alone. Most offenders had committed previous offences, often in the form of misdemeanours. The crimes committed by these offenders (of whom one was a woman) were very similar in nature. The offenders, generally under the influence of alcohol, usually first verbally abused Roma and then attacked them physically (in one case the victim was a Roma woman and in another a Tunisian shop assistant). The average age of the offenders was 34. Ascertained education: two had graduated from secondary school; the others were skilled workers, with one having only elementary education. All the offenders lacked any sort of family background, with most being single or divorced. Dependencies were ascertained in almost all cases: smoking, very often alcohol, most of them denied drug addiction, or this was not ascertained. Psychiatric past histories were generally not detected; there was one case of short-term unconsciousness, one of epilepsy and aggression including a stay in a psychiatric facility.

### **Depiction of inter-ethnic conflict in the media:**

Research into inter-ethnic conflicts also included an analysis of their media depiction in the Czech press. The aim of the analysis was chiefly to map the Czech media scene with regard to the depiction of inter-ethnic conflicts (in a Czech environment usually consisting of conflicts between skinheads and Roma) and to identify any thought, reasoning and language stereotypes which are symptomatic of reporting on inter-ethnic conflicts and their protagonists, stereotypes in the interpretation of the „reason“ for the assailants, their placement in the overall context etc. The selected materials were processed through a qualitative analysis of the documents. In the spirit of the qualitative research strategy, the specific monitored categories arose gradually during the thorough reading of articles and as part of the analysis itself. We were interested in social categorisation in inter-cultural contact, i.e. how persons or certain groups are referred to – in our case how victims and offenders of specific inter-ethnic conflicts are written about. We also analysed other aspects of inter-ethnic conflicts depicted by the media – the circumstances of the conflict, journalistic interpretation of the „reasons“ for the conflict, its placing in the overall context etc.

In order to analyse the depiction of inter-ethnic conflicts in the media we used press articles from 2002 which refer to specific inter-ethnic conflicts in the Czech Republic – i.e. to specific cases. These materials were obtained on an ongoing basis from two sources: first from the monitoring of Czech press journalism and columnists from the national and regional press, and secondly from the ICSP clippings service.

The research group contains newspaper and magazine articles from 2002 which provide information on specific inter-ethnic conflicts in the Czech Republic. We analysed information from the press concerning racially motivated crimes which had either just been committed or which were the subject of judicial proceedings. These generally involved new facts and circumstances or information about the case. A criterion for their selection was that the racist motive for the crime had either been proved or the possibility thereof was seriously discussed in the media. A final total of 397 articles were analysed. The **first and main group** numbering 349 articles was divided into six sub-groups and included information on a total of 65 specific cases in which inter-ethnic spite was mentioned as a motivation. The overwhelming majority (36 cases/254 articles; i.e. 55% of all cases referred to, and 72% of the articles from the first group) concentrated on events where the racially motivated crime or misdemeanour had been committed by a person (or prosecution had been brought against that

person) of Czech nationality belonging to the Czech majority, and where the injured party was a Roma. In terms of frequency, this was followed by racism on the part of the Czech majority/skins against another nationality, while a number of articles cover so-called reverse racism, i.e. racially motivated offences committed by Roma against the Czech majority. However, this was chiefly caused by the seriousness (and therefore attractive to the media) of one of four cases of reverse racism perpetrated by Roma. The selection of articles also turned up very strange cases which did not correspond to any of the listed types. For example, there was a case where Vietnamese sold records of racist songs about the Vietnamese, or several local cases where Czech skinheads in the Sudetenland disseminated anti-Czech leaflets. The **second group** comprised articles that treated racism, Nazism or extreme right-wing movements in a general way and where specific cases were only mentioned by way of illustration or as a listing of cases.

Research results: Previous ICSP research projects had shown that Roma are the most frequent victims of racially motivated violence in the Czech Republic. The media depiction of this minority group is from many perspectives interpreted very differently. Roma and activists defending their rights often consider the media as being responsible for a negative and one-sided portrayal of Roma and as one of the causes of anti-Roma attitudes on the part of the majority society. This, conversely, sees the media as being pro-Roma. The public perceives the media as part of a hypocritical conspiracy of human rights activists, intellectuals and cowardly politicians who avoid „truthfully“ addressing and solving the problems that co-existence with Roma causes for the majority. It is evident that the interpretation of the media statements is not clear-cut in any one case.

Nevertheless, most experts agree that the Czech media does not greatly contribute to improving relations between the majority and the Roma minority. Some are of the opinion that it directly „pours oil onto the fire“ and that Roma are not given sufficient space to comment on issues covered by the media. The analysis confirmed this. A major problem are imprecise statements that distort and conceal the real nature of conflicts with a racial sub-text. This primarily involves treating the problem not as a social matter but as a war between skins and Roma. Secondly, there is the presentation of attacks as equal conflicts („fight“ instead of „attack“). Thirdly, (constantly in relation to Roma) there are references to criminality and general problems as the cause of the attack (it is sufficient to recall that the Nazis, the inspiration for our „white warriors“ liquidated the Jews, who stood out for exactly the opposite reason, in order to demonstrate the absurdity of this thesis).

Most newspaper and magazine articles from our selected group covered inter-ethnic conflicts that had just happened or which were the subject of judicial proceedings at the relevant time. They thus form part of the news, which should by definition be objective, neutral, without authorial evaluation or comment. They often adopt the tabloid style of a so-called black chronicle. „Objective“ news should certainly avoid the characteristics of a black chronicle as a genre. Nevertheless, this type of journalistic work does not occur only in tabloid titles (e.g. Blesk), but also in the so-called serious press. The use of inappropriate expressions may result in the events described being trivialised and belittled, and thereby to the dangerous banalisation of evil, which inter-ethnic conflicts most definitely are.

The research also found that, when giving information about inter-ethnic conflicts where the suspect or accused has yet to be convicted, journalists do not always consistently abide by the principle of the presumption of innocence, which is one of the most fundamental principles of criminal proceedings and criminal law in general.

The analysis of the press revealed an interesting characteristic of racially motivated crime. At a local level there may be a number of linked attacks and retaliation for which it is difficult retroactively to say who was the initiator, who the culprit and who the victim, just as sometimes there remains a question mark over the racial motive for crimes. This type of action and counter-action with a racial sub-text could be called reactive racism.

A negative factor is undoubtedly the occasional reference to the asocial habits of Roma as something that almost legitimises and justifies their attack in the media, the so-called serious press not excluded. This may involve relating the opinions of neighbours of a family that has been attacked and the colourful description of their life, drawing attention to their customs etc.

It clearly cannot be said that the media only creates a negative image of Roma or foreigners. The problem comes when they write about Roma or foreigners without giving them the opportunity to comment on the matter themselves. Foreigners are commonly the subject of statements from police spokespersons, officials or community representatives. The perspective of the protagonists of these texts, i.e. the foreigners themselves, is absent from the articles. Balance and comprehensiveness are very important when providing information about Roma and other minorities, and not only in relation to inter-ethnic conflicts.

### **Interviews with Roma:**

The aim of the semi-standardised interviews was to establish broader contexts for the issue of inter-ethnic conflicts and to obtain subjective accounts of possible discrimination in our society from Roma themselves. We went to people who due to their education and employment are also able to see the problem from the other side, are more objective and have a certain distance from these sensitive problems and opinion on them. We spoke to four men and two women (hereinafter the interviewees) with secondary-school or university education and relevant social status (five worked in state administration and one in the media). The resulting information was the more significant for the fact that it concerned the experiences of educated Roma who obviously behave decently and are cleanly dressed and whose sole handicap with regard to their fellow citizens is the darker colour of their skin.

The situation is particularly serious as regards feelings of discrimination, which the Roma interviewees had sensed without exception since childhood and which was not overly dependent on their appearance (tidiness). They had perceived discrimination from the earliest age, in school, in the workplace and in other areas. Relations with the police are difficult. However, they also see the presence of so-called „black“ racism. They see the problem of the slow progress of integration as being two-sided.

In the view of the respondents, relations between the police and Roma are problematic. Above all, the police do not trust Roma. Although the situation has improved somewhat it is still not favourable. For example, when a Roma makes a statement it is checked thoroughly, whereas this is often not the case for non-Roma, who are generally believed. It is however a fact that Roma communicate poorly with the police and do not understand police „jargon“. According to police officers themselves at least half of policemen and policewomen look down on Roma. They don't distinguish Roma according to their dress as they know that some Roma have enough money, but believe that they have come by it illegally. The first impression of well-dressed Roma: they are foreigners. When they find that they are not, their



attitude is „God knows where they got it from“. Not only the police but also ordinary people look at Roma with suspicion.

All the respondents have feelings of discrimination in differing degrees. They can be specified as feelings of separation from the surroundings, non-acceptance and lack of understanding (the neighbours of a respondent, for example, put up a high opaque fence so that they could not see her family's poverty, her fellow students did not include her in their group and did not understand why she was different). According to the respondents, during their childhood Roma live in an environment of insults and have feelings of neglect and abandonment in children's society. One respondent, for example, was ordered out of a discotheque and a restaurant, during pregnancy she had insults hurled at her by skinheads etc. She also experienced discrimination in the way her siblings were treated at the employment office (what do you want, you don't have any education, we're all looking after you). Our respondents also came into contact with discrimination in the workplace (people don't want to obey a Roma), in politics (when a Roma joins a political party he or she is not expected to be seen too much; apparently this could put off potential voters).

According to the respondents, the majority do not allow Roma to realise themselves and do not want Roma in higher positions. They appreciate the interest of government and parliament in employment and education. They would welcome positive discrimination in education, although it should be strictly controlled – cooperation with Roma advisers, child care departments etc – so that it is not open to abuse and thereby the further worsening of the image of Roma in the eyes of the majority.

The respondents had a positive view of the Roma press, although they regard it as unfortunate that it is not more widely known. The Roma elite in the management of associations and magazines are, however, seen as corrupt. National majority dailies and television are seen as being slow to pick up on the issue. For example, contributions involving a minority tend to emphasise their backwardness. The only positive Roma aspect mentioned is music. Only the negative side of things is shown; you never get to see a Roma family that lives decently and which is „integrated“.

The respondents provided interesting opinions on the subject of Roma emigration abroad: e.g. that even unsuccessful emigration has a certain benefit for Roma children, who at least for that period of time are able to learn at least the basics of a foreign language and thus have the chance to continue with it when back at home; they realise their possibilities there. In the Czech Republic, Roma do not see the chance to „better themselves“ through hard work. Someone who has work abroad is lucky – multicultural environments do not perceive Roma as different, they are evaluated according to their work and behaviour and not according to the colour of their skin. Many Roma do not perceive emigration as the solution to a certain problem but as an adventure, a journey. Roma also appreciate the fact that abroad they do not have everyday feelings of discrimination, slights and rejection and on the contrary also encounter positive discrimination.

Our respondents universally saw the problem of integration as two-sided. They criticised Roma peoples' failure to make an effort, although on the other hand they stated that the majority is not willing to give Roma a chance, and that it generalises all of them as loafers and cheats.

They also criticised the lack of strategy in social policy, which leads to the abuse of the social system. They would welcome positive discrimination in education, although this should be strictly controlled so that it is not open to abuse and thereby the further worsening of the image of Roma in the eyes of the majority. As inspiration to be applied in the media they mentioned that in American films, for example, in the police, but also in offices and hospitals, whites are shown with dark-skinned work colleagues, and people are accustomed to this and are not surprised by it in reality. People must get used to the fact that Roma work for example behind the counter of a bank, in a shop, and in trams as drivers. On the question of whether a caste system functions among Roma a respondent told us that it did with regard to „degesh“ („worse“ Roma). „Better“ Roma do not eat with them even if they are invited to a wedding. Degesh are not insulted by this, they just accept it as the way things are. If degesh come to a „better“ family, they are given food but the dishes are then thrown away. (!!!)

### **Questionnaire survey at the Czech Police Academy:**

Research goal: main questions addressed by the research performed at the Police Academy at the end of 2003: are Czech police officers racists and xenophobes; if so, why is that the case, where are the roots of this phenomenon and isn't it rather a problem of the whole of society? What scale of values (and attitudes derived therefrom) do Czech police have in general? What sort of relationship do police officers have towards minorities in general? Is there a connection between national (ethnic) background, ways of thinking and acting in offices, and even the crimes committed?

Research methodology: questionnaire and comparison with similar research conducted on a national scale.

Research results: The questions and comparison with other similar research showed that racism is not a problem only of the Czech police but of all society. With the police it is a level of resistance (currently low and also heavily tested) to racist temptations and interpretations of reality. The problem can also be seen in the overall despair at „ethnic – minority“ crime, which creates xenophobic attitudes and emotions. The reluctance to see problems and really solve them (as a result of a certain pseudo-humanism and „bribing“ inter-ethnic co-existence with concessions) infiltrates the whole system from the top downwards. From feelings of apathy, scepticism, lethargy and anger at the despair it is only a short step to open manifestations of intolerance. And police officers often encounter „otherness“ of an ethnic nature. What respondents presented in relation to co-existence with Roma in the Czech Republic stems partially from their own experience. In the matter of resolving problems with Roma in the Czech Republic respondents conformed to the national average. Only a minority advocated radical steps bordering on racism or which could be called fully racist. In line with many experts on the issue, respondents criticised the fact that nobody, not even experts, may know statistical data about the Roma population.

It was shown that the more marked manifestations of xenophobia among the police were closely linked to their immediate work. Most of them regularly come into contact with the members of ethnic minorities, although they say that the level of preparation for these contacts is poor, or totally lacking. A difference is drawn between police's relations with various groups of foreigners and different ethnic groups. A markedly negative attitude was recorded in relation to Roma. More than half of police know a colleague who has a racist outlook, but they have an explanation and excuse for such attitude. Respondents assessed co-existence between the Roma and non-Roma population negatively.

We must consider the efficacy of a system where the vast majority of respondents have no experience of training that prepares them for work with ethnic minorities, and even if they do, they do not consider it applicable in ordinary practice, i.e. situations arise where unprepared people are sent into demanding situations full of racist and xenophobic impulses.