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**Dynamic of semi-legal practices of Russian speaking student migrants in the Czech  
Republic.**

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### **Introduction**

In today's interconnected world, knowledge of only one language is not often considered enough for the highly competitive international labour market. In order to get a "good" work position together with a professional qualification, the daily use of foreign languages is sometimes essential. Likewise, people are encouraged to have particular interpersonal skills, such as flexibility, mobility, intercultural communication, the ability to understand global connections, etc., so as to be successful and build a career. International education is seen as a good way of obtaining all these skills and experience. As claimed by Dr. Goodman, the President of the Institute of International Education (2013): "the careers of students will be global ones, in which they will need to function effectively in multi-national teams. They will need to understand the cultural differences and historical experiences that divide us, as well as the common values and humanity that unite us."

In some cases, a foreign diploma is seen as a passport to status (Waters, 2013). Holding a diploma from a foreign university and, later on, being an international specialist carry great prestige, while working in a multinational company is often seen as a "dream job". These so called "highly-skilled" migrants are considered the "good ones", being part of the global mobile elite and intelligentsia.

Moreover, international students are considered to be those who bring money to the receiving country since, apart from their daily basic expenses, they usually have to pay higher tuition fees

than local students. According to the Institute of International Education (2015), international students contributed approximately \$30.5 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2014/2015 academic year alone.

Universities, language schools, and other educational institutions work to entice international students from all around the world and promote their services and educational programmes. Having a high percentage of international students at a university is also a matter of prestige in some cases. Universities in non-Anglophone destinations make an effort to establish more and more courses and programmes in the English language so that they can compete on the global education market with such key destinations as the USA, Great Britain and Australia.

In addition, immigration laws are usually more favourable in regards to students, as their stay is considered temporary. A student-visa is usually easier to get than, for example, a working-visa, as every country tries to regulate their labour market.

Student migration has been addressed and described by many international academics, politicians, as well as by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. For example, organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD systematically collect data on international students; it was possible to find information on the “stay rates” of international students in the latest OECD reports - the estimated rate is around one in five students on average.

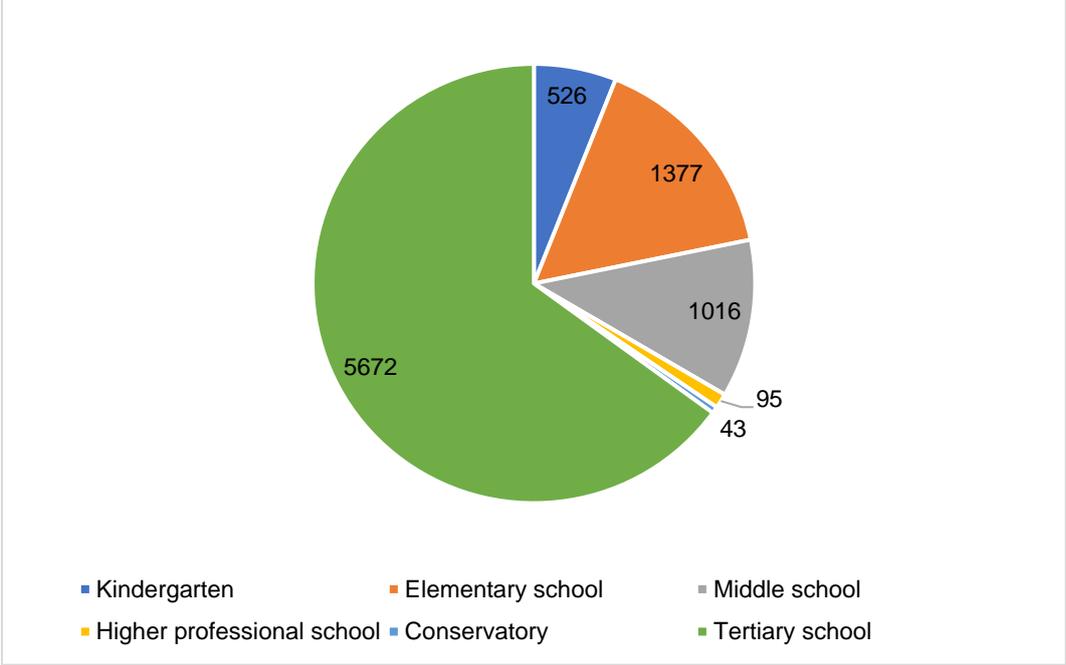
This topic also has received great attention from international anthropologists. For example: Valentin, (2012); Olwig and Sorensen, (2002); Darcy, (2011); and Baas (2010) have all conducted ethnographical researches and contributed to this topic. Furthermore, it's also possible to find contributions on this topic from social geographers such as Skeldon (2011; 1996), King (2011; 2003), Waters (2005), Koser and Salt (1997) and psychologists Tsong and Liu (2009), etc.

But the literature in the Czech language, which deals with the topic of student migration still seems negligible, especially ethnographical studies. Most of the studies related to educational

migration in the Czech Republic usually deal with the process of adaptation to the host country and the new educational system. Other common studies aim to determine the student’s intention to return or to stay, or concentrate on the “brain drain-brain gain” aspect. What is more, foreign students are usually incorporated into bigger studies on migrants in general or on different ethnic minorities.

But given the increasing number of international students and applications for student-visas in the Czech Republic, from my point of view, it deserves larger amounts of attention from scholars. According to the Czech Ministry of the Interior, education is the most common reason for coming to the Czech Republic. Russian and Kazakh citizens are among the top applicants for long-term visas and long-term residence permits on the basis of education.

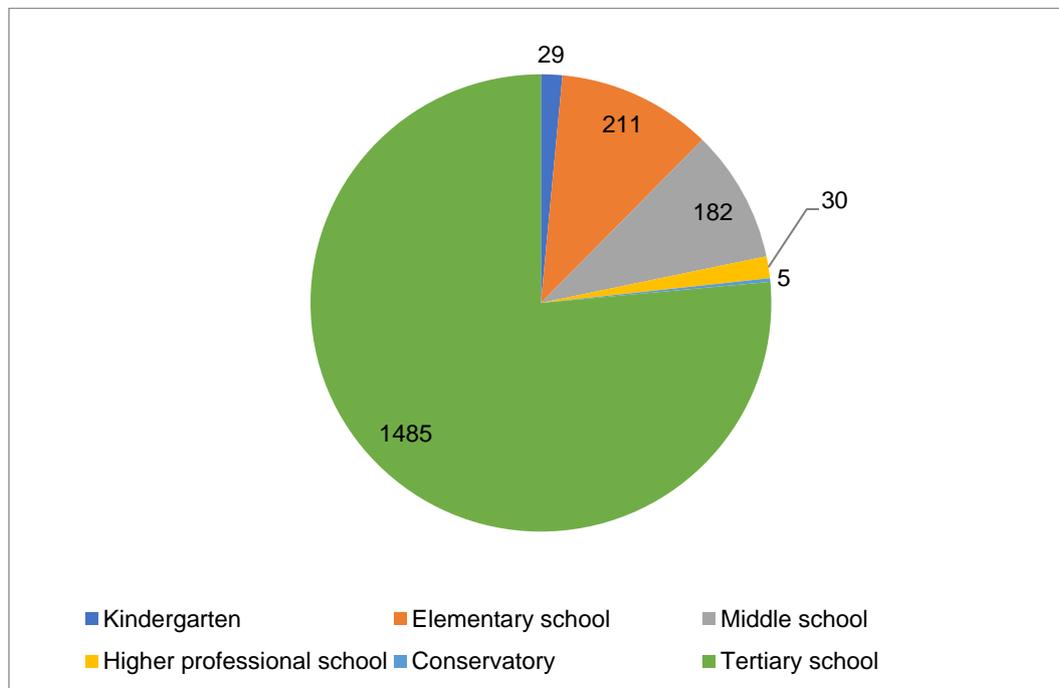
According to The Czech Statistical Office, 8 729 migrants from Russia were studying in various levels of school in the 2015/2016 academic year. Below is a table showing the data about Russian pupils and students in detail.



Graph 1 : Russian pupils and students at different levels of the education system in the Czech Republic as of 20.1.2016. Source: The Czech Statistical Office.

Out of 5 672 Russian students in tertiary education, 4 094 studied at public post-secondary institutions in the 2015/2016 academic year. Most of the students were working towards a Bachelor degree (3 963), followed by Master degree students (1 036) and PhD's (259).

People from Kazakhstan also obtain different degrees of education at Czech schools.



Graph 2 Kazakh pupils and students at different levels of educational of educational system in the Czech Republic as of 20.1.2016. Source: The Czech Statistical Office

Slightly over half (869 from 1 485) of the total number of students from Kazakhstan enrolled in tertiary education studied at public post-secondary institutions in the 2015/2016 academic year, and as with their Russian counterparts, the majority were studying for a Bachelor degree (1 188), as well as a Master degree (215) and PhD degree (26).

In my research I've tried to bring an anthropological perspective to the educational migration topic and to explore the life of young Russian speaking migrants who came to the Czech Republic from Russia and Kazakhstan for educational purposes. It was an ethnographical work, where the life of student migrants was explored from an anthropological perspective, and participant observation was the core method of the research. The multi-sited field research was conducted from 2008 to 2014 in Russia (Yekaterinburg and Ural region), in Kazakhstan

(Astana), and principally in Prague, Czech Republic. Participant observation took place in Czech language schools for foreigners, universities in Prague, dormitories, civil society organizations engaged with migrants, as well as other organizations established by Russian speaking students. An important part of this work is self-reflection and an analysis of the research position within field, as I myself took a one-year Czech language course in Prague, together with Russian speaking students from Russia and Kazakhstan, and has lived in a dormitory where students usually live for the duration of the course. As of 2015, 55 student research participants participated in the research (41 from Russia and 14 from Kazakhstan).

This paper elaborates on research I've conducted and focuses on the dynamic of semi-legal practices of Russian speaking students from Russia and Kazakhstan in the Czech Republic. It draws on the theoretical concept of semi-legality (Rytter,2012), which explains the whole process of migrants balancing between legal and illegal spheres, between policies and personal needs. This paper goes further and argues that student migrants are balancing not only between policies and their personal needs, but also between moral obligations in relation to their parents in country of origin. First part of this papers introduces my research participants and shows the way they come to the Czech Republic. Second part of paper discusses research participants narratives and semi-legality concept.

### **Research participant's portraits, the decision-making process and the role of family in it.**

This chapter provides portraits of some of the research participants, including their personal and family stories before arriving to the Czech Republic. It tries to outline the individuals' values, desires and expectations during their study abroad and what kind of reasons and factors have played role in their decision-making process about educational migration. The stories of all research participants are not presented here, but rather only a few of them, those, which it is

believed, demonstrates the complexity of the decision-making process and diversity of life situations the research participants experience. Some unnecessary details in the text were omitted to ensure the anonymity of the research participants.

### **Alla**

Alla never thought that she would go somewhere to study abroad. She was born in a village and grew up in a small Siberian town. Her family never travelled abroad because both parents were school teachers and there was not enough money for such trips. Her family only travelled to Alla's grandmothers once a year. *"It was such an exciting event because we had to pack our bags and I always liked it. The whole process when you go somewhere, that something new is waiting for you"*. When the time came to choose a university, Alla considered applying to a university in Saint Petersburg since one of her schoolmates was already studying there. *"She was some kind of guiding star. She worked in the tourist industry and went on business trips to different countries. This was also attractive to me, and I wanted to study at the same university she was. She was paying for her education, but I knew that my parents could not afford it. There were some budget places for free education, but only 4 of them for the entire country, and I understood that the chances of getting into one were very low"*.

Meanwhile, the mother of Alla started to work at a private language school and once came home with the suggestion that Alla study in the Czech Republic. Alla agreed to it with enthusiasm: *"Of course I agreed to it. This private language school was constantly organising different international programs and colourful posters from the countries that students had travelled to were hanging in their office. I once saw pictures from Prague and thought that it would be great to visit it. I started to be interested in learning the Czech language even before I was going to be going anywhere. I was interested in Slavic culture and I thought that it would be great to know some other Slavic language"*.

Alla's parents decided to take two loans out from the bank in order to pay for the language school and for accommodation in a dormitory during the first year, but warned her that she wouldn't be able to return to Russia very often as tickets were quite expensive. Alla agreed not to do so; she didn't see it as a problem because the relationships inside the family were quite complicated. *"I've always had a strained relationship with my mom... or maybe it's better to say that we've had some misunderstandings. And during this period, before I went to the Czech Republic, she started to complain about father a lot and I didn't like it. I thought that if I stayed somewhere close by, she would be visiting me and would be getting on my nerves. That's why going somewhere far away was what the doctor ordered!"*

During the spring, Alla and her parents began to collect all the necessary documents for a visa to the Czech Republic. Alla didn't want to tell anybody about her plans, but during her prom the representative of the private language school came and gave her a certificate saying she was the only graduate who was going to continue an education in Prague. At 17 years of age she arrived in the Czech Republic.

### **Irina**

Irina was 16 years old when her mother suggested she obtain her higher education in the Czech Republic. Her mother's friend told them about the possibility of getting education for free in the Czech Republic and suggested a trusted language school, the director of which she knew personally. Irina wasn't happy about this. She was in love and dating her boyfriend, had very good friendships with her classmates; she didn't want to leave. Moreover, Irina is a big patriot of Russia and her native city, which she had considered to be the best place on earth. But, in the end, she thought that to get a European diploma wouldn't be such a bad idea. Like her friend told her: *"With a European diploma you will get a much better job here and you will get more*

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<sup>1</sup> Alla's parents had recently divorced.

*money than a person who has the same position but with a Russian diploma*". So she agreed to get a diploma abroad and return to Russia as soon as possible.

However, her mother kept telling her: *"What is there do in Russia? Stay there, find a life partner and live in Europe, where it's calm and safe"*. Irina didn't agree with her mom and also wanted to receive a Russian diploma through correspondence, together with the Czech education, so that in future she would have a European and a Russian diploma. The final decision about studying abroad was very emotional. She was a little bit afraid, as she would be alone for the first time, very far from home as well as her family and friends. But her mother's friend also knew some students who were already in Prague and helped Irina find a room in a flat with a girl from the same city, making Irina's adaptation to the new country smoother.

### **Angela**

Angela never wanted to live in Russia and had been thinking about emigration for a long time. One of her father's colleagues lived in Prague and Angela and her family became interested in the Czech Republic as well. Angela read about the different possibilities of getting an education in Prague and what kind of options exist for permanent residence after her studies. She already had a master's degree from a Russian university, but decided that it would be better to get a European one, as it would help with later inclusion into the Czech labour market. She also came to the Czech Republic as a tourist once, to see if she would like to live in the country.

Before Angela actually moved to the Czech Republic, she knew precisely what kind of university and faculty she would apply. She also knew that after graduating from a Czech University foreign students have open access to the Czech labour market, without any need for a work permit. Angela's plan was to learn the Czech language through a one-year language course, then to get a diploma from a Czech university, get a trade license, get a job and on that basis, change her student long-term residency to one based on her work or business status. Steps were planned even for bigger dreams such as having a family house near Prague. This dream

was supported mainly by her father, who generously financed all her expenses as he always wanted his daughter to live in Europe.

Angela was attracted to the European life style, its beautiful architecture and the possibilities of travelling in the Schengen Area without any restrictions. So finally, at age 22, she came to Prague together with her best friend, leaving her long-term boyfriend back home.

### **Svetlana**

Svetlana had already earned two higher education degrees in Russia. It was pretty popular getting two different Master's degrees at the same time, so she thought that if one degree is great, then two is even better, and, moreover, you never know which one will be the most useful. However, even after graduating from both universities and finding a job, she wasn't happy as there was no life partner in her life. She was 26 and all her classmates were married, pregnant, or having kids - she wanted the same. However, she had a feeling that either all the men were taken or they were looking for kind of model: a thin girl, with blond hair and, of course, on high heels. She didn't feel that she fit this image.

At one point, Svetlana and her friend Anna had gone to a summer school in Europe, where Anna met a guy from the Czech Republic who fell in love with her. After the girls returned to Russia, Anna started exchanging emails with the guy from Prague. Later, their relationship developed and they were engaged. Their story became an inspiration for Svetlana. She understood that maybe it would be easier to find a partner somewhere else rather than in Russia. This opinion was also supported by different dating agency advertisements, which referred to a demographic problem in Russia and offered to arrange dates with foreigners. Svetlana, however, didn't trust these agencies and knew it would be better to just go abroad and meet a guy there. After some time, she learned about the possibility of studying for free in the Czech Republic and thought that it would be the better to go abroad. So she used some savings and

money she had inherited (the family sold the house after Svetlana's grandmother) and paid for the one-year language course and for accommodation in a dormitory.

### **Lisa**

Lisa was very active during her school years in Kazakhstan, organising different community events, singing, and writing articles for local newspapers. When the time came to decide on a university, she considered applying to Russian universities in Moscow and in Saint Petersburg. She wanted to move away from Kazakhstan since she didn't feel at home there. Lisa claimed the reason was mainly the usage of the Kazakh language. *"I don't know the language, and nowadays the Kazakh language is strongly promoted. So you have to learn it... but it's not mine... I don't know it at all, even after 11 years of learning it at school"*.

One day, Lisa's mother suggested she go to Prague to get an education, but her father wasn't keen on this idea. "At first, father didn't want to let me go. I am the only child in the family. But then both parents told me that I had to decide what would be better for myself. I thought... thought about it for half a year. I considered the pros and cons since I was a very active person and it was very important for me to stay active. Moreover, I had been thinking of moving to Russia. However, I weighed everything - what studying in the Czech Republic or Russia would bring me - and decided on the Czech Republic. First of all, because I could get an education for free here and that I could learn something interesting". The other reason why studying in the Czech Republic weighed in favour of studying in Russia was that Lisa broke up with her boyfriend, who lived in Moscow; so Prague actually presented a new chapter in her life and she has chosen it.

In the research participants' narratives, it was quite obvious that their parents played a large role in the decision-making process. In some cases, the initiative to get a foreign education came directly from the parents, while in others parents just supported the children in their decision. It's interesting that in some cases the students professed that the decision to come to the Czech

Republic was made regardless of their own wishes. According to some students, their parents sometimes tried to fulfil their own ambitions or dreams through their children, as they hadn't had such opportunities to travel behind the iron curtain. For example, Alla claimed: *"I think it was my mother's dream to live abroad, to use foreign languages every day. But she wasn't able to fulfil it when she was young"*.

Parents sponsoring these studies abroad wanted to ensure comfort for their children and, in some cases, for themselves in the future. Some of my research participants claimed that their parents have plans to follow them when they are retired and once their children become successful and have a stable position in the Czech Republic. Meanwhile, the children are sent to monitor the situation in the country, to learn about the immigration laws, about business possibilities and purchasing real estate.

With all that expectations and money involved students are often feeling trapped, as families invest quite a large sum of money sending their children abroad to study. Students usually come to the Czech Republic through a Czech language preparation course; during a full- or half-year they are supposed to learn the language in order to pass the admission exam in Czech. A Czech language course, which is intended to prepare students for studying in Czech at public universities, costs between 3 000 - 4 000 euros (it is sometimes more expensive for students from Kazakhstan) or more per academic year. Students have to pay the whole sum for the language course in advance while they are in Kazakhstan or in Russia, and on that basis they may apply for a student-visa to the Czech Republic. They also have to pay for agents, visas, plane tickets and for accommodation. So in the end it's quite a big sum of money for middle class family in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Referring to the classical work of Marcel Mauss (1999), "The Gift", we can say that any act of giving creates a moral obligation to reciprocate on part of the recipient. From my perspective, the existence of reciprocal relations between migrants and those they left behind is not only

material. On the contrary, my hypothesis is that in the case of the student migrant, it can be the expectations of their parents that they be independent and be able to support at least themselves, and in certain ways, become an adult (and very often later on to support or take care for their parents). As Philpott (1968, p. 467) claims, migration can be a process of attaining adulthood for young migrants; leaving can be regarded as a stage in a migrant's social maturity.

Since student migration is connected with substantial financial expenses and the need for investments from the entire family, it can place a large responsibility on students who go abroad. The interviews with students demonstrated that there were some research participants who were enjoying an unlimited amount of their parents' money. However, there were also those who tried to find a job as soon as possible as they could not take money from their parents any longer and had to start to support themselves.

Some students start work during their first year in the Czech Republic while attending language school, while others wait until they enter university and have a more flexible schedule. In theory, it should be possible to combine work and study, but it seems that it is not as easy as was expected. Students are trapped in a situation where, on the one hand, they must be able to support themselves and not ask for money from parents, and on the other hand, be "good" students, have high attendance so as to renew a student visa the following year, as well as pass all the necessary exams. As Olwig (2011, p. 91) claims, "migrants navigate not only within a political landscape, but just as significantly, within a moral landscape that has a great bearing on their motivations for travel, their dwelling in migratory destinations and their continued relations with their place of origin". The research conducted for this paper is in agreement that a moral aspect has very significant influence on a migrant's life in the country of destination.

The investments of the parents do place some kinds of responsibilities on the children's shoulders. It is not surprising that student migrants attempt to enter the labour market and at least support themselves, without asking for money beyond the large sum their parents have

already invested in their migration. Occasionally, the moral obligations of students to their parents are one of the reasons they fall into a kind of grey zone in the Czech Republic, since not everyone can find regular work immediately.

One such example is the case of Alla. Her father has been working for 2 years without a day off to support her stay in the Czech Republic. He used to work at a furniture company and had to send almost his entire salary to Alla. When most of the students went back to Russia and Kazakhstan after the entrance exams, Alla didn't want to leave the dormitory as the summer months had already been paid for and started to look for a job. *“For one month, nobody wanted to give me a job. I was going to different shops in the city centre with my printed CV. I wanted to earn money for the laptop, but nobody believed that I could find such work. But one of my friends, from another language course, used to work illegally as a packer at a warehouse. I just called him and asked if he would take me there the next day! He said that I was crazy and that they had 12-hour shifts there.”*

Alla's friend also warned her that the warehouse was very far from the city centre and that it was very hot inside. However, Alla wasn't deterred and decided to go. They met at 5.30 at a metro station. *“The work was very hard. I had to pack everything into oilskin and move it through hot air. I had to then stick labels on but the thing which I used for it was also very hot and all my nails fell off. Moreover, I twisted my hand on the first day because of the 12-hour shift. In the evening that day I couldn't even raise a spoon. But it was good that they paid every day and 55 CZK per hour, so every evening I got 600CZK. All the money I put in a special envelop. I almost haven't slept this month.”*

Alla worked in that place 4 days per week for a few weeks, but later found that most girls were sent to another place: a cosmetics warehouse. *“The working day there was shorter and the job wasn't as tough. So I asked if they could transfer me there, but they said that it was only for permanent workers. Anyway, I decided to call one girl I knew from this cosmetics warehouse*

*and invited myself there. It was such an easy job! We were just packing shampoo in beautiful boxes and chatting around the table. So in the end I saved 9 000 CZK”.*

Alla's case illustrates a way in which foreigner workers are sometimes employed in the Czech Republic, through the frame of a so-called “client system”. According to Jan Cernik (2005), even though it is hard to define the term “client”, it is possible to say that it is a subject of a particular economical negotiation that is very dynamic. In the context of labour migration from former Soviet Union countries to the Czech Republic, the “client” isn't the customer, but the person who ensures the sale of unqualified labour (usually), while at the same time satisfying demand in the labour market of the Czech Republic. Cernik claims that in the Czech Republic, the client usually has a normal, registered company that does work intermediation for building and cleaning companies. The client, usually together with work intermediation, supplies the spectrum of migration and other services from transportation to accommodation, and even services to ensure the legal stay of migrants in the Czech Republic. The client works on the border of different worlds: not only on the border of economic and legal worlds, but also on the borders of different organizational norms of economic negotiation. The client system was developed through interaction with Czech migration laws during the so-called liberal period of the second half of 1990s, and forms the basis of the structural preconditions for the functioning of the client system by ignoring the engagement of organizational crime in the temporary migration field and the illegal employment of foreigners (Cernik, 2005).

According to Cernik (2005), the client system in the Czech Republic was at its peak at the turn of the millennium. During this period, this phenomenon could be seen as the dominant form of organising temporary labour migration in the Czech Republic. The “clients”, who had earlier worked in less formal forms (for example, as representatives of traditional working groups), established different forms of legal entities so as to have the possibility to reflect changes in the legal environment; thereby this method of organization moved away from the shadow economy

and informal structures. Clients have also included in their migration services the arrangement of new necessary administrative tasks, such as visas or membership in a statutory authority of cooperatives and business companies.

Polina's friend also worked through this system. Petr used to work in a clothes shop as a security guard. He found this job through an agency and didn't have a contract directly with the shop. The salary wasn't regular and sometimes he received nothing. Nevertheless, he couldn't complain as he wasn't an official employee of the shop.

Students must often balance between immigration policies/restrictions, moral obligations they have according to their parents, and their own needs. To understand better the situation of student migrants, the concept of semi-legality can be used.

### **Semi-legality**

Mikkel Rytter (2012) in his text “Semi-legal family life: Pakistan couples in the borderlands of Denmark and Sweden” introduces the concept of semi-legality to describe the situation whereby Pakistani transnational couples commute on a regular basis between their legal residences in Sweden and their places of work and networks of friends and family in Denmark. Married couples subjected to this mobile lifestyle are always in the process of becoming illegal, which is the consequence of “overstaying” in Denmark or “under staying” in Sweden.

According to Rytter (2012, p. 93), recent studies emphasize a more process oriented approach and document how migrants may move between the statuses of legal and illegal. Rytter (2012, p. 93) explains that “the concept of “semi-legality” bears some resemblance to the concept of “semi-compliance”, recently introduced to describe and discuss the employment of migrants who are legal residents but who violate the employment restrictions attached to their immigrant status, and so move between different legal statuses” (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010, p. 201)

Ruhs and Anderson (2010, p. 201) introduced the new concept of “compliance”, and identify and distinguish between three levels of compliance: “compliant migrants are legally resident and working in full compliance with the conditions attached to their immigration status. Non-compliant migrants are those without the rights to reside in the host country. Semi-compliance indicates a situation where a migrant is legally resident but working in violation of some or all of the conditions attached to the migrant’s immigration status” (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010, p. 201). They argue that – at least to some degree – semi-compliance is simply a logical result of the tension between the needs of a flexible labour market on the one hand, and the desire to closely monitor the employment of migrants for immigration control purposes on the other.

Ruhs and Anderson (2006, p. 8) distinguish between two “types” of compliance. “R-compliance”, where the “R” stands for “residence”. “R-non-compliant migrants include people who overstay visas, or who enter illegally, and failed asylum seekers who have exhausted rights of appeal. ‘E-compliance’, where the ‘E’ stands for ‘employment’, indicates whether a migrant is complying with all the conditions of employment attached to the migrant’s immigration status (E-compliant) or not (E-non-compliant). An example of E-non-compliance would be a student working more than the legally allowed 20 hours during term time” (Ruhs and Anderson, 2006, p. 9).

According to Ruhs and Anderson (2006, p. 10), “semi-compliance indicates a situation where migrants have a valid reason to remain (R-compliant), but are in breach of some or all of the conditions pertaining to the employment attached to their immigration status (E-non-compliant)”. However, at the same time, the category of semi-compliance is extremely broad and could capture a wide range of violations – with varying degrees of severity – of the conditions of employment attached to a migrant’s immigration status.

The concept of semi-legality is a broader concept and explains not only the relationship between the rights to residence and rights to work, but the whole process of balancing between legal and

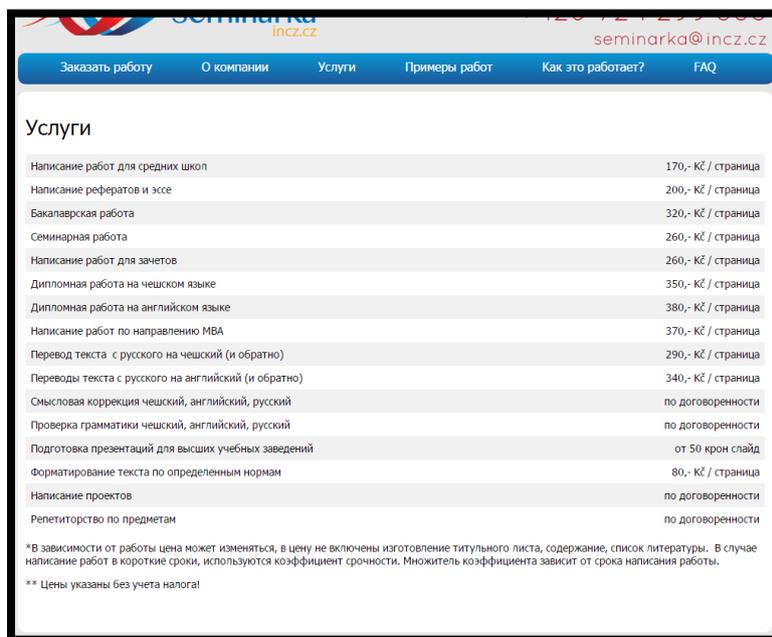
illegal spheres, between policies and personal needs. And once a violation or disregard of the law is noticed, state governments always try to introduce new policies that place a certain population under control. This suggestion is relevant to the process of prolonging a student's legal stay in the Czech Republic, as well as to the process of their employment, since these two processes are quite interconnected.

During the research, it was observed that students usually work at unqualified job positions in the beginning of their career in the Czech Republic. For example, they often work as cleaners, waitresses, security, babysitters and sales positions at gift shops or "Russian" shops. Also, students work at hotels as receptionists, as tutors for other students, as tourist guides and insurers. Even though non-EEA students are allowed to work 20 hours per week in the Czech Republic, it is sometimes difficult for them to find a "proper" job with a contract. Furthermore, in some cases, students work more than they are legally allowed, including full-time. Occasionally, the terms and conditions of employment are not the best, and the student permission system is exploited. Conversely, people who would like to work and want to avoid the complicated scheme of getting a work permit for non-EU citizens, can use the student residence permit.

For instance, Natasha, after finishing her language courses, didn't get into the university she wanted. She decided to apply for the Faculty of Nuclear Physics, as there were no entrance exams and it would ensure the student status needed to prolong her stay in the Czech Republic. Immediately, she found a job in a souvenir company, which she could do from home. She was paid in cash without a contract and it lasted almost a year. She decided that she didn't want to study again, as she had already obtained a master's degree in Russia. However, the next year she applied for the Faculty of Nuclear Physics again, just so that she could prolong her stay on the basis of her student status and continued to work, now in a different shop.

On occasion, students lose their motivation to study and decide just to stay and work in the Czech Republic. Some students change their purpose of stay to working or business, while others continue to be officially enrolled in a university and carry a student status.

Of course, there are also students who try to combine work and study. For some students it works well, while others, turn to their fellow students and ask for help when they aren't able to handle all their study obligations. In some cases, students are paid for such help, so it becomes mutually beneficial for both sides. There are also some "professional" services for Russian-speaking students such as writing an essay or diploma work in Czech, English and Russian languages.



The image shows a screenshot of a website's price list for writing services. The website is 'seminarka.incz.cz' and the contact email is 'seminarka@incz.cz'. The navigation menu includes 'Заказать работу', 'О компании', 'Услуги', 'Примеры работ', 'Как это работает?', and 'FAQ'. The main heading is 'Услуги'. The table lists various services and their prices in Czech Koruna (Kč) per page or per hour. The services include writing for secondary schools, essays, bachelor's work, seminar work, exam preparation, diploma work in Czech and English, MBA assignments, translations, proofreading, presentation preparation, formatting, and project writing. A disclaimer at the bottom states that prices are subject to change and do not include VAT.

Услуги	Цена
Написание работ для средних школ	170,- Kč / страница
Написание рефератов и эссе	200,- Kč / страница
Бакалаврская работа	320,- Kč / страница
Семинарная работа	260,- Kč / страница
Написание работ для зачетов	260,- Kč / страница
Дипломная работа на чешском языке	350,- Kč / страница
Дипломная работа на английском языке	380,- Kč / страница
Написание работ по направлению MBA	370,- Kč / страница
Перевод текста с русского на чешский (и обратно)	290,- Kč / страница
Переводы текста с русского на английский (и обратно)	340,- Kč / страница
Смысловая коррекция чешский, английский, русский	по договоренности
Проверка грамматики чешский, английский, русский	по договоренности
Подготовка презентаций для высших учебных заведений	от 50 крон слайд
Форматирование текста по определенным нормам	80,- Kč / страница
Написание проектов	по договоренности
Репетиторство по предметам	по договоренности

\*В зависимости от работы цена может изменяться, в цену не включены изготовление титульного листа, содержание, список литературы. В случае написания работ в короткие сроки, используются коэффициент срочности. Множитель коэффициента зависит от срока написания работы.  
\*\* Цены указаны без учета налогов!

Picture 1 Picture of the price list for writing a diploma work. Source: Social network vk.com

This, of course, does not mean that all students who combine work and study pay for such services, or that all students who do not work refrain from using them sometimes. Most of the students successfully combine university study and work, or start to work only after they graduate from university, since any foreigner who obtains a university diploma in the Czech Republic does not need a work permit and can enter the local labour market without any legal restrictions. But even after graduation former students have to balance in semi legal sphere, as

for example Regina. Regina has graduated from Czech public university in spring and had to find a job with proper contract until September, so she could prolong her legal stay in the Czech Republic. After months of non-stop searching for a job with proper permanent contract in her area of expertise, she couldn't find it and she started to work in a call center. She had permanent employment contract, but with 3 months probationary period. On that basis she applied for a working residence permit, but after one month in call center, she was fired and being sad that she didn't have to come the next day. She was devastated as all her documents were on evaluation at Ministry of Interior and she still didn't get the residence permit. She was afraid that she wouldn't find new job in haste and coming back to Russia where she had only mother who was supporting her financially all these years would be a failure. So she decided to ask her friend to employ her "just on paper", so she can work anywhere else no matter what contract and just transfer money for her friend, so he can pay social and health security and taxes for her. In this semi-legal situation Regina had been living more that one year, till she finally found a job according to her education and with proper permanent employment contract.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the above ethnographic cases demonstrate that the students did not come to the Czech Republic with the direct intention of violating laws, but due to the high expenses connected with migration, misleading information about the country, and a lack of orientation with its laws, migrant students are trapped in a situation where, on the one hand, they must be able to support themselves and refrain from asking for money from their parents, while on the other hand, be "good" students, attend school, and fulfil the academic obligations necessary to renew a student visa for the next year.

Usually, the use of different migration services and the client system is interconnected and one offence creates a need to find more and more solutions to find a balance in the semi-legal sphere. It creates a cycle of actions which aims to maintain legal status in the country. Students

are supposed to find more and more variations of how to balance in the semi-legal sphere. And oftentimes it causes a dependence on others, such as on other students and/or representatives of the migration industry.

Student migrants use different strategies and the services of different actors in order to balance in the semi-legal sphere. Firstly, they can retain their legal status using their own tricks, like applying for studies where no entrance exams are needed; secondly, they can use a sophisticated partnership with other students; and thirdly, they can use the services of counterfeit schools, the client system and different agencies, as was already mentioned in the previous chapter.

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