

D. Kieran Mulhall

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IEPS M.A. Thesis Assessment

Czech Immigration Policy and Its Potential

Assessment:

D. Kieran Mulhall has produced an impressive M.A. dissertation dealing with the issue of Czech immigration policy. As somebody interested in the issue of immigration in both the United States and Europe, I found it delightful to read Kieran's work, which contains an introduction, eight main chapters, and a conclusion. There are also a number of illustrative figures. As Kieran is a native of the Irish Republic, English is his mother tongue and there is therefore no need to criticize the quality of Kieran's written English.

In the introduction, Kieran points out that the success of Czech immigration policy is linked with integration. This is undoubtedly true. The first main chapter discusses globalization and immigration in a global sense. Both global immigration and the economic theory of globalization are analyzed well. The second chapter bears the title "The Economic Theory of Migration." Kieran aptly focuses on the various issues involved and correctly states that there is a correlation between migration and growth, but he wisely refrains from making any sweeping generalization that migration causes growth. In the chapter that follows, Kieran discusses migration to and from the territory of today's Czech Republic from an historical perspective. Throughout this chapter, Kieran not only presents quantitative data, but also discusses the various reasons for both emigration and immigration during the different periods of modern Czech history. The fourth main chapter deals with demographic trends in the Czech Republic. In a nutshell, the Czechs have not been having enough children and modern advances in lifestyle and medicine have resulted in people living longer. The absence of immigration could well result in a shortage of active participants in the economy as well as a

collapse of the social system. Of course, the overstretched social system in the Czech Republic is in dire need of painful reforms and migration alone will not remove the need for the pampered Czech population to accept more individual responsibility for its own welfare. In the fifth chapter, Kieran analyzes the actual nature of Czech immigration policy as it stands now. His explanations are thorough and I fully agree with the assertion that the complicated process associated with living and working in the Czech Republic legally has contributed to the problem of illegal immigration. The sixth chapter deals with the socioeconomic impact of immigration. I like the fact that Kieran refers to studies of the effects of immigration elsewhere because this debunks myths spread by the nativist tabloid press in certain countries that immigration represents an economic burden on the societies in question. The seventh chapter addresses the effects of immigration on the functioning of the welfare state. It is interesting that migrants are less likely to claim social benefits than natives with similar skills and qualifications. The final chapter describes the social outcomes of immigration. Sadly, the Czech Republic has not become sufficiently tolerant towards newcomers since the restoration of freedom in 1989. The main causes of friction appear to be the absence of correct policies that would facilitate the integration of immigrants. Though some progress is being made, the slow speed of this progress is disheartening. In the conclusion, Kieran provides some advice on how to remedy the presently unacceptable situation. I agree with his opinion that the Czechs themselves have everything to gain and little, if anything, to lose by adopting a more open immigration policy.

This dissertation provides much useful information and the fact that it is written in English logically means that it can be of use to an international audience. The only minor criticism I have is that there are some minor typographical errors and that the numbering of the chapters is somewhat incorrect. I recommend that Kieran receive an

excellent mark. I wish him good luck in his future endeavors and I do hope that his upcoming sojourn in Scotland will be rewarding.

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