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Verification of counterurbanisation processes: example of the České Budějovice region

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Abstract. Counterurbanisation as a deconcentrating process of settlement systems is connected with population migration from cities to their geographically distant hinterland located beyond the external border of suburbs, i.e. beyond the metropolitan zones. Many authors consider it a low-intensity process empirically hard to identify. Still, in the South Bohemian region of České Budějovice (RCB) counterurbanisation was confirmed, although it is not a dominant but rather a highly variable process with some effect on the character of settlements. It seems that after a long period of population and socio-economic decline a new rise started in several municipalities of the RCB rural area. The smallest rural settlements (less than 200 residents) boast now the top population growth rate along with the top net migration rate. In general, the volume of immigration flows to the rural area from the centre and suburbs of České Budějovice is higher in absolute figures than the volume of emigration flows from the rural area. The detailed anonymised database of migrants of the Czech Statistical Office makes it possible to analyse the migration volume and direction by municipalities.

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1. Introduction

Social development of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) states is not in phase with the Western Europe. Furthermore, due to the half-century era of socialistic development, it has its particularities making it different and giving a distinctive character to the individual global phenomena. The same is true for the urbanisation processes and effects of migration on the character of the settlement system. The aim of this paper is to analyse the counterurbanisation as one of the deconcentrating urbanisation processes. Specific conditions and the course of urbanisation processes in the Czech Republic are described in the first part of the paper. The objective is also to introduce the chosen approaches to the assessment and research methods of counterurbanisation. In the analytical part, the counterurbanisation tendencies and manifestations are verified using the settlement system of the metropolitan South-Bohemian region.

2. Theoretical background: counterurbanisation as a concept

Already since the mid 1970s, many authors point to the demographic changes which took place in the developed Western countries (Beale, 1976; Berry, 1976 in Mitchell, 2004; Cloke, 1978; Williams, Sofranko, 1979; Champion, 1981, etc.). Surprisingly, the population of rural, non-metropolitan areas started to grow. New terms such as 'new migration', 'rural demographic revival', 'rural repopulation' or 'ruralisation process' emerged. McLoughlin (1991) later identified this process as a 'demographic revolution'. The demographic development of rural areas did not feature the predicted simple and straightforward increasing line of progress as assumed in the 1970s in the developed Western countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, many countries experienced repeated changes between growth and decline of rural, non-metropolitan areas, ambiguous trends in main migration flows, and thereby some alternations between de-concentration and concentration tendencies. The proposition about a radical change in the development of the settlement system from concentration to deconcentration was called into question. Some authors recommended labelling the deconcentration trend as a certain 'chaotic concept' or an 'exclusive hypothesis' (Champion, 1992; Halfacree, 1994: 164; Mitchell, 2004; Šimon, 2011). Spencer (1995) alleges that the deconcentration does not represent a radical change in the development of settlement systems. Fielding (1982) was among the first to explain that the population growth of the peripheral countryside is more likely in countries with a higher degree of urbanisation than in less urbanised countries as in the case of Central and Eastern European countries.

Therefore, the deconcentration tendencies in the settlement system in the former socialistic countries of CEE appeared later (Enyedi, 1990; Musil, 1993; Sjöberg, Tammaru, 1999; Czerny, 2002; Altrock et al., 2013, etc.). For example, in the former Czechoslovakia and the succeeding Czech and Slovak Republics the concentration processes prevailed almost till the beginning of the 1990s. Furthermore, they showed specific traits; as a result of a communist state regulation, the development in the 1970s and 1980s was focused on small and medium towns in peripheries and on district centres. This process of concentration or distribution of population and socio-economic activities to smaller centres was designated the micro-concentration. Simultaneously a counter-metropolisation process went on

(Hampl, 2005: 36-38). It consisted in a controlled damping of growth of the largest centres including the capital by means of restricting factors causing the population immigration, i.e. repressing housing construction and the development of technical and social infrastructure. Thereby, the metropolisation processes weakened. Similarly to standard processes of population concentration and activities in towns, hinterland of metropolitan centres and small rural villages in peripheries noticed a decreasing number of inhabitants and depopulation in spite of the mentioned interventions of the socialistic government in the urbanisation processes and formation of Czech metropolises. A change in the development of migration tendencies in Czechia, and with some regional specifics in other CEE countries, occurred following the democratic revolutions at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s (Tóth, 1994; Librová, 1997; Čermák, 2001: 175; Sýkora, 2002; Brown, Schafft, 2002; Soja, 2002, etc.). This turnaround in the deconcentration character combines effects of the post-industrial and the specific post-socialistic transformation. It appears 20 to 30 years after changes in the developed Western countries. However, it must be noted that the population growth in rural and often also in peripheral areas represents a significant change compared to the previous development of concentration and urbanisation trends. This change is crucial in putting an end to the marked trajectory of population and socio-economic decline and to the degradation of rural areas.

Counterurbanisation is defined and explained in literature as (a) a deconcentration process (Berry, 1976a in Mitchell, 2004: 17, etc.); (b) the process which occurs when the number of inhabitants moving in the direction of concentration (from the rural areas to towns) is lower than the number of inhabitants moving in direction of deconcentration, from towns to the rural areas (Geyer, Kontuly, 1993; Popjaková, 2012; Fig. 1.); (c) the process where inhabitants move from towns to rural municipalities which are located in non-metropolitan areas, to more rural areas, beyond the external border of suburbs (Berry, 1976 in Champion, 1989: 52-53; Halfacree, 1994: 164; Šimon 2011: 248); (d) a negative relationship between the net migration and the size of municipalities (Fielding, 1982); and finally as (e) population revival and growth of rural areas together with the corresponding population decline of cities and large towns (Halfacree, 1994: 164).

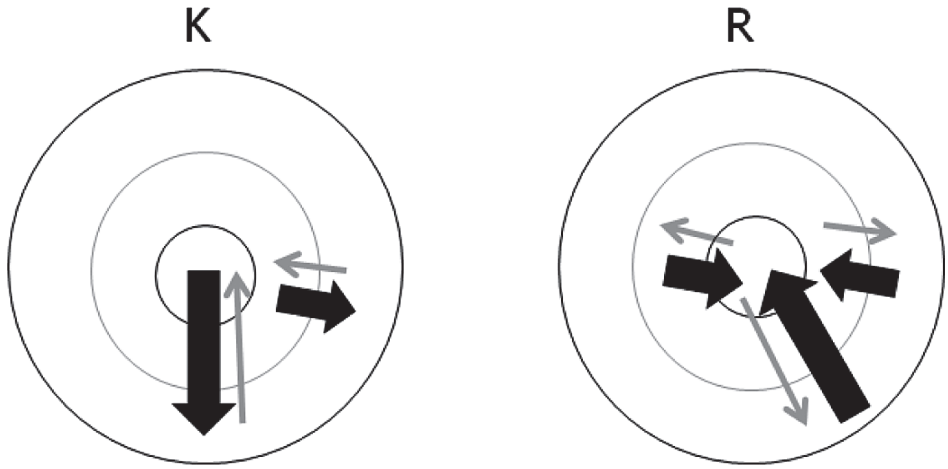

Fig. 1. Counterurbanisation (K) and reurbanisation (R)

Explanation:

dominant migration flows
less significant migration flows

Source: Geyer, Kontuly, 1993; Popjaková, 2012

3. Methodological notes

Traditional research on settlement systems and related urbanisation processes is based on analyses of migration and distribution of population in space. Similarly, the basic research tool in the analysis of counterurbanisation is the spatial mobility of population. Many authors consider migration a crucial component of counterurbanisation (Champion, Atkins, 1996; Mitchell, 2004: 17). In summary, the following can be used as the primary methodological instruments for identification of counterurbanisation:

Methods of quantitative research concentrated on studies of:

a) population changes of settlements (growth rate; the Hoover Index of population concentration), analyses of total population increase, differentiation of natural and migration increase of the municipalities in the region describing the concentration pattern over time;
b) balance of migration between municipalities;
c) balance of migration flows between the centre and hinterland;
d) identification of the character of migration flows and of 'counterurbanisationists', mainly from the point of view of their age structure, whether they rejuvenate the rural population or on the contrary, whether they contribute to population aging; investigation of the population structure in relation to sex, social status, nationality, and ethnicity.

Methods of qualitative research, which represent a separate stage of research. Acquisition and the processing of 'soft data' for the study of causal relationships of the counterurbanisation processes, motives of population moving to the countryside; recognition of factors conditioning the migration, researching the nature of rural settlements where the population moves to, of the conditions and possibilities they offer, the character of their management, closer identification of 'counterurbanisationists', i.e. identifying the type of people who move out from towns to the countryside (Champion, 2006; Szymańska et al., 2009; Ouředníček et al., 2011);

In accord with the above-quoted methods a) – c), research on counterurbanisation in this study concentrated on: the analysis of the dynamics in the population number in RCB municipalities (part 5); analysis of the migration balance by municipalities (part 6); brief analysis of migration flows between municipalities (part 7.1), and analysis of migration flows of municipalities in the metropolitan region with the centre of České Budějovice (CB) (part 7.2). Indicators of the population growth rate were used for the analysis of the population development. In the analysis of migration the following indicators were applied: total migration, i.e. the absolute number of in-migrants and out-migrants to and from municipalities; total in-migration; total out-migration; migration balance, i.e. the difference of in-migrants and out-migrants; net migration rate, i.e. the migration balance divided per 1,000 inhabitants of the mid-year population; total migration rate, i.e. total migration divided per 1,000 inhabitants of the mid-year population, and other indicators.

Detailed migration database of the Czech Statistical Office (CSO), i.e. the anonymised data about each migrant in the Czech Republic (CZ) made these analyses possible. CSO obtains these data from the form "change of domicile report" filled in by every citizen of the CZ upon moving. The anonymised record of each migrant was reduced by the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU due to the law about personal data protection but it still collects and provides the following: migrant's original and new place of permanent residence, birth date, sex, marital status, and nationality. Study of migration flows between the centre and hinterland (point c) requires the definition of region. The region should be singled out as a migration region. It means that its outer borders should be identical with the outer border of the most intensive migration links of the regional centre with municipalities in its wide hinterland.

While studying counterurbanisation, apart from determining borders of a migration region, it is also necessary to determine the inner borders of the region, i.e. the borders of the regional centre and those of the suburban zone of the region, the borders dividing metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Inner borders are determined for the sake of distinguishing the types of migration flows.

In this way the migration region consists of three spatial segments:

a) centre/city/metropolitan centre of a region
b) close hinterland of a city/suburb, which forms a metropolitan area together with the centre

c) wider hinterland of a city/non-metropolitan area/rural area.

Zone I, the centre of a region and its borders are usually easier to determine, as they are often identical to administrative borders of the city. By determining outer borders of a suburb, the hinterland of a centre is divided into two parts – the above-mentioned Zones II and III of a migration region. It is precisely on the links between Zones I and III, i.e. between the centre and the rural municipalities geographically far from the centre where the processes of counterurbanisation are examined.

The method of definition of a migration region published to southern Bohemia by J. Čekal (2007) has been used in this paper. The mentioned method of migration regionalisation is based on the approach of Hampl and Müller (1995) who applied the principle of two functions of migration aggregated in the form of summation; it is the principle of concentration and integration. Based on these, two assessments are drawn: 1) identifying the strongest emigration directions, i.e. the size of emigration from particular municipalities of a region to its centre; and 2) expressing the strongest mutual migration relationship between the settlement unit, i.e. the municipality, and the regional centre using the migration turnover index. This method was supplemented by another dimension of migration resulting from the principle of deconcentration also taking into account and assessing the opposite, deconcentration flows, i.e. the size of immigration to the individual municipalities from the centre when defining a migration region. Determination of suburban zones according to the method of residential suburbanisation that was applied in the Czech Republic by the team of Ouředníček (2013) was used in this paper. The method is based on the evaluation of absolute and relative indicators of population migration and housing construction in hinterland of urban centres.

4. České Budějovice Region as the object of research

The defined migration region of České Budějovice (RCB) consists of 117 municipalities. The centre of the region, Zone I, is formed by the municipality of České Budějovice (CB) within its administration borders. A compact area of 43 municipalities in its surroundings represents Zone II, the suburb of the metropolitan city of CB. The remaining 73 municipalities belong to Zone III, the city's rural area. The rural area was further segmented, on the one hand according to the number of inhabitants into five size types of 0-199 inhabitants (25 municipalities), 200-499 (30), 500-1,000 (9), 1,000-2,499 (5), and 2,500-4,999 (4). On the other hand, the wider hinterland was divided according to the average accessibility of the territories in the Czech Republic (CZ) from the minor administrative centres to municipalities within the distance below and over 18 and 30 minutes (Musil, Müller, 1995: 340; Kubeš, Kraft, 2011: 815).

The metropolitan region of CB and its rural area is specific in the socio-economic and settlement system of the CZ. České Budějovice, the city of a hundred thousand inhabitants itself, is permanently assessed as one of the strongest Czech regional centres. On the other side, its immediate surroundings are assessed as weak with low intensity of settlement (Hampl, 2005: 91) missing the secondary centres of some significance. The rural area of the RCB spreads towards the territory which has been categorized and characterized as peripheral by many authors (Musil, Müller, 2008; Perlín et al., 2010; Kubeš, Kraft, 2011, and others).

The RCB is the social and economic centre of southern Bohemia. Position of this territory has always been eccentric regarding the main settlement axes. Lack of raw material and the marginal position in the 19th century industrialising processes caused the socio-economic lag. The southernmost situated parts were subject to a dramatic change of population after WW2 when German population was displaced. Moreover, the course of what was referred to as Iron Curtain coincided with the border of southern Czechia with Austria and Germany. The peripheral situation and poor economic development were the causes of emigration and depopulation of rural areas. The territory revived after the 1989 political and social transition. Instead of being a disadvantage, the position proved to be beneficial. The economy of the region was not significantly hit by the recession of the post-socialistic transformation in the 1990s of the 20th century. The south Bohemian region is characterized by a relatively high level of economic development and dy-

namic economic growth (Hampl, 2005: 50-51). As the area is not polluted and overpopulated it gradually became attractive for migrants since the beginning of the 21st century.

5. Population trends in settlements of the region

In the long run, the region of České Budějovice (RCB) is losing in population. Just like in other, mainly borderline, parts of the CZ, its demographic situation aggravated after WW2, when the number of inhabitants rapidly decreased following the displacement of the German population. Regardless of these events, the region achieved a population growth in several last decades. Between the years 1992 and 2010, the population of the RCB region increased by 12,000 from 178,838 to 190,978, i.e. by 7%, or in other words by 700 inhabitants per year on average. The biggest population growth took place in the smallest municipalities of 0-199 inhabitants (31.6%; 796 people in absolute numbers), in the period under review, and in municipalities of 500-999 inhabitants (30.6%; 3,425). In municipalities with population 1,000-2,499, and 200-499 the number of inhabitants grew by over 25% (6,335; 3,328). In municipalities with population 2,500-4,999 it only grew by 6.7% (2,117 people).

When evaluating the trends in the number of inhabitants of municipalities in the three specified Zones of the region – its centre, the suburban and the rural areas – it seems, as presumed, that the biggest average yearly increase took place in municipalities of the suburban zone (Fig. 2). In total, the number of inhabitants in the České Budějovice suburb increased by 294 persons per 1,000 inhabitants in the period 1992-2010 under review. The highest increase in the suburban municipalities, by approximately 21 persons per 1,000 inhabitants per year on average, was recorded in 2006-2010. In general it was in 2006-2010, in the last five years of the period under review, when the most intense population growth took place not only in the suburban municipalities, but also in the rural municipalities, i.e. more peripheral countryside of the České Budějovice region, as well as in all size types of municipalities of the RCB. In the period of 1992-2010, the population of rural municipalities of Zone III increased by 8.8% in total (3,319 persons), which is significantly less than in suburban municipalities (25.0%; 12,682 persons). In spite of this, the smallest rural municipalities (below 200 inhabitants) of Zone III had higher increments of population in the last two years under review than the municipalities in the suburban Zone II (21.6‰ versus 18.3‰) leaving aside deviations in population increments caused by administrative changes in the municipalities (Fig. 2). Rural municipalities of Zone III, with accessibility exceeding 18 minutes, reported an even higher increase in population of 20.3‰ in 2009/2010. These results point to a dynamic growth of not only small municipalities in general, but also of small villages in the periphery of the RCB.

The metropolitan centre of RCB, the city of České Budějovice, lost in total around 39 inhabitants per 1,000 in 1992-2010 (3,861 people), especially between the years 1999 and 2004. Although the city reported a small average annual increase in the remaining 5 years, its number of inhabitants after the year 2008 kept up with the constant moderately decreasing trend.

Only 4% of the total increase of the RCB population in the years 1992-2010 was supplied by the natural population change. Although the crude rate of the RCB's natural increase is positive, it only reaches a small amount of 0.2‰ (544 people in total in the whole period). It follows that the total increase in population of the RCB is caused principally by a positive balance of migration. Moreover, the region in its total reaches a positive rate of natural increase. This is attributable to the central city of CB on the one hand (0.9‰ in the period of 1992-2010 under review; 1,603 inhabitants in total in absolute numbers), and to some municipalities in its suburb and rural area on the other (Fig. 3). On the contrary, a high natural decrease of -2.5‰ in average (in total -122 persons) was recorded in the smallest, mainly rural municipalities of up to 200 inhabitants and of -1.8‰ (-439) in municipalities of 200-499 inhabitants. A remarkable fact is that not only in the region as a whole, but also in all municipalities under review the natural increase grew steadily and more children were born starting by 2001 and especially since 2006. Hence, the effects of migration seem to be positive in case of small rural municipalities. Small rural municipalities have unexpectedly en-

joyed, on average, a natural increment in 2006-2010. Consequently, the weight of the natural population movement in the total increase of municipalities' population including the rural ones increased. This was possibly a crucial turn in population development since the beginning of the 21st century.

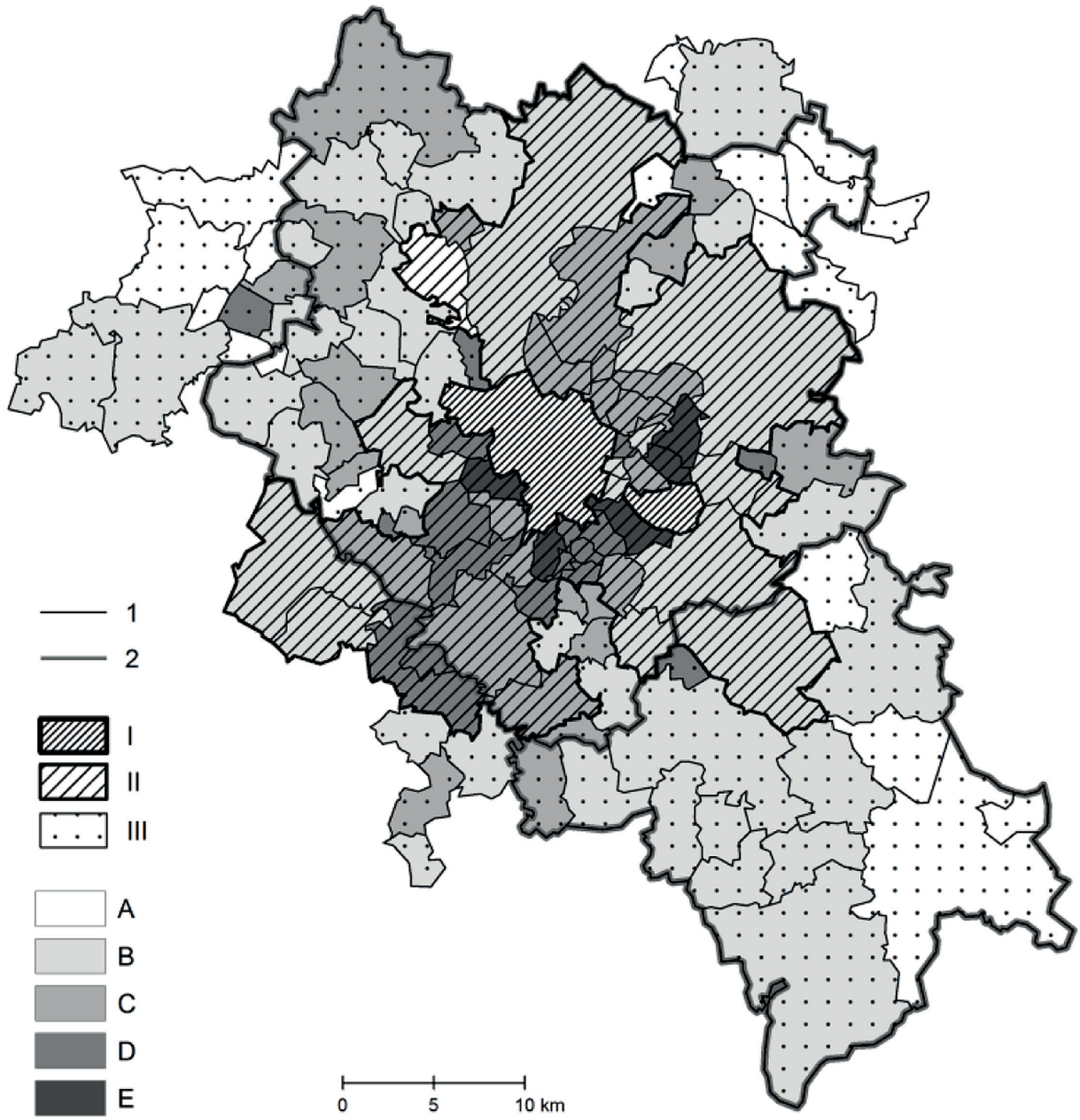

Fig. 2. Population development in the municipalities in the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010

Explanation: 1 – municipality border, 2 – district border; I – centre of region, II – suburban zone, III – rural area; Population growth ratio (in %): A – until 100; B – 101-120; C – 121-150; D – 151-200; E – above 200

Source: ČSÚ, 2012a,b; Ouředníček et al., 2013; Čekal, 2007

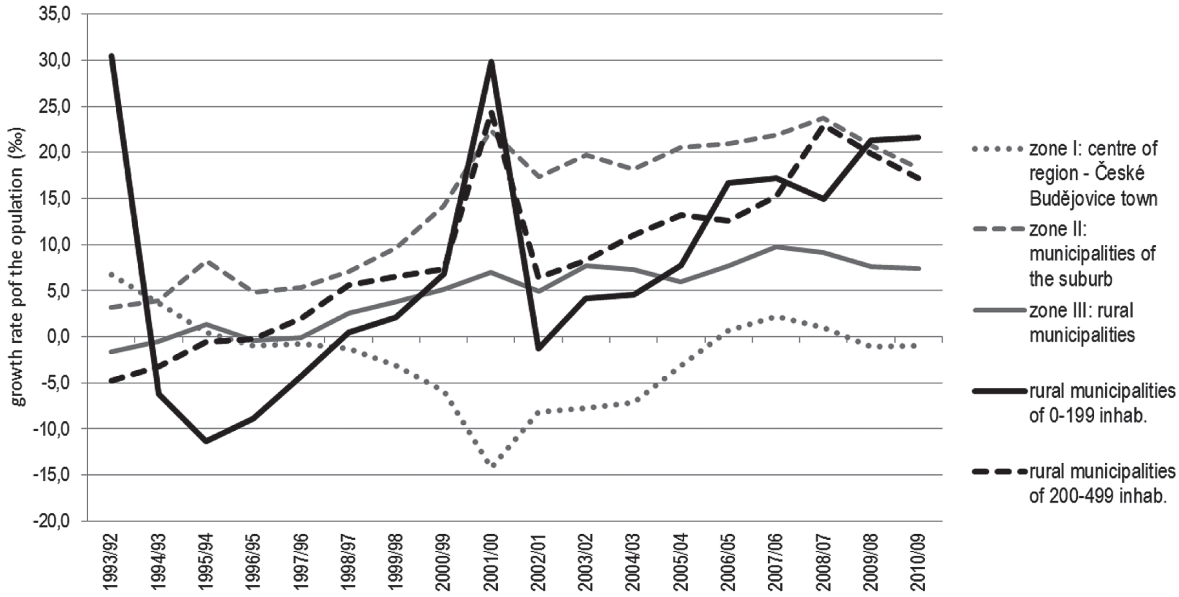

Fig. 3. Growth rate of the population in the zone I-III of the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010

Source: ČSÚ, 2012a,b

6. Migration balance

The growth in population of the České Budějovice region is above all guaranteed by a positive migration balance, i.e. the net immigration (96%). So when considering the total migration (inner + outer), it can be said that the RCB is relatively active in migration – more than six thousand migrants a year in average migrated within its borders. It was in the years 2006-2010 when the region achieved the highest average intensity of population migration. The number of migrants in the region increased in absolute as well as in relative numbers gradually from 2000 with its peak in 2007, when the number of migrants reached the ceiling of almost 11,000. The growth of migration activity since the beginning of the 21st century was preceded (especially in the late 1990s) by a period of migration decline. Economic recession accompanied by transition and the slow birth of housing market after 1989 manifested themselves not only in the RCB but also in other regions of Czechia, where it limited population movement. At present, migration within the region reaches an average level of 43% per year. The share of foreign migration in the total migration volume for the region is on the level of 10%, meaning foreign migrants represent on average about one tenth of all migrants (the foreign migration metrics changed in 2001).

At the same time the RCB region is making migration gains. Throughout the whole period under review the number of in-migrants exceeded the number of out-migrants. Since the start of the new millennium, we observe a widening of the divide between the two migration balances and a moderate increase of the positive net migration with its peak in 2007 (net migration rate 8.5‰). Migration gains were reported by the region as a whole, and in its context in particular by the municipalities of the suburban Zone II (15‰). Although some municipalities in the suburb gained massively in population through migration even in recent years, there is a moderate decrease of net migration of the suburb, as the number of in-migrants into municipalities of the suburban zone as a whole dropped while the number of out-migrants notably went up. In the context of an overall increase in the migration intensity, where the total migration rate reached 63.4‰ in the years 2001-2005 and 65.5‰ in the years 2006-2010, we observe a loss in the net migration rate (19.6‰ in the years 2001-2005 and 18.2‰ in the years 2006-2010). The borders of the area have moved beyond the zone of suburban zone in the last years due to migration gains of municipalities (Fig. 4.). Intensive migration

gains are observable in the group of municipalities with 1,000-2,500 inhabitants (16.6‰ in average for the years 1992-2010). The highest net migration in rural settlements, i.e. in Zone III (8.4‰ in average for the years 1992-2010, i.e. 4.9‰ in 1992-2005 and 17.5‰ in 2006-2010) is reported by the smallest municipalities below 200 inhabitants. On the contrary, since 1995 the centre of the RCB, the city of České Budějovice, had a negative balance of total migration. Negligible migration gains or even migration losses are also reported by some towns and again by some small peripheral communes as well.

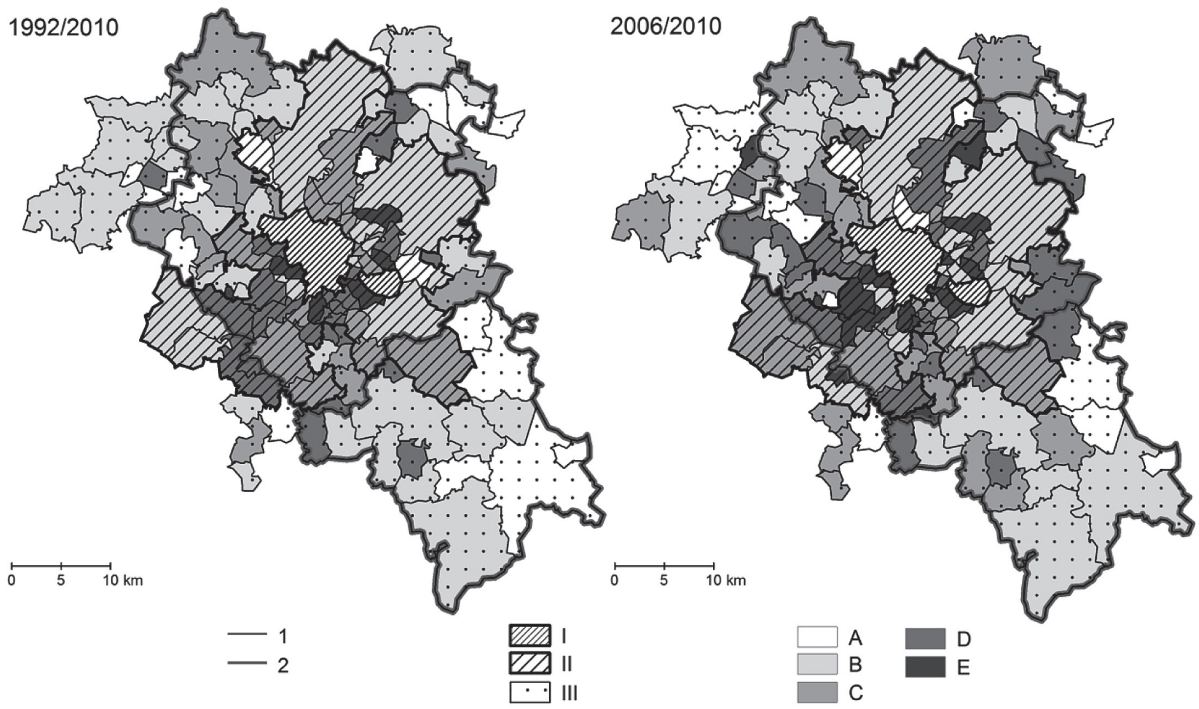

Fig. 4. Net migration in the municipalities of the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010

Explanation: 1– municipality border, 2 – district border; I – centre of region, II – suburban zone, III – rural area; 1992/2010 Crude rate of net migration in ‰: A – -17.0-0.0; B – 0.1-10.0; C – 10.1-20.0; D – 20.1-40.0; E – above 40.0; 2006/2010. Crude rate of net migration in ‰: A – -22.5-0.0; B – 0.1-10.0; C – 10.1-20.0; D – 20.1-40.0; E – above 40.0

Source: ČSÚ, 2012a,b; Ouředníček, et al., 2013; Čekal, 2007

7. Balance of migration flows

When investigating the migration flows between the three elementary areas identified within the RCB – its centre, its suburb and the rural area, it was confirmed, as assumed, that the biggest volume of migrants is connected with the suburban surroundings of the metropolitan centre (total migration rate 41.0‰), followed by the rural areas (28.3‰), the lowest relative migration activity being reported by the city of České Budějovice itself (17.2‰). Not only in relative, but also in absolute numbers, both in the individual years and in average for the whole period, the number of migrants in the suburban zone exceeded the number of persons migrating to and from centre of the RCB (the city of CB). The lesser importance of rural areas in this matter is documented by its smallest share in the number of migrants within the region (22.5%, Fig. 5.).

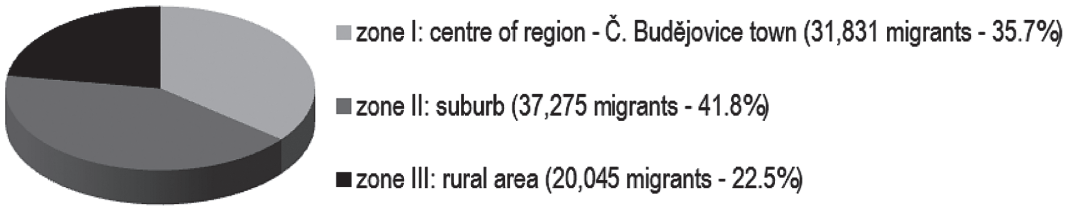

Fig. 5. Share of migrants in the zone I-III of the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010
Source: ČSÚ, 2012b

7.1. Evaluation of inner migration flows

The inner migration of inhabitants within the RCB expressed by the net migration index is characterized by a relatively high negative net migration of the metropolitan centre. It is the result of not only the negative net migration reported by the city with municipalities in its suburb, but also in relation of the city with small rural municipalities with population below 200. Thus, besides the progressive increase in the positive migration rate of the smallest municipalities in the defined RCB's rural area, there is evident not only a moderate decrease in migration intensity in the municipalities of the suburban area, but also for the first time in the period under review after 2006 a higher average migration activity of the municipalities in the RCB rural areas in comparison with the migration activity of municipalities of the city centre and its suburb. This fact may indicate the start of weakening suburbanisation and strengthening counterurbanisation and reurbanisation tendencies in the region. At the same time the fact that the distance from the centre is not the factor that would affect the migration intensity of rural settlements is confirmed (net migration rate oscillates between 2.26‰ and 2.34‰). It is more influenced by the size structure of settlements (net migration rate oscillating between –1.2‰ and 5.6‰).

7.2. Evaluation of migration flows to and from metropolitan centre

As indicated by Čermák (2001: 172), the city of České Budějovice (CB) has in long term one of the highest rates of the emigration of population to its surroundings among the Czech cities. Nowadays, the share of persons relocated from CB to the municipalities in its suburb and to rural area oscillates around 60% of all out-migrants. In the meanwhile, the emigration from the city of CB to the municipalities in the suburban zone is 2.5 times higher than to municipalities beyond its borders, i.e. the rural municipalities. In relation to its suburban area, České Budějovice lost population constantly during the period of 1992-2010 under review (18.8 inhabitants per 1,000 a year on average).

The intensity of negative net migration of the city has risen continuously and reached its peak in 2003, when 849 persons moved to the suburb and only 272 persons moved from suburb into the city. The intensity of emigration from the centre to the suburban Zone II has relatively decreased during the last 5 years. An average yearly number of out-migrants per 1,000 inhabitants decreased from 22.6 ‰ in the years 2001-2005 to 21.2 ‰ in the years 2006-2010 (Table 1). In spite of this, the absolute number of in-migrants to suburb remained high.

It means that the suburbanisation process in the region still continues. As far as rural municipalities are concerned (Zone III), up to the year 1994 the number of in-migrants to the city of CB from the rural area still predominated (Fig. 6). However, after this year, besides the emigration from CB to suburbs, the immigration to rural areas definitely rose as well. It reached the highest level of 8‰ in the last 5 years between 2006 and 2010. It was only 6.1‰ on average during the period of 1992-2005 (Table 1). These facts confirm, in the meaning of the above-mentioned, an increasing intensity of counterurbanisation processes.

Table 1. Intensity of migration flows between zones I-III in the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010 period 1992-2010

		Emigrants from:		
Imigrants to:		CENTRE	SUBURB	RURAL AREA
	CENTRE	x intra-urban migration	**3.8** ***(6,957)*** reurbanisation	**1.7** ***(3,123)*** reurbanisation
	SUBURB	18.8 *(16,924)* suburbanisation	5.0 *(4,518)* intra-suburban migration	**2.7** ***(2,444)*** reurbanisation
	RURAL AREA	**6.6** ***(4,840)*** counterurbanisation	**3.2** ***(2,366)*** counterurbanisation	4.8 *(3,500)* rural migration
period 2006-2010				
		Emigrants from:		
Imigrants to:		CENTRE	SUBURB	RURAL AREA
	CENTRE	x intra-urban migration	**4.7** ***(2,220)*** reurbanisation	**1,7.** ***(921)*** reurbanisation
	SUBURB	21.2 *(5,643)* suburbanisation	5.7 *(1,514)* intra-suburban migration	**2.8** ***(751)*** reurbanisation
	RURAL AREA	**8.0** ***(1,607)*** counterurbanisation	**3.6** ***(731)*** counterurbanisation	4.7 *(952)* rural migration

Notes: 3.8 1(6,957), i.e. 3.8 ‰=crude rate of migration; 6,957=absolute number of migrants

Source: ČSÚ 2012a,b; Ouředníček et al. 2013; Popjaková 2013

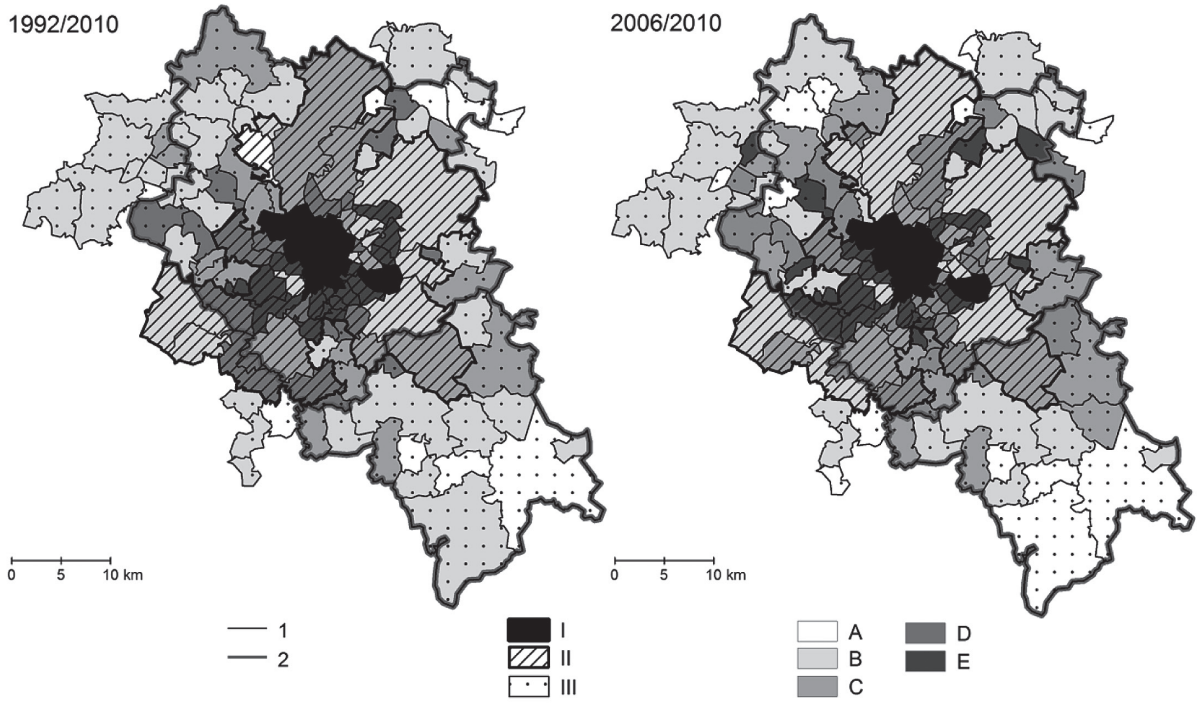

Fig. 6. Progress of counterurbanisation in the České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010

Source: ČSÚ, 2012b, Popjaková, 2013

A more detailed view of the map of municipalities' migration, the net migration in relation to the centre (Fig. 7), enables us to observe a process of an increasing number of municipalities which acquire population from the centre through migration, not only in the suburban, but also in the rural area. This confirms the above-mentioned continuation and spatial extension of the RCB's suburban process. On the other hand, there is a higher rate of the negative net migration as well as a moderate increase of municipalities which keep losing migration from the centre, i.e. less inhabitants from the city of CB move there compared to the number of inhabitants who move to CB. This involves mainly small rural municipalities in the periphery of the region mostly located in the distance of over 30 minutes from CB, as well as the rural towns. Their example may indicate certain reurbanisation tendencies in the RCB (which were not confirmed in the region as a whole, Popjaková, 2013).

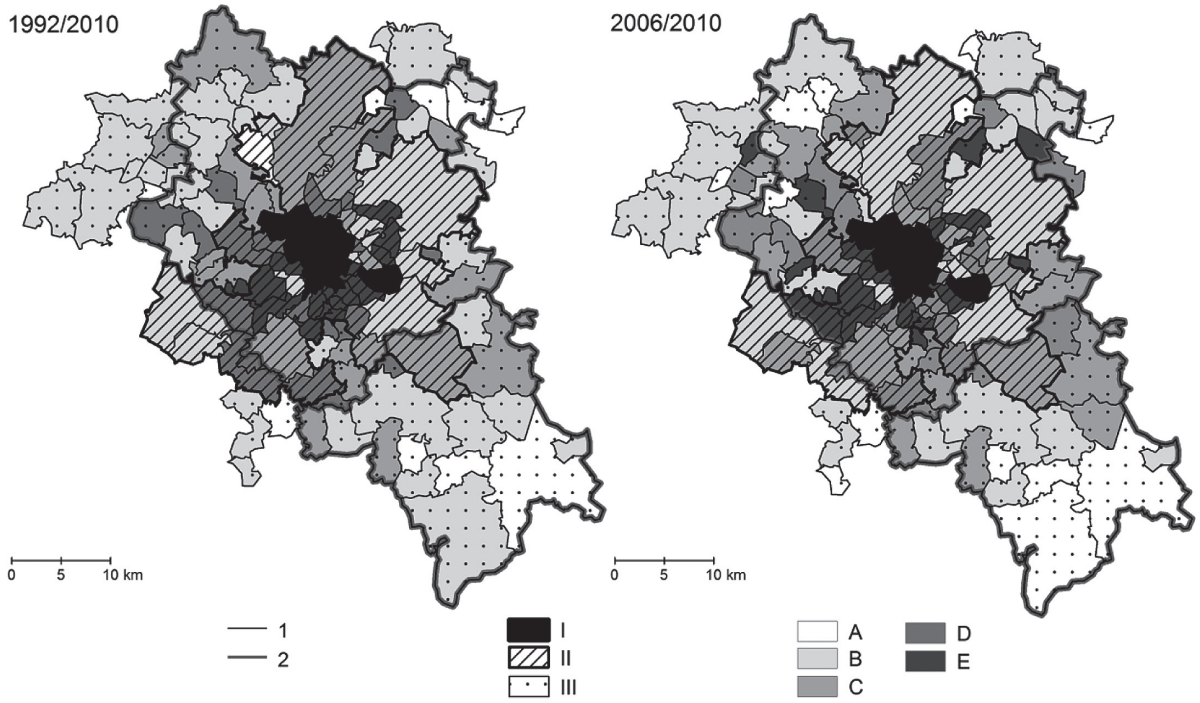

Fig. 7. Net migration of the municipalities in the relation with the centre of České Budějovice region between 1992 and 2010

Explanation: 1– municipality border, 2 – district border; I – centre of region, II – suburban zone, III – rural area; 1992/2010 Crude rate of net migration in ‰: A – -8.9-0.0;, B – 0.1-5.0; C – 5.1-10.0; D – 10.1-20.0; E – above 20.0; 2006/2010 Crude rate of net migration in ‰: A – -55.6-0.0; B – 0.1-5.0; C – 5.1-10.0; D – 10.1-20.0; E – above 20.0

Source: ČSÚ 2012a,b; Ouředníček at al. 2013; Čekal 2007

Resorting to the concept of Geyer and Kontuly (1993), counterurbanisation occurs when the deconcentration flows given by the number of in-migrants to the rural areas from the centre and suburbs are higher than the concentration flows, i.e. the number of out-migrants from the rural areas to the centre and suburbs. Similarly, it can then also be paraphrased that the reurbanisation processes arise in the situation when the number of in-migrants to the city from suburban and peripheral, i.e. rural zone, as well as from the rural areas to suburbs, is higher than the number of out-migrants from the city to the suburbs and to the countryside, and from suburbs to the countryside. If we start with these premises and at the same time investigate the volumes of migration transfers in the RCB region, we arrive to a conclusion that the existence of counterurbanisation is confirmed while the reurbanisation processes has not been confirmed in the studied area. It follows from the comparison of data in Table 1 for the

period 1992-2010. The volumes of counterurbanisation/deconcentration migration flows are in absolute numbers higher (7,206 migrants = /3,233+1,607/ + /1,635+731/) than the volumes of population concentration (5,567 migrants = /2,202+921/ + + /1,693+751/). It similarly holds true in relative figures. At the same time, the data for the period of the last 5 years of 2006-2010 under review confirm the increasing intensity of deconcentration processes to the detriment of concentration ones. The deconcentration counterurbanisation flows in the RCB are graphically and explicitly confirmed in Fig. 6 by the curves of migration flows between the three defined zones: the centre, the suburb, and the rural area.

8. Discussion

The Region of České Budějovice (RCB) is a specific territory of the Czech Republic. It is perhaps an example of the Central European country's territory as a periphery next to what was Iron Curtain, which divided Europe since the end of WW2. Its economic and social development lagged behind the rest of the country until the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. Its significance changed after the economic transition. The transition, which took place in all post-socialist countries since the end of the 20th century, was a period of decay for many of them. On the contrary, transition benefited the RDB. A region which was not a traditionally industrial and possessed a diversified industrial structure escaped the pernicious impact of transition. Thanks to its favourable ecological status it became attractive for migrants. The results of the research in this territory point to several tendencies in the development of migration flows in the České Budějovice region (RCB) and to their consequences.

1) Although the metropolitan centre (Zone I), the city of České Budějovice (CB), reports a low natural increase, it loses population continuously since 1996, as a result of strong emigration flows especially to the suburb, but also to the rural area. Thus, the city reports one of the highest levels of population emigration into surroundings among Czech cities.
2) On average, all size types of the RCB municipalities in the suburban area of the city (Zone II) grow significantly in population thanks to intensive population immigration. In the RCB, the process of suburbanisation continues and spreads in the space. The development of migration in the region indicates that this tendency, due to which the reurbanisation processes in the region will be further repressed, should continue in the coming years. In spite of this for the first time there is a moderate decrease in intensity of the suburbanisation tendencies, i.e. a decrease in the emigration rate from the centre to the suburb also accompanied by the decrease in the positive migration balance in these municipalities, as well as finally a small decline in the increment of the number of inhabitants in municipalities of the suburban zone. This tendency may indicate a decline of suburbanisation tendencies in the RCB region.
3) In rural areas (Zone III), the smallest rural municipalities of up to 200 or 500 inhabitants also grow in population, especially in the last years, but on average they have a natural decrease. It follows that the increase in the number of inhabitants of these municipalities is given by migration gains.

Another fact connected with the rural area of the RCB region is a certain number of mostly small municipalities with a decreasing population. They result from the natural decrease accompanied by negative migration balance of population. Geographically speaking these are settlements in peripheral northernmost and southernmost parts of the Region. Some of them grow, other diminish although they are situated close to each other. In the sense of Weekley (1988), two parallel effects were confirmed in RCB's rural population development: a population growth guaranteed by counterurbanisation, and, on the other hand, the ongoing depopulation. The situation is perhaps attributable to the capabilities of local leaders (Ouředníček et al., 2011). However, the search for causes of this feature was not the task of our study.

We can question the "limits of counterurbanisation" represented for example by the specific amenity migration into the mountain areas. Its excessive development connected with the spread of different forms of land exploitation may cause degradation of the natural potential of such territories (Löffler, Steinicke, 2013). Causes of migration in the RCB

cannot be definitely identified based on the analysis of the available hard statistical data. Regarding the nature of the south of Czechia as a territory with dwarfed industrialisation in the past, low population density, economic activities and a good quality environment, amenity migration is expected (Bartoš at al., 2011). But the rate of such migration certainly does not reach the border level in the RCB region. Learning about the causes and nature of amenity migration in the RCB requires further quality-focused research.

Intensification of the counterurbanisation flows and growth of the number of inhabitants of rural area thanks to the immigration of the younger population can guarantee improving of the age structure of the over-aged rural population and suspension of the aging process of the rural population in comparison with towns (Szymańska et al., 2009). On the other hand, some researchers notice that the counterurbanisation can cause a phenomenon labelled by some authors as an "exodus of the countryside" (Champion, Shepherd, 2006). In general, the counterurbanisation connected with a specific immigration of elder or middle-aged population to the countryside, can strengthen the depopulation and aging of the rural population which was present in this area in the period of intense urbanisation, and by this it can paradoxically invoke a regression of the countryside. Research on counterurbanisation did not concentrate on these processes in this study.

9. Conclusion

Counterurbanisation as an urbanisation process of deconcentration is often questioned by specialists involved with the issue. The concept of 'counterurbanisation' itself and its logic are discussed too (Champion, 2001: 151; Šimon, 2011: 235). More important than the analysis of this term from the linguistic point of view is the semantic, substantive side sense of the "counterurbanisation" term seen as a deurbanising process. Anyway, the counterurbanisation represents a real and confirmed phenomenon. In the Czech Republic, a new social phenomenon occurred which means the growth of peripheral areas and of distant rural areas suffering from a prolonged population and socio-economic decline. Although it is not a massive growth significantly dispersed in space and durable in time, but rather a highly variable process in contemporary conditions, it still has and plays an important role in the development of settlements, and thus also of the social order. One should not underestimate or overestimate the importance and the role of counterurbanisation. However, it definitely is a a prevailing deurbanisation process, i.e. suburbanisation changes or stops the massive concentration tendencies, which may bring a significant turn in the organisation of society.

The study of migration in the RCB confirms that counterurbanisation is not a dominant urbanisation trend. In the current socio-economic conditions it will probably never acquire such massive dimensions as urbanisation. Urbanisation was historically an exceptional process with a considerable spatial and temporal range. Urbanisation processes have been running parallel to industrialisation over several centuries. They meant a straightforward concentration of economic and social activities into cities at the expense of the development of the countryside. Urbanisation processes developed progressively. After the initial slow phase they materialised in mass movement of population from the economically less developed regions to more advanced ones. These processes emerged in Central and Eastern Europe by the end of the 18th century and culminated at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries and gained new forms after WW2 in the socialist era typical for the promotion of industry as the means providing for full employment in all regions. In some CEE states and/or in the less developed areas the processes proper to urbanisation concentration still continued and eventually faded out at the beginning of the 21st century.

The processes of suburbanisation and consequently counterurbanisation showed that the concentration processes have their limits; that the urbanisation and the related socio-economic regression of the close surroundings of cities, metropolises, and also of the peripheral regions are subject to the principles of autoregulation. Each system has its given limits. The autoregulation processes prevent a complete destruction or even disintegration of the system in the case of settlement mega-systems and the unbearable and unsustainable growth of cities. New urbanisation processes appear pro-

gressively, at the beginning as some coincidental and dissipative structures, which can give impression of being chaotic: suburbanisation, counterurbanisation, and reurbanisation. In the first phase it was suburbanisation which relieved the excessive development of cities (metropolises) and not only did it stop the regression of municipalities in the cities' surroundings, but also brought a huge development mainly of their residential function. In the secondary phase, the counterurbanisation partially slowed down or even stopped the degradation of peripheral rural areas, geographically more distant from cities. This too was the case of the RCB, where the process of counterurbanisation was confirmed via the analysis of statistical data concerning migration. The next research stage will focus on a more detailed study of 'counterurbanists,' of reasons for their moving, and of causes of disparities in the development of rural settlements in the region using the methods of qualitative research.

Suburbanisation, counterurbanisation, and reurbanisation are subsequent or accompanying processes of urbanisation. They emerge as a response to the higher limit of development progressively reached by cities thanks to urbanisation processes. What is certain is that counterurbanisation, reurbanisation, and suburbanisation certainly do not and will not reach the intensity of the development of urbanisation because of their low volume. At the same time counterurbanisation tendencies often vary. Growth of counterurbanisation in some intervals and decline in others is quite common. At the same time, counterurbanisation proves to be disrupted in space. Presented factors may convey the impression that counterurbanisation is a chaotic process. It can be viewed as a chaotic process, but not in the negative way. In any case, it is an identified and verified urbanisation process with an outright role, significance, and reason. Disputing, doubting or underestimating counterurbanisation is not relevant.

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