Immigrant internal migration in a new destination country: Do immigrants suburbanise in Czechia and why?

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Abstract

International migrants are often a major force reshaping settlement geography. However, their role in urbanisation processes has predominantly been explored in more established immigration countries, while such knowledge remains limited in Central and Eastern Europe. This paper investigates trends in participation of different groups of foreign residents in urbanisation processes in Czechia, which has recently become a new immigration destination. Using a longitudinal dataset of the Czech migration registers (2005-2017), it assesses the extent of participation in urbanisation processes. It also evaluates the strength of socio-demographic and place-based factors contributing to suburbanisation, a process which makes the Czech suburbs the settlement type with highest net migration and to which both the Czech majority and the immigrant population contribute. The paper finds similarities between the internal migration of different immigrant groups and that of the Czech majority, indicating the predominance of suburbanisation of affluence, notably in culturally and economically well-off groups.

Key words: immigrant population, internal migration, suburbanisation, Czechia, settlement system
Introduction

Internal and international migration have been prominent topics in population geography, producing abundant literature encompassing, among other things, intensity, spatial patterns and impacts on population redistribution (Fonseca, 2008; Smith et al., 2015; Rees et al., 2017; Hanaoka et al., 2017; Champion et al., 2018). Following from the high levels of immigration and the politicisation of the debate around immigration and interethnic relations in immigrant destination countries and beyond, a new field dealing with internal migration of non-native populations and ethnic minorities has developed within this literature. This increasing interest in immigration and ethnicity has resulted in a number of studies which strive to understand the intricacies of immigration on the one hand and social cohesion and community relations on the other (Hickman and Mai, 2015; Phillips and Robinson, 2015) and has also brought forward the role of ethnicity in internal migration, its impact on population redistribution and the participation of minority populations in various urbanisation processes (Finney and Catney, 2012; Rees et al., 2017).

Given their generally higher propensity to move, minorities broadly defined by ethnicity are often one of the major forces in reshaping the settlement geography of their destination countries (Finney and Catney, 2012: 4). However, the emerging evidence on the role of minority populations in urbanisation processes seems to be limited to established immigration countries. Observations from traditional immigration countries such as the USA, the UK and the Netherlands (Bolt et al., 2008; Finney and Simpson, 2008; Farrell, 2016) indicate that immigrants tend to assimilate to the general migration patterns of the majority population at later stages of their residence in the destination country by relocating into suburbs, some also participating in counterurbanisation, although the pace and extent of these processes differ between individual minority populations. A non-negligible role of minority population in suburbanisation was also noted in newer destinations of international migration such as Greece, Spain and Japan (Arapoglou, 2012; Bayona-Carrasco and Gil-Alonso, 2012; Hanaoka et al., 2017). By comparison, relatively little is known about the significance of minorities as part of the general urbanisation processes in the most recent countries of immigration in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Analysing the phenomenon in a new context may open new perspectives
on immigrant internal migration, thereby contributing to the debate on its significance and on the underlying factors of such population moves. The lack of evidence from the CEE region is unsurprising as most of it remains an emigration and transit area. However, evidence on immigrant role within urbanisation processes and population redistribution is scarce even for new immigrant destination countries in the region, such as Slovenia and Czechia. An exception is the work of Janská et al. (2014) on Czechia, which observes patterns of internal migration in foreign citizens in a specific period before the impacts of the 2008 global economic crisis became apparent. This was followed by a study of two major immigrant groups’ assimilation in the Czech districts and selected urban areas (Janská and Bernard, 2018).

Taking Czechia as an example, this paper analyses immigrants’ role in the general patterns of internal migration, and particularly in the population deconcentration from cities to suburbs, from a longitudinal perspective. First, it explores to what extent immigrants (defined by country of citizenship) participated in urbanisation processes in Czechia in the most significant period of recent immigration of 2005-2017, notably in those leading to spatial dispersal from urban areas. An adoption of the latter type of migration could be perceived as a sign of assimilation to the behaviour of the Czech majority population, for which dispersal has been the main trend (Ouředníček, 2007).

Suburbanisation and counterurbanisation are likely to transform the social environment of the destination areas by bringing alternative —urban— lifestyles to the destination areas (Ouředníček et al., 2019). An even greater transformative potential of such migration flows of immigrants than of the majority can be expected. Apart from bringing alternative ways of life, the presence of foreign population may also challenge the local social environment by a new diversity in residents’ appearance, cultures and perception by others (Catney, 2016). However, little has been known about the conditionality of such migration behaviour. Therefore, the second part of our study seeks to identify factors underlying immigrants’ participation in the suburbanisation process. The data used in this article suggest that, resulting from participation of both majority and minority populations, suburbs have had the highest net internal migration of the three types of settlement (urban, suburban, rural) in Czechia in recent years. Given that immigrants represent a highly diverse group with
dissimilar spatial patterns of settlement which are likely to be related to different underlying forces, the main immigrant groups in the country are analysed separately. Due to an anticipation of the role of economy in shaping immigrant internal migration in Czechia, the observations are broken down into three time periods, characterised by dissimilar economic conditions.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, we review the literature that links urbanisation processes to minority internal migration to highlight the importance of looking at the causes and consequences of immigrant migration. Second, we provide the context of Czechia as a new immigration country. Third, we introduce the data and methodology of the current study. Fourth, we present our results in the next sections. Fifth, we discuss our results in international comparison and elaborate on the likely consequences of immigrant internal migration for the Czech settlement system. We conclude by linking these observations to the debate on causes and consequences of immigrant internal migration.

The ethnic component in urbanisation processes

The concept of the stages of urban development (Hall and Hay, 1980; van den Berg et al., 1982; Champion, 2001) and its successor, the theory of differential urbanisation (Geyer and Kontuly, 1996), aimed to capture the vast complexity of the development of the settlement system. However, the idea of consequent stages in development of urban system inherent in these frameworks was later rejected by empirical evidence (Kontuly and Geyer, 2003). It was shown that urbanisation processes represent types of development that coexist simultaneously within the settlement system rather than sequential stages (Ouředníček, 2007). Nevertheless, these frameworks provide a useful starting point for evaluating the development of population geography by highlighting the importance of individual migration streams, including both deconcentration and concentration tendencies, the simultaneous operation of which constantly reshapes the spatial patterns within the settlement system.

Migration flows directing from cities as nodes of settlement hierarchy (i.e., deconcentration, or down-scale migration) and those directing towards them (i.e., concentration, or up-scale migration)
comprise different population groups. For instance, Turok and Mykhnenko (2007) note that some of the large Western European cities’ population growth is due to international migration from beyond the region, and other recent research also observes an ethnic component in deconcentration processes, notably suburbanisation (Alba et al., 1999; Zorlu and Latten, 2009; Finney and Catney, 2012; Tammaru et al., 2013), but also counterurbanisation (Finney and Simpson, 2009a).

Immigrants’ spatial mobility is higher than that of the domestic population, as the former always have, by definition, a previous experience with mobility. This supposedly makes them less embedded in local networks and more prone to move to new opportunities than the local population. Generally, the extent to which immigrants participate in different urbanisation processes relates to several interwoven factors. First, migration in general tends to differ for people at various age groups and stages in life course. Thus, the resulting patterns of internal migration of immigrants are likely to be influenced by their demographic structure (Finney and Simpson, 2008). Second, the traditional spatial assimilation perspective stresses the importance of socio-economic and cultural factors. It holds that the gradual reduction of socioeconomic and cultural distance between the minority and majority populations would eventually translate into a greater similarity of spatial behaviour of the two groups (Massey, 1985; Zelinsky and Lee, 1998). Thus, for instance, immigrant suburbanisation can be thought of as a sign of suburbanisation of affluence - spatial assimilation to the presumably better-off majority population (Zhang and Pryce, 2019); or seen as suburbanisation of poverty, known from more established immigration countries, resulting from the interplay between the reurbanisation of the better-off majority population and the affordability of housing in some suburban areas, which is sought after by groups with lower socio-economic status that may overlap considerably with immigrant/ethnic minority population (Howell and Timberlake, 2014; Hochstenbach and Musterd, 2018; Bailey et al., 2019). Third, the stratification perspective asserts that spatial patterns of internal migration behaviour may be influenced by discrimination that can be more pronounced towards some groups than others (Chung and Brown, 2007). Fourth, the approach of resurgent ethnicity highlights that even when discrimination becomes irrelevant, some groups prefer to reside in proximity to their co-ethnics, i.e. people sharing the same ethnic background as the reference group. Following co-
ethnic networks may then result in ethnic spatial clusters in the city and at its outskirts, so-called ethnoburbs (Li, 1998). Fifth, and notably relevant to labour migration, is the factor of economic opportunities, which can have a substantial influence on immigrant internal migration. Much as the overall performance of the national economy can impact on the extent of immigration to the country, the spatial distribution of job opportunities can draw immigrants to specific areas. Finally, a new component in the determinants of immigrant internal migration has been the increased accessibility of virtual communication and of travel, which simultaneously inhibits and motivates spatial movement and the resulting (de)concentration of population groups. Internet communication seems to reduce internal migration by providing an alternative to moving place of residence (Green and Shuttleworth, 2015), but has also allowed the emergence of transnationalism and translocalism, which consist in an individual’s embeddedness within and circulation across multiple locations (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013).

These determinants relate to individual urbanisation processes to varying extents. While long-distance migration tends to be driven by economic factors, short-distance intra-metropolitan moves like suburbanisation serve usually to adjust one’s residential environment (Geyer and Kontuly, 1996). Therefore, the drivers of ethnic minority suburbanisation are likely to be influenced by the demography of the movers and the extent to which they follow the ethnic networks or, alternatively, disconnect from them. Simultaneously, little impact is expected from work-related factors such as the difference between the economic performance of the origin and destination municipality.

**Czechia: a new immigration destination**

Having become a new destination for international migration soon after the end of the Cold War, Czechia has quickly grown to be a “migration Goliath” among the CEE countries (Drbohlav, 2011). Although the country’s migration situation does not allow direct comparison to the Anglo-American region and other North-West European countries, its trajectory towards becoming a mature immigration country is clear (Okólski, 2012). The differences between the established immigration
countries and Czechia result from the specific geography, history, politics, culture and economy of the latter (Přidalová and Hasman, 2018). Thus, the immigrant population in Czechia is characterised by an overall small socio-cultural and economic distance from the majority population (Ouředníček, 2016), it settles into a less unequal society, and represents a lower proportion of the population than in established immigration countries. Furthermore, due to the rather short recent history of immigration and the strictness of the Czech naturalisation policy, most immigrants still hold the citizenship of their country of origin. This allows us to use the terms ‘immigrants’ and ‘foreign citizens’ (‘foreigners’) interchangeably.

According to the most recent data (Alien Police, 2019), the registered population with other-than-Czech citizenship in Czechia represents some 4.7% of the country’s population and consists mainly of Ukrainians (114 thousand, 22.5% of foreign population), Slovaks (110 thousand, 21.7%)², Vietnamese (59 thousand, 11.6%) and Russians (35 thousand, 7% of foreign population), followed by a number of smaller groups originating predominantly in Europe. Although most international migration to Czechia has been motivated by work, the growing proportion of women and children among foreign residents indicates that settlement and family migration also take place (Drbohlav and Valenta, 2014). In general, citizens of countries to the East of the country can be associated with less-skilled labour and family migration, while those from Western countries are more often professionals. However, there are exceptions, such as a generally more highly socio-economically positioned Russian population, which has similar educational and occupational structure to residents from Germany, the UK and US (Přidalová and Hasman, 2018).

The proportion of immigrants in Czechia has traditionally followed a decreasing gradient from the West to the East of the country and peaking in major cities, notably in the capital city of Prague (Figure 1). Janská et al. (2014) attribute this geography to the importance of large cities as gateways

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1 Interestingly, in contrast to the public discourse in established immigration countries where the term ‘immigrants’ is preferred, the Czech public discourse prefers the term ‘foreigner’. In Czech, the latter bears a neutral meaning, as opposed to ‘immigrant’, which is burdened by the negative connotations given recently by the Czech extreme right.

2 Technically, persons with Slovak citizenship belong to the category of ‘foreigners’ in Czechia and are considered as such below. However, given the longstanding shared history and cultural similarities of Czechia and Slovakia, they are not perceived as such by the Czech population.
for new arrivals. They also note that, despite the overall tendency toward concentration in major cities, immigrants were becoming part of the suburbanisation process in 2006–2008, the period of highest economic prosperity (by the time of their writing), which attracted a number of foreign workers to the country.

Despite the decrease in immigration and the strict migration policy which followed the 2008 economic downturn in Czechia, the proportion of immigrants in suburban population has continued to grow slowly (Table 1). It remains to be answered, what are the determinants of immigrant suburbanisation in Czechia, how different population subgroups participate in it and how their tendency towards suburbanisation develops over time.

![Map of Czechia showing proportion of foreign citizens by settlement type](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per cent foreign citizens in Czech municipalities by settlement type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: municipalities without foreign population are shown in white
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population size of municipality</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;50k</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20k-50k</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10k-20k</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5k-10k</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2k-5k</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;500</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All municipalities</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Proportion of foreign citizens on population of Czech municipalities in 2006, 2013 and 2016.*

*Source: Alien Police*

### Data and methods

This paper presents a longitudinal analysis of internal migration of immigrants in Czechia based on population registers released by the Czech Statistical Office. The data include all changes in residence between municipalities between 2005 and 2017, the most significant period of recent immigration (Přidalová and Hasman, 2018), registered with the Czech authorities. There is a well-known underestimation of the number of migrations of Czech and other EU citizens, for whom reporting the change in residence is not enforced (Janská et al., 2014). However, the data are more reliable for foreign citizens, notably those holding citizenship of non-EU countries, as their reporting residential changes to the authorities is compulsory.

The observed years were broken down into three periods, which relate to different stages in the Czech economy and which exhibit diverse patterns in international and internal mobility. First, the years 2005–2008 represent a period of economic boom with high international and internal migration of foreign citizens in Czechia (Figure 2). Second, the period of 2009–2012 is characterised by a shrinkage of the Czech labour market, which was hit by the global economic crisis after 2008, although its impacts in Czechia were less severe than elsewhere in Europe (Crescenzi et al., 2016).
Nevertheless, the Czech migration policy tightened and the number of immigrants with a permit for temporary stay decreased (Drbohlav and Valenta, 2014). Also, international and internal migration of foreigners in Czechia came to its recent low. Third, the years 2013–2017 witnessed a recovery of the Czech economy, which contributed to a new increase in international migration. This was not, however, accompanied by an elevated internal migration of foreigners as observed in the first period.

These three periods are henceforth referred to as 1) economic boom, 2) post-crisis, and 3) new growth, respectively. It is likely that the diversity of migration trends between them also relate to different determinants and have diverse impacts on the spatial distribution of population.

![Figure 2. International migration to and internal migration within Czechia by citizenship, 2005–2017. Source: Czech Statistical Office.](image)

*Note.* The figure shows yearly numbers of immigration to Czechia and of internal migration between municipalities within the country.

To assess the internal migration of population groups in Czechia, we define urbanisation processes based on a matrix of the type of settlement, of origin and of destination of migration of the given group. This allows us to unpack the messiness of unidirectional flows with which population geography has often been content, despite the fact that it obscured the diversity of source areas and the transformative potential of migration (Stockdale, 2016). We work with three types of settlement
delimited by Ouředníček et al. (2013) - core cities, suburbs, and rural areas – which together make up the whole territory of the country and comprise 52%, 18% and 30% of the Czech population, respectively. The resulting flows can be generalised into three groups. First, residential movements from rural and suburban to urban areas, i.e., concentration, or up-scale migrations (dark shading, Table 2). Second, changes of residence from urban to suburban and rural areas, i.e., deconcentration, or down-scale migrations (light shading). The third group consists of migration within the same type of settlements (unshaded diagonal). As this type of migration occurs between settlements of the same type, it supposedly engenders smaller changes for the areas than the former two groups of flows (Ouředníček et al., 2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>inter-urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>(re)urbanisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>urbanisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Matrix of urbanisation processes.

Note: Dark shading for concentration (up-scale) processes, light shading for deconcentration (down-scaling) processes.

To examine the determinants of immigrant suburbanisation, we performed a series of binary logistic regression analyses using data provided by the Czech Statistical Office, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Alien Police. The dependent variable is the type of internal migration (with 1 = suburbanisation, i.e. migration from an urban area to a suburb within 50 km, a perimeter of Prague, the largest metropolitan area; 0 = other types of internal migration). The propensity of suburbanisation is related to a) individual characteristics of the movers and b) features of the

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3 Czech suburbs are delimited not only by spatial proximity to the city, but also by a minimal proportion of immigration from there and by a minimal intensity of housing construction in the municipality (Ouředníček et al., 2013, 2019).

4 The analyses were also run for moves originating in urban areas only. As their results were similar to those for total internal migration, with which the present paper is concerned, only the results of the latter are presented here.
destination areas. The first group includes categorical independent variables: gender, marital status, age group and country of citizenship. The second group of independent variables relates to the ethnic and economic structure of the destination municipalities. The binary variable of (co-)ethnic concentrations results from the prevalence of the relevant group of foreign citizens in the municipality population as opposed to their prevalence in the national population, using the location quotient (for similar procedure, see e.g. Přidalová and Hasman, 2018). The economic variables are the shares of municipality population in dormitories and in holiday compounds (as each may relate to settlement of different immigrant groups - guest workers and some well-off groups, respectively) and the difference in unemployment rates between the origin and destination municipality of internal migration.

Comparability across population groups and time periods of this last variable was ensured by considering their inter-quartile range where appropriate. To ensure that the specific role of Prague in the Czech immigrant population geography does not confound our results, the analyses were performed a) for suburbanisation occurring across the territory of Czechia and b) for urban-to-suburban migration flows, except those directing to the suburbs of Prague. The first set of logistic regression models examines the determinants of suburbanisation in the total population of Czechia during the economic boom, the post-crisis, and new growth periods. In the second step, logistic regressions were performed for 2013–2017 only and the main immigrant groups defined by their countries – Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia, Vietnam – or regions of citizenship – EU15 and USA, Other CEE (i.e., CEE besides the individual countries stated earlier), Other.

**Immigrant groups’ participation in urbanisation processes in Czechia**

Foreign citizens make up a considerable part of migration flows to, within, and from Czechia (Table 3). Their proportion in all internal migration streams between core cities, suburbs and countryside is noticeably more pronounced (11.3% in 2005–2017) than their overall percentage in the population of

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5 Detailed reliable data for an analysis of selected individual immigrant groups were only available for 2013–2017.
Czechia (below 5%; see above). Foreigners' intensity of internal migration is up to three times higher than that of the majority population (162.8‰ vs 54.7‰, although this result must be interpreted with some caution because of the underestimation in Czech citizens’ migration⁶). This is in line with observations from more established destination countries, where immigrants tend to be more geographically mobile than the majority population (Finney and Catney, 2012; Finney et al., 2015).

Table 3 also shows a predominance of up-scale migration flows in foreign citizens, as opposed to flows that lead to population dispersal down the settlement hierarchy (29.7% of foreign citizens’ migration for urbanisation and reurbanisation processes and 26.7% for suburbanisation and counterurbanisation). Conversely, Czech citizens tended towards down-scale rather than up-scale migration (36.4% of total migration of Czechs for suburbanisation and counterurbanisation processes and 26.5% for urbanisation and reurbanisation). This corroborates previous findings, e.g. those of Janská et al. (2014), who observed population deconcentration in the majority population and the opposite for foreign citizens (though with traces of suburbanisation) at the time of the economic boom of 2006–2008. Our observation can be explained by an increased migration mobility during the economic boom, which makes up a substantial part of the mobility that occurred during the full 13-year period observed here.

However, as indicated above, the trends in foreign citizens’ internal migration, driven by developments in the labour and housing market as well as in migration policy, have changed considerably since then. Therefore, we examine next how the dissimilar structural conditions impacted the proportion of foreign citizens in internal migration flows.

Pronounced changes can be observed in both Czech and foreign citizens, albeit in opposite directions (Figure 3). The increase in the proportion of up-scale migration in the Czech population is paralleled by a decrease of down-scale migration, mainly driven by a slowdown of suburbanisation and an advancement in suburban-to-urban migration. This tendency was expected as the first generation of

⁶ A study comparing registered migration and migration as a result of changing one’s usual residence across regional borders in 2011–2014 reports that the gross migration of Czech citizens was around twice higher in the latter case (Baštecká and Kurkin, 2018).
suburban households started to enter the empty-nesting stage of suburban life-cycle (Ouředníček et al., 2015). Conversely, the tendency of foreign citizens towards upward migration has been decreasing, notably due to decline in rural- and suburban-to-urban migration. At the same time, urbanisation processes leading to foreign population dispersal, notably suburbanisation, have grown. This transformation of internal migration trends in the foreign population has been accompanied by an overall decrease in their mobility within the country (from 63 thousand moves per year in 2005–2012 to 38 thousand in 2013–2017) and an increase in Czech citizen migration (from 405-408 thousand per year in 2005–2012 to 447 thousand in 2013–2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Czech citizens</td>
<td>391 114</td>
<td>363 151</td>
<td>541 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign citizens</td>
<td>113 485</td>
<td>38 903</td>
<td>46 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Foreign</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Czech citizens</td>
<td>169 170</td>
<td>81 931</td>
<td>96 035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign citizens</td>
<td>34 791</td>
<td>8 640</td>
<td>7 689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Foreign</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Czech citizens</td>
<td>455 101</td>
<td>102 897</td>
<td>547 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign citizens</td>
<td>61 175</td>
<td>7 436</td>
<td>29 805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Foreign</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Total size of migration flows by citizenship and proportion of foreign citizens, 2005–2017.*

*Source:* Czech Statistical Office

*Note:* See Table 2 for shading key.
Development of immigrants’ participation in urbanisation processes in Czechia

A further breakdown of the foreign population into citizenship groups indicates that there was a variety of trends in their participation in urbanisation processes in the country in 2005-2017 (Figure 4). On the one hand, there was a substantial decrease of migration mobility of Ukrainian citizens throughout the period 2005–2017. This illustrates that the largest immigrant group in Czechia was hit most severely and quickly after the Czech economy slowed down in late 2008, although most Ukrainians remained in the country (Leontiyeva, 2016). Internal migration of other citizenship groups (Vietnamese, Russian, Other) continued to grow and only declined after 2012. On the other hand, an increase in internal mobility was observed for citizens of Slovakia and other CEE countries as well as for citizens of EU15 and USA. This corroborates findings of Přidalová and Ouředníček (2017) based on data for Prague, where, after the onset of the economic downturn and the related tightening of the Czech migration policy, third-country citizens were replaced by EU citizens in the largest migration flows, as the conditions on entry and residence became more strict for the former than the latter.

The proportion of up-scale and down-scale migration also differs considerably among citizenship groups. Some of the most established groups (Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Russians), but also the

Figure 3. Internal migration flows of Czech and foreign citizens by origin and destination and period.

Source: Czech Statistical Office
residual category of Others, show a growing proportion of down-scale migration. This is, however, accompanied by a decrease in absolute numbers of migrations from urban to rural areas. As migration turnover decreases considerably, this can be perceived as a tendency of actual settlement in line with the spatial assimilation theory. By growing down-scale migration, the established immigrant groups adopt the trend previously predominant in the majority population. Conversely, a gradual increase in EU15 and US migration towards more urban areas can be noted. While this trend of urbanisation or reurbanisation in citizens of Western countries is also visible in absolute terms, it is smaller than the spatial dispersal trend of the largest immigrant groups, just mentioned. Given the ongoing predominance of up-scale migration in the Czech population, Western foreigners seem to exhibit simultaneous similarity of migration behaviour with the majority population. These findings have crucial impact on the character of ethnic spatial segregation in Czechia. Small socio-cultural and economic distance between most foreign minorities and the majority population lead to their spatial mixing at the municipal level.
Determinants of immigrant suburbanisation in Czechia

The previous sections of this article showed that similarities with the Czech majority population can be found in internal migration of immigrants originating in countries to both the West and the East of Czechia. While the first group gradually (re)concentrates in urban areas, the latter disperses to the suburbs, the most attractive settlement type for the Czech majority in the recent past. We now turn to unpacking the determinants of immigrant suburbanisation in Czechia to assess the extent to which this trend is caused by factors discussed in scholarly literature related to the immigrant population and the features of the destination areas of their migration.
Results of our first analyses (Table 4) indicate that, based on available indicators, suburbanisation in Czechia is better explained by the model which excludes migration within the Prague metropolitan area, although the difference is not particularly high especially in the boom period of 2005–2008. Given the focus of this article on ethnic differences, we pay most attention to categories of citizenship in suburbanites. A comparison of the two models presented in Table 4 underlines the unique position of Prague for Czech ethnic minority geography. This is confirmed by absolute numbers of suburban migrations where moves to Prague suburbs alone represent around 60% of all foreigners’ suburban migrations in Czechia. Moreover, only some foreign citizen groups’ participation in suburbanisation in Czechia is noteworthy: around Prague, that of Slovaks and Russians. In other parts of the country, their likelihood to suburbanise was smaller and paralleled by citizens of EU15, USA and Other CEE countries. This is likely due to suburbanisation of neighbouring countries’ citizens, notably those of Germany and Poland, as the suburban municipalities with most internal migration growth are located close to the respective country borders. Conversely, the smallest odds for suburbanisation were exhibited by Vietnamese (particularly in the model including Prague suburbs) followed by Ukrainian citizens. This suggests that little change has occurred since Janská et al.’s (2014) observation of these groups’ preferences for countryside and large cities, respectively, which follow from their specific occupations and a weaker position in the labour market. It is rather the well-positioned immigrants from Slovakia and Russia who take part in suburbanisation in Czechia, thus demonstrating that instead of suburbanisation of poverty it is rather suburbanisation of affluence that takes place in the country among both the majority and the foreign population.

Results of further analyses (Appendix 1) indicate that demographic characteristics of immigrant groups are the main determinants of their suburbanisation in Czechia. In models, both those for Czechia as a whole and those for regions outside the capital city, being married and aged 35–44 or 0–14 are the main predictors of immigrant suburbanisation in the period of 2013–2017. In the metropolitan region of Prague, above-average concentration of co-ethnics in the destination suburban municipality increases the odds of further immigrant migration from urban areas for most immigrant groups, notably Russian and Ukrainian citizens, suggesting that the presence of ethnic community
serves as a pull factor in the suburbs of Prague. In other parts of the country, the inverse situation takes place, with spatial concentration of co-ethnic population in municipalities seeming to decrease the odds of immigrant suburbanisation. However, the proportion of foreign residents in population there remains limited, preventing us from making reliable conclusions. Drawing on earlier research from the Prague metropolitan region, which observed a negligible role for ethnic community in immigrant residential decision-making (Přidalová and Klsák, 2019), we argue that it is the job opportunities, transnational links and ethnic infrastructure in proximity to suburbs rather than the ethnic community itself that drive ethnic suburbanites close to Prague. Outside this area, immigrant concentrations are sparser and less attractive for further suburbanisation. Overall, this gives little support to expectations of resurgent ethnicity and creation of pioneer stages of ethnoburbs (Chung and Brown, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model for Czechia: Exp(B)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model for Czechia without Prague suburbs: Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nagelkerke R²</strong></td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>0.986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.376</td>
<td>1.386</td>
<td>1.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0.748</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td>0.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td>0.640</td>
<td>0.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>1.007</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>0.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1.371</td>
<td>1.368</td>
<td>1.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Binomial logistic regression models of suburbanisation in Czechia for total population (odds ratios).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic structure of destination municipality</th>
<th>Without ethnic concentration</th>
<th>With ethnic concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1.435 1.776 1.732</td>
<td>0.648 0.977 1.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>0.243 0.297 0.328</td>
<td>0.409 0.566 0.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other CEE</td>
<td>0.815 0.883 0.995</td>
<td>0.601 0.729 1.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU15 and USA</td>
<td>0.983 0.932 0.892</td>
<td>0.864 0.998 1.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.805 0.898 0.969</td>
<td>0.555 0.780 0.777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic structure of destination municipality</th>
<th>Difference in unemployment from origin</th>
<th>Share of population in dormitories</th>
<th>Share of population in holiday compounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without ethnic concentration</td>
<td>1.000 1.000 1.000</td>
<td>0.791 0.620 0.730</td>
<td>0.938 0.931 0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With ethnic concentration</td>
<td>2.010 1.399 1.749</td>
<td>1.113 0.623 0.364</td>
<td>0.624 0.641 0.629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions and discussion

Despite having been an immigration country for a comparatively short time, Czechia has an important ethnic component in its internal migration. Immigrants represent a significant proportion in all urbanisation processes, exceeding their share on population more than twice. This is particularly pronounced in intra- and inter-urban migration, but down-scale migration of immigrant population is growing too. In contrast, the long-term trend of down-scale migration in the Czech majority population seems to have reversed. Immigrants increasingly disperse from the large urban centres, thus adding to the diversity of the Czech suburbs and, to a smaller extent, also of the countryside.

The empirical material presented here indicates that, in contrast to other immigration countries in Europe and beyond, the suburbanisation of immigrants in Czechia is a matter of wealth rather than of poverty. Although in absolute numbers Ukrainians, who tend to be of lower socio-economic status, dominate the urban-to-suburban migration streams, their net migration there remains negative. It is rather the culturally close groups with relatively higher socio-economic status – citizens of Slovakia and Russia – who are positively associated with this trend. The ethnic heterogenisation of the Czech suburbs thus remains moderate, taking place predominantly in suburbs of the capital city.
The specificity of Prague in Czech immigrant population geography also translates to the determinants of suburbanisation, which differ between the metropolitan region of the capital city and the rest of the country. We find tentative evidence of resurgent ethnicity and ethnic networks, notably around Prague. However, the determinants of greater importance (demographic characteristics of suburbanites, particularly age and marital status) generalise throughout the country and indicate the influence of family reasons for suburbanisation.

Particularly low odds of moving from cities to suburbs were observed for Vietnamese throughout the observed period. This is noteworthy given that Vietnamese citizens typically work in retail, thanks to which their population is spread across the Czech countryside. Although evidence of discrimination against the Vietnamese in Czechia exists (Sokačová, 2014), the group is overall perceived well by the majority population (Tuček, 2017; Hasman and Divínová, 2019), which gives only limited support to the stratification theory. Moreover, the observed limited propensity of the Vietnamese in Czechia to suburbanise seems counterintuitive given the family character of their immigration (Přidalová and Hasman, 2018). Among plausible reasons for the limited likelihood of Vietnamese to suburbanise may be their generally lower socio-economic status and their preferences for urban and rural settlement. These determinants could not, however, be examined due to unavailability of appropriate data.

We find similarities between suburbanisation in Czechia and upwardly socially mobile immigrant groups in traditional destination countries, but with one major difference: that of the socio-economic distance between the majority and minority populations. Czechia is a country with low housing affordability and incomes lower than in Western Europe. Despite this, it appears that the disadvantage for immigrants compared to the majority in finding suitable housing in the generally expensive suburbs is less in Czechia than in established immigration countries. The low socio-economic distance between the Czech majority and immigrants to Czechia may therefore be pre-existing rather than the result of a gradual assimilation. Also, we have noted that opportunities for temporary living arrangements, notably workers’ dormitories, deter both the majority and immigrant groups from suburbanisation. Despite similarities in being immigration countries and in an absence of social
housing, Czechia thus differs from some West and South European countries. There, suburbanisation may result from a lack of affordable housing in urban and more affluent suburban areas and from preferences for living near co-ethnic community rather than from upward social mobility (Zorlu and Latten, 2009; Bayona-Carrasco and Gil-Alonso, 2012). By comparison, less wealthy urban immigrant groups in Czechia may be at lesser risk of suburbanisation triggered by poverty, given their high participation in the labour market and supposedly more favourable position on the housing market comparing to their counterparts abroad.

On top of the small socio-economic distance between Czechs and immigrants mentioned above, other differences between Czechia and established immigration countries are likely to render the Western theoretical approaches inapplicable. In particular, it may also be the immaturity of the Czech migration system with a comparatively small proportion of immigrants and their descendants in population which causes that processes such as stratification theory or resurgent ethnicity have not developed yet (see also Hasman, Křížková 2020). In this vein, it would be valuable to see to what extent the Czech case is an outlier or a norm in the CEE region. However, as the country is a pioneer in international migration within the region, comparable material is scarce. For example, in the complex evaluation of the recent suburbanisation around Bratislava, no mention of the immigrant suburbanisation has appeared (Šveda and Šuška, 2019), the same holding for Cracow or Poznan (Więcław-Michniewska, 2006; Beim, 2009). As for ethnic minorities, there is some evidence from the Baltic states, where most minorities have arrived back in the Soviet era. The results are rather mixed, showing that ethnic minorities are less likely to suburbanise than the majority in Estonia (Kährik and Tammaru, 2008; Tammaru et al., 2013), but that some minorities (Russians) do suburbanise in selected metropolitan areas in Lithuania (Burneika and Ubarevičienė, 2016). Despite the fact that some CEE countries have also witnessed recent immigration, suburbanisation tendencies of the present-day international migrants are yet to be examined there.

An underlying concern for the public and policy interest in immigrant internal migration is the assumption that it leads to spatial segregation, which is perceived as a bad thing by the general public (Peach, 1996; Finney and Simpson, 2009a). Although much academic literature has challenged this
popular assumption (Finney and Simpson, 2009b), a greater understanding of the underlying forces of population change is still needed. It was beyond the scope of this paper to assess the extent of segregation; however, our results as well as previous studies find little indication of immigrant internal migration in Czechia causing spatial segregation (Přidalová and Ouředníček, 2017).

Neither could our research at the municipal level assess the intraurban dynamics of the different tendencies of the foreign and majority populations to urbanise and suburbanise, which can have detrimental effects on some groups. Literature shows that in-migration of foreigners into the (inner) cities – gentrification – can in selected neighbourhoods lead to a displacement of middle-class majority to outside the centre or even outside the city itself to suburban localities (compare Hochstenbach and Musterd, 2018). The authors’ experience indicates that some foreign residents, expats and tourists can pay higher rents and purchase more expensive residential properties than the majority population, which has led to a skyrocketing of real estate prices in central areas of the largest Czech cities. Consequently, these gentrification processes supported by increasing urbanisation tendencies of foreigners can play an important role in changing patterns of internal migration in Czechia. Scholarly research focusing on this interplay would contextualise and clarify the existing – yet scarce – evidence of some foreign citizens acting as rather powerful stakeholders in the city (for an example of foreign citizens as gentrifiers in Barcelona see e.g., Arbaci and Tapada-Berteli, 2012) in contrast to the notion of immigrants as vulnerable populations, found predominantly in established immigration countries. By presenting evidence from new immigration countries, such research has the potential to enrich population geography by acknowledging the complexity of the roles immigrant population can play in urban areas.

References


**Data sources**


