



Integrating Immigrant Children into Primary Schools in The Czech Republic and Norway

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Introduction

Nearly 2% of the world population (125 million people) live in a different country than they were born. This number continues to grow (Aasen, 2012). Current trends in migration is such that people from the south and east migrate to the north and west. Migration often causes stress and conflicts in the target countries (Brochmann, 2012). The process of integration of immigrants should be therefore considered as a key point in mutual coexistence.

Education is often rightly considered as the most important and most basic priority of the society and the most important tool for integrating immigrants into major society. Children are firstly organized in school, they build the first social contacts and learn tolerance towards others. Immigrants' parents are often in touch with the major community firstly at school thanks to their children. Therefore, it is important to create a society in which everyone has equal access to education and has the same chances to establish social relationships.

Target of the poster

To show results of research of Czech and Norwegian efforts to integrate immigrant children into primary schools which was a main task for diploma thesis.

Theoretical background

Giddens's concepts of integration (1999):

- Assimilation (immigrants are in all aspects adapted to the major society)
- Melting pot (tendency not to suppress culture, traditions and customs of immigrants, but mix immigrants with the majority society and develop new cultural patterns)
- Cultural pluralism (most promoted model in modern democratic societies: acknowledging of different cultures in one society as equivalent)

Bourdieu's Theory of cultural capital (1977):

The ability to use a hegemonic cultural codes of society. Pupils who have developed cultural capital, decode the rules at school better, they establish easily relationship with teacher and are also more motivated.

Methodology

Research question of the thesis: What are the main characteristics of integrating immigrant children into primary schools in the Czech Republic and Norway?

Research method: Two case studies of primary schools (school A: Brno, Czech Republic; school B: Oslo, Norway).

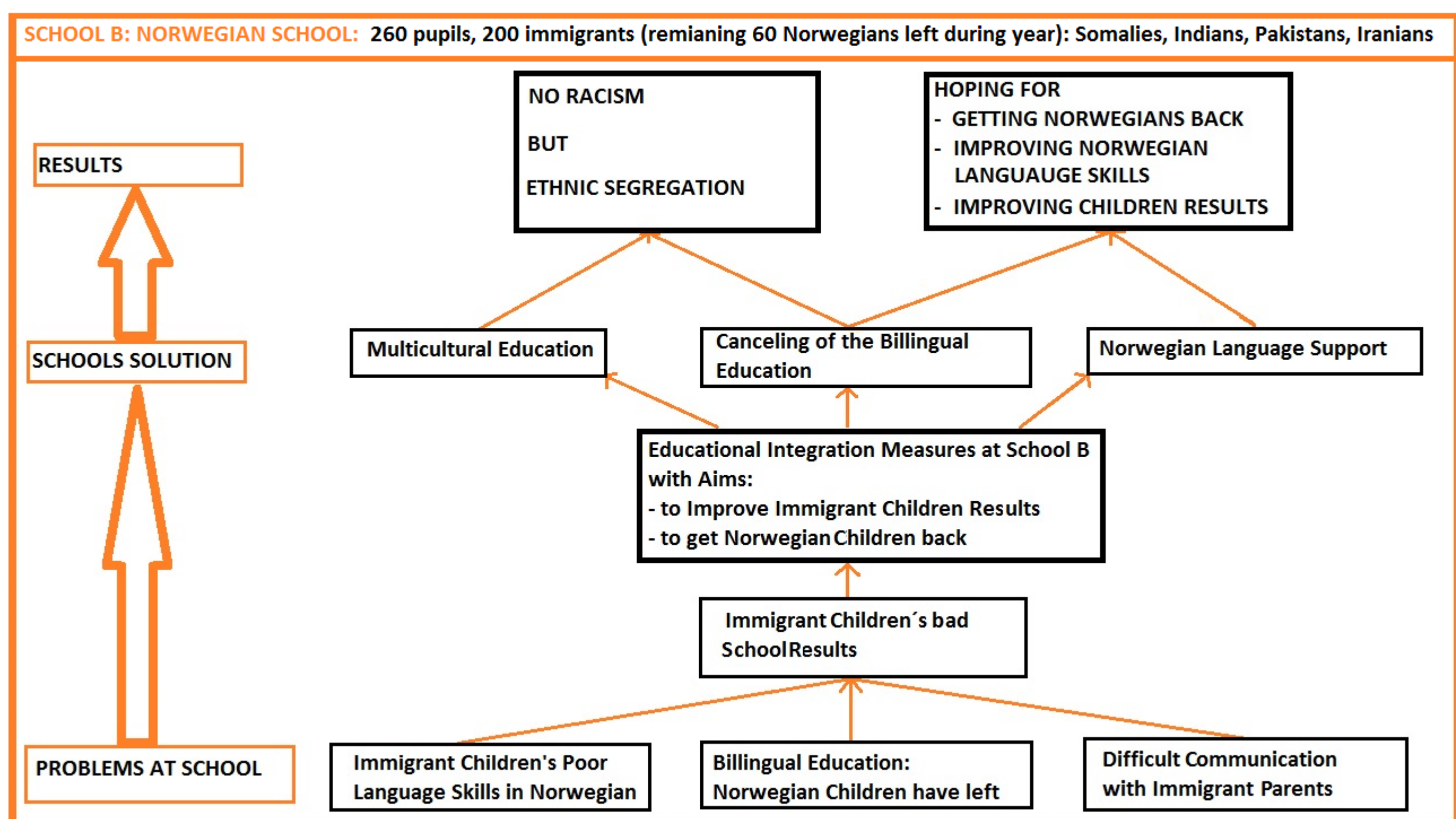
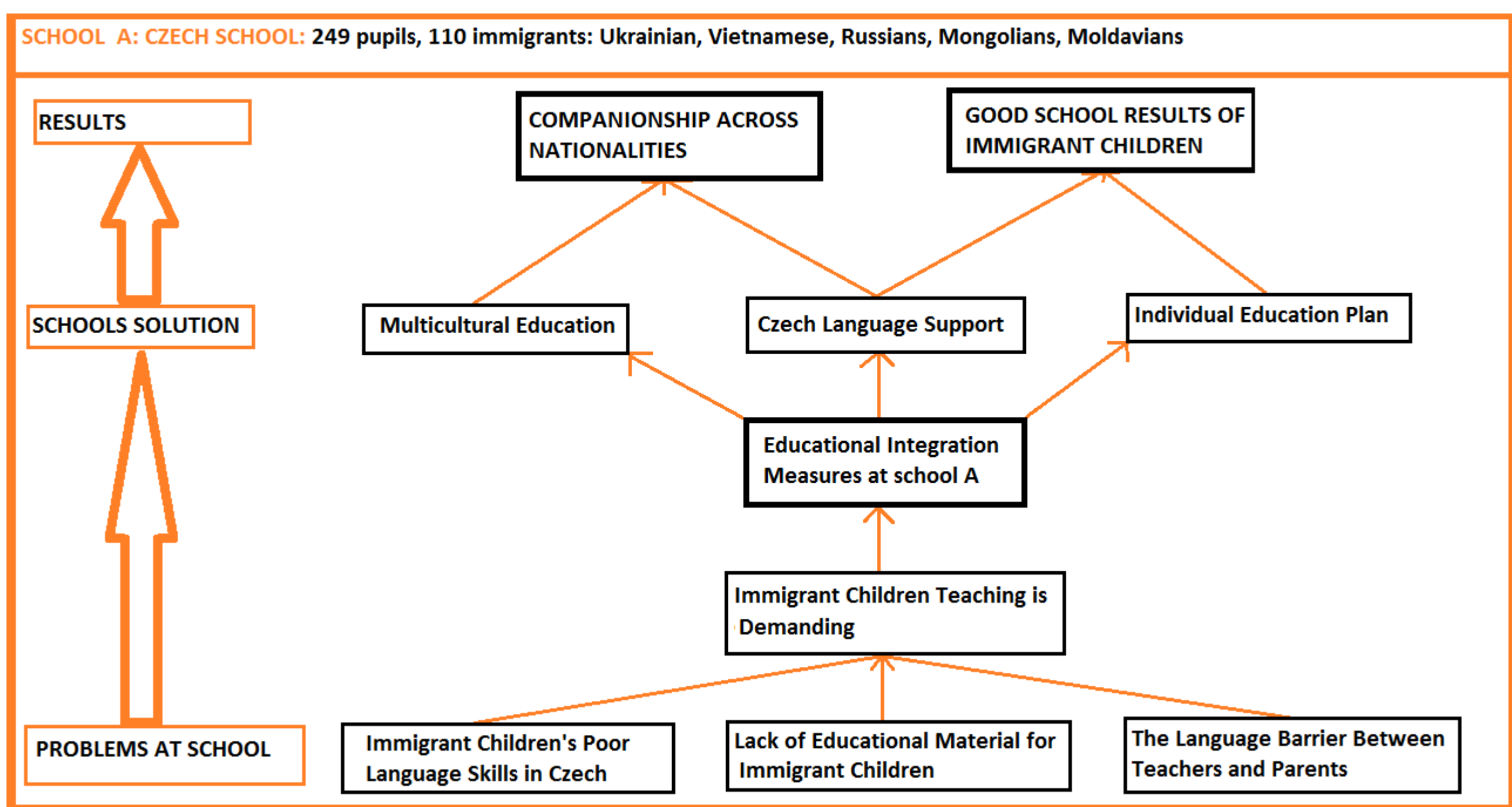
Criteria for choosing school A and B: city with similar population, schools with similar amount of pupils and high amount of immigrant pupils.

Techniques of data collection: documents analysis, observation, interview.

Categories for comparison:

- legislation regarding integration of immigrant children
- characteristics of immigrant children
- implemented support for immigrant children at schools
- immigrant children's results
- companionship across nations
- communication with immigrant parents

Findings



Discussion: INTEGRATION PARADOX?

Norway focuses more on immigrant children education on the state and legislative level in comparison to the Czech Republic. Norway also allocates more money for immigrant education and integration. Nevertheless the empirical research has showed that:

- All Norwegian pupils have left school B, immigrant children are segregating to ethnic groups, don't communicate with Norwegian major society and have bad school results.
- There is a good relationship between Czech and immigrant children, no present segregation, Czech pupils aren't leaving the school because of immigrant children and immigrant children do have good school results.

The question is now:

- Where are the boundaries in immigrant educational support?
- Where should immigrant children support stop and where should focusing on major pupils start?

What does influence the integration process?

Thesis shows detailed answers, here are the main points:

- high number of immigrant children at one school
- cultural closeness between immigrant children and major society
- ability to speak the majority language
- contact with major society
- parents education and cultural capital of the family

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