FOLIA GEOGRAPHICA • ISSN 1336-6157 (hard copy) • ISSN 2454-1001 (online)

IMPORTANCE OF MIGRATION AND COUNTERURBANISATION AS FACTORS OF STABILIZATION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION OF THE PERIPHERAL REGIONS – EXAMPLE OF SOUTH BOHEMIA

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Received: August 31, 2018 | Revised: October 21, 2018 | Accepted: November 18, 2018
Paper No. 18-60/2-518

Abstract
The article presents an example of two regions of the northern periphery of South Bohemia, as a territory where following a prevailing out-migration of the population and negative demographic development resulting from historical socio-economic events, a reversal occurred one hundred years later which tended to stabilise its migration. The determining factor of this change is the volume and character of migratory flows. The negative migration balance (-2.4‰ between 1991 and 2010 for both regions) has changed over the last five years of 2011-2015 to a positive one (3.1‰), especially for municipalities with up to 100 residents (11.0‰ between 2011 and 2015). The values of the migration importance index point to a change in the importance of migration from the "negative" level to the "preservative" level. The weakly prevailing in-migration and (in certain cases) counterurbanisation flows from metropolitan and regional centres have been confirmed. Although the observed peripheral regions are naturally continuing to lose population (rate of natural increase of -4.4‰ in 2015) and overall the number of inhabitants does not grow, or it grows to a minimum degree (overall increase of 0.5‰ in 2015, -0.7‰ between 2011 and 2015), the important factor for the potentially more progressive demographic development of the peripheral region is the favourable age structure of the in-migrants (the share of children below the age of 15 years of 22.9%, the age index 140.3%). Counterurbanisation based on the migration of seniors was not confirmed. The identified trends of counterurbanisation and in-migration of young families thus becomes an important process for demographic "healing" of the peripheral regions, as illustrated by the example of remote rural areas of South Bohemia. Given its low volume and low economic and social impact, in general counterurbanisation

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cannot be compared with urbanisation, however it is important not only for the population stability, but also for the overall social stability of the affected, long depopulated rural regions.

Key words
Peripheral region, depopulation, migration importance, counterurbanisation, population change

INTRODUCTION

The Northern periphery of southern Bohemia is the territory that lies on the border of two Czech administrative and statistical regions NUTS3 (Jihočeský and Středočeský). Given its location with respect to more important regional and metropolitan centers, it is a territory that can be identified as a remote rural area (Šimon, 2014); a territory which is located beyond the external border of the suburban zones of these centers (Geyer and Kontuly, 1993; Popjaková 2012, p. 155; Ouředníček et al. 2014, p. 5). Musil and Müller (2008) refer to this category of rural areas as inner peripheries. Southern Bohemia and especially its peripheral regions have been affected by long-term out-migration and depopulation, related to specific historical events, such as the industrialisation since the early 19th century and especially at the turn of the centuries and in the 1940s, several cases of migration of the German and Czech population between the world wars. Another factor was the quantitatively dramatic expulsion of the German population after the Second World War with further socio-economic implications for the regions, as well as the policy of a central system of settlement and integration of municipalities which has been put into practice between 1971 and 1990. This has supported the growth of medium-sized centres at the expense of rural areas (Boháč 1928, p. 57; Trnková, 1989; Kučera, 1998; Deiters, 1998; Musil, 2001; Serb, 2004).

The northwest (NW) and northeast (NE) periphery regions of South Bohemia have long been (for over a hundred years) regions with negative population change. Even as early as the 1880 Census, Southern Bohemia recorded a population decline. Korčák (1929) and Srb (2004) discuss its depopulation during the interwar period; the out-migration of young people in particular and the highest population losses, among others "throughout the northern outskirts of South Bohemia, from Blatná through Milevsko up to Mladá Vožice". Even though the population change and the migratory situation of South Bohemia have stabilized since the 1960s and mid-1970s (Drbohlav, Blažek 1992; Čermák, 1997), the outflow of population from the peripheral parts in the north as well as the south of the region has continued uninterruptedly from the 1980s (Aleš, 2001) to the present.

OBJECTIVES

The basic aim of the study is to point out the importance of migration on the basis of analysis of migration and of the population change in the example of two delimited homogeneous regions in the Northern periphery of South Bohemia – the Northwestern (NW) Belčice-Mirovice region and the Northeastern (NE) Mladovožicko region.

Both regions are evaluated together based on the average for all municipalities of both regions together with parallel demonstration of the specifics of each of them. In-migration and especially positive net migration to the remote rural areas has a character of counterurbanisation. Is this type of urbanisation present in the northern periphery of South Bohemia? How strong is it? To what extent does it affect the overall balance of the population and the overall demographic situation of the regions? How did the migration evolve and what is the nature of migration in these regions over the last 25 years? Who are the participants of the counterurbanisation? These are the basic research questions of this study.

This article elaborates a brief overview of the theoretical concept of counterurbanisation. The methodological part defines the delimited peripheral regions of South Bohemia. A method of assessing migration significance in relation to the total population change is presented, together with the methodological procedures of applied quantitative and qualitative research on population migration in the analysed peripheral area.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Counterurbanisation is an urbanisation process linked with the rural space. Unlike urbanisation and re-urbanisation, counterurbanisation and suburbanisation are deconcentration processes (Berry, 1976; Berg et al., 1982). It is a migration flow (Champion, 1992) moving people from towns to rural settlements that are located in non-metropolitan areas, i.e. beyond the external border of the suburbs (Šimon 2011, p. 248). Similarly, Cloke (1995) defined it as the deconcentration of the urban population "behind" the suburban zone. Counterurbanisation occurs in a situation where the population moving in the direction of concentration, i.e. from rural and suburban zones to cities, is lower than the number of inhabitants migrating in the direction of deconcentration, i.e. from the city and suburbs to the countryside (Geyer and Kontuly 1993). This process can also be represented graphically (Popjaková 2012, p. 155, Fig. 1; Ouředníček, et al. 2014, p. 5, Fig. 1). A distinctive characteristic feature of counterurbanisation is that it represents a negative dependence between net migration and settlement size (Fielding, 1982), i.e. when the settlement size decreases then the net migration intensity grows. At the same time, it applies to the population revival and growth of rural areas together with the corresponding population decline of cities and large towns (Halfacree, 1994: 164). The

criticism of the concept of counterurbanisation (even questioning source data) occurred right after the publication of the first studies that pointed out the reverse of population decline in some rural areas (Beal 1976, p. 953). The criticism was based on the fact that this urban process is not very intense, especially in comparison to the urbanisation. Champion (1992) argues that if the migration to rural areas was significant, it would not increase the number of people in cities at the same time in developed countries. Deconcentration, according to critics, does not represent a radical turn in the development of the settlement system (Spencer, 1995). Counterurbanisation does not have a distinctly increasing development trajectory, but shows a change in growth and decline in intensity. Alternation of deconcentration and concentration flows often occurs. Some authors refer to counterurbanisation only as a certain "chaotic concept", "exclusive hypothesis" or "periodic exceptions" (Champion, 1992, Mitchel, 2004; IE, 2008; Šimon, 2011).

In the USA and Western European countries, trends of rural population growth in the 1970s were monitored. They were called „rural change", „rural turnaround", „rural renaissance" or urban processes of „ruralisation" (Beale, 1976; Berry, 1976; Cloke, 1978). However, in the 1980s, there was a decline in rural population growth and the situation returned to the historical migration patterns of "rural to urban migration". In the 1990s, the growth and decline of rural non-metropolitan areas occurred again (Johnson, 2003).

The deconcentration tendencies appeared in post-socialist Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs; OECD, 2001) with a time delay of approximately two decades in comparison with western countries, similarly to others' socio-economic processes (Popjaková 2008, p. 20). The exception was Poland where the deconcentration of the population occurred earlier, similarly to Western Europe (Kupisewsky et al., 1998; Jażdżewska, 2006). The main reason was the relatively low level of urbanisation, the big differences between cities and the countryside, and the fusion of suburbanisation and hinterland transformation into specific contiguous urban areas (Lisovski, 2004). A detailed comparison of counterurbanisation in the post-socialist and Western countries was described by Šimon (2014). In general, the intensity of counterurbanisation is affected by previous processes of urbanisation. The varying intensity and timing of the realization of industrialisation and its associated urbanisation in post-socialist CEECs on one hand, and western countries on other hand, has an impact on the differences in the counterurbanisation processes in these countries. Additionally, in the post-socialist CEECs, the urbanisation processes are influenced by the directly controlled, artificially forced urbanisation accompanied by the mass construction of pre-fabricated apartment buildings in towns, which culminated in the 1970s (Matlovič and Sedláková, 2004, p. 86; Mykhnenko and Turok, 2007). In general, counterurbanisation is a phenomenon linked to changes in lifestyle. It appeared thanks to the development of transportation and communication technologies, which made it possible for people to choose

their residential preferences. Counterurban migrants are attracted mainly by the lifestyle in the countryside (Campbell et al., 1984; Šimon 2014). The migration to remote rural areas is often linked to ecological motives of migrants; this is the so-called amenity migration (Bartoš, 2011; Gosnel and Abrams, 2011).

In the Czech Republic, a reverse of migratory balances occurred in the second half of the 1990s including the migration stabilization, i.e. the migration and, in some cases, the population gains of small-scale rural municipalities. This process was initially typical for the suburban areas of large cities (Librová, 1997; Hampl, 2005; Čermák, 2001; Ouředníček et al., 2013), and the remote rural areas began to grow with a delay (Šimon, 2014; Popjaková and Blažek, 2015).

DATA AND METHODS

The investigated territory (Fig. 1.) consists of two regions – the Mladovožicko region in the Northeast and the Belčicko-Mirovicko region in the Northwestern part of the South Bohemian NUTS3 region. They were delimited in a way to match the criteria of the so-called rural remote areas beyond suburban commuting zones, e.g. beyond the prevalent commuting hinterland of cities (Šimon 2014). Concurrently, the delimited peripheral area matches the criteria of the Czech countryside settlements (Perlín, 2003), the so-called 'inner peripheries' (Musil and Müller, 2008) and South Bohemian peripheral areas (Kubeš and Kraft, 2011). The peripheral regions represent a territory of 44 settlements with the number of inhabitants between 35 and 2,720 (Fig. 1).

The research on counterurbanisation and the character of migration and its effectiveness was based on the analysis of statistical data on internal migration (without international migration) of the Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ, 2016) over a 25 year period (from 1991 to 2015). Even if the official evidence of migrants in the Czech Republic has some objective flaws, the anonymised migration database of the CSO per settlements provides quite a detailed picture of the size and the flows of migration as well as the basic demographic and social characteristics of the migrants. The quantitative analysis was based on the absolute and relative indicators such as migration, population changes, age structure, migration turnover, net migration, total increase, natural increase, etc.

To express the importance of migration, we used the migration importance index (I_{mi}) as a percentage share of the net migration (NM) over the total population increase (TI) – I_{mi}=NM/TI*100. It is an alternative to the Webb cross method, which lacks, however, a more accurate specification of the weight of migration in the population dynamic of a region. On the basis of I_{mi} and the relation between net migration, natural increase and total population increase, five types of migration effectiveness were set apart – from significantly positive, positive, preservative, negative, to significantly negative (Tab. 1).

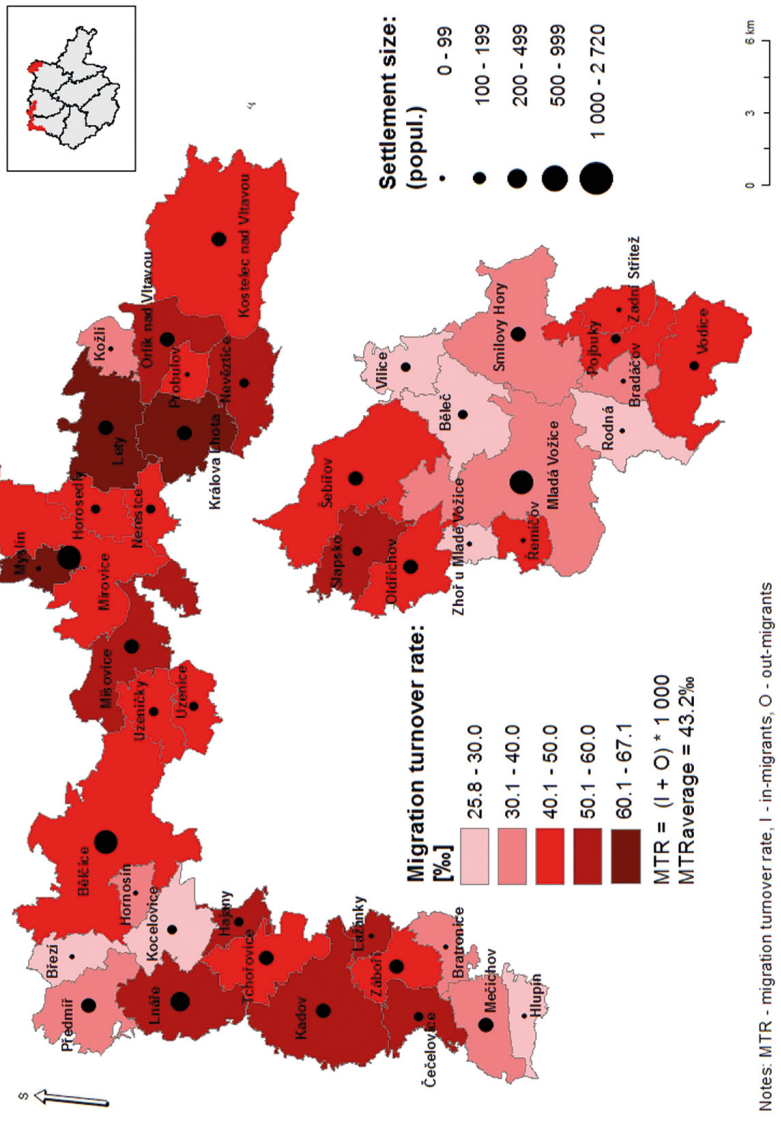

Figure 1
Migration turnover in the northern peripheral regions of South Bohemia between 1991 and 2015
Source: ČSÚ, 2016

Table 1 Importance of migration in terms of its impact on population change

Cat.eg. **Importance of migration**		**NM**	**NM vs. NI**	**TI**
V	**significantly positive:** significant impact of M on the positive population change, M (significantly) ensures the positive population change; NM > 0 ∧ TI > 0 ∧ NI ≤ 0; NM (multiply) exceeds NI; under the condition of the positive total population increase, i.e. TI > 0, for the *migration importance index* it applies: $\mathbf{I_{me} \geq 100}$	**NM > 0**	NM ≫ NI NM > NI	TI **>** 0
IV	**positive:** relatively strong influence of M on the positive population change; M contributes to the positive population change; NM ≥ 0 ∧ TI **>** 0 ∧ NI **>** 0; under the condition of the positive total population increase, i.e. TI **>** 0, for the *migration importance index* it applies: $\mathbf{0 \geq I_{me} < 100}$	**NM ≥ 0**	NM > NI NM < NI NM = NI	TI **>** 0
III	**preservative:** preserving influence of M on the population change, which is however negative; NM ≥ 0 ∧ TI ≤ 0 ∧ NI ≤ 0; under the condition of the negative total population increase, i.e. TI ≤ 0, for the *migration importance index* it applies: $\mathbf{I_{me} \leq 0}$	**NM ≥ 0**	NM ≥ NI	TI ≤ 0
II	**negative:** negative impact of M on the population change; M contributes to the negative population change; NM < 0 ∧ TI < 0 ∧ NI < 0; NM ≥ NI; under the condition of the negative total population increase (population decrease), i.e. TI < 0, for the *migration importance index* it applies: $\mathbf{I_{me} \leq 50}$	**NM < 0**	NM ≥ NI	TI **<** 0
I	**significantly negative:** (significantly) negative impact of M on the population change, i.e. M (significantly) contributes to the negative population change, in other words it does not contribute to the positive population change; NM **<** 0 ∧ TI **<** 0; NM **<** NI ∧ NI **>** 0; NM ≪ NI ∧ NI **<** 0; under the condition of the negative total population increase, i.e. TI **<** 0, for the *migration importance index* it applies: $\mathbf{I_{me} > 50}$	**NM < 0**	NM < NI NM ≪ NI	TI **<** 0 TI **>** 0

Source: ČSÚ, 2016

Notes: M – migration, TI - total increase, NI - natural increase, NM - net migration, Imi - migration importance index

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Northern periphery of Southern Bohemia has long been among the "depopulation areas" of Czechia with a persistent negative balance of population change. For the entire monitored period (since 1880), its population has continuously decreased. 14,458 inhabitants lived on the territories of both delimited regions in 1991. At the end of the observed period, in 2015, there were 12,872 inhabitants. It

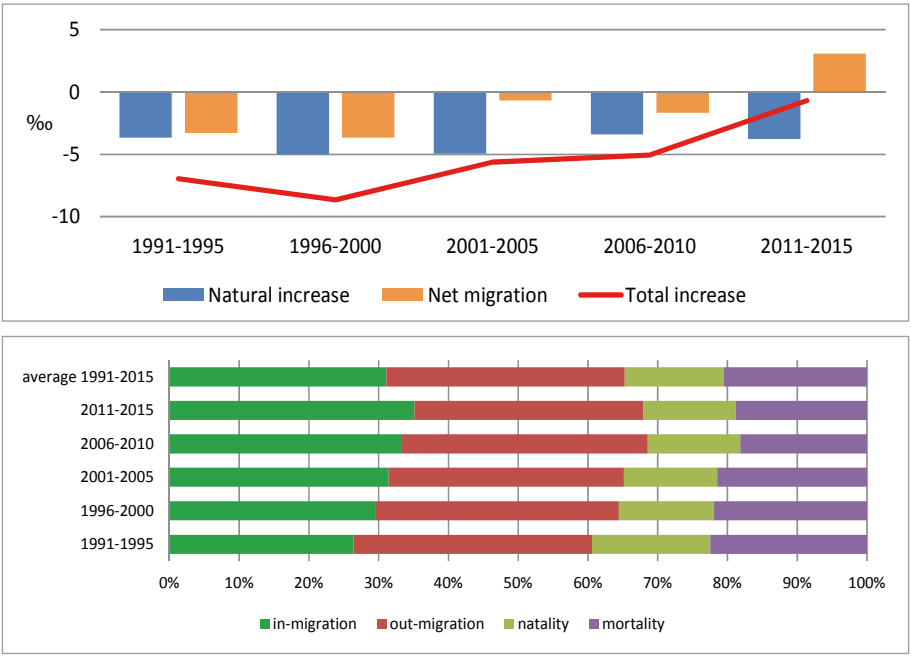

Figure 2
Population changes in the northern peripheral regions of South Bohemia between 1991 & 2015
Source: ČSÚ, 2016

was also observed that the North-eastern periphery had lost the population more intensively than the North-western periphery. The growth index of immigration was $I_{1991-2015}$=88.9% for the whole territory. The annual decline for the whole peripheral region never dropped under 98.3%. The population decreased constantly and very gradually and moderately in the whole period between 1991 and 2015. The growth was registered only in 2013 (100.2%) and again in 2015 (100.1%).

The Northwest (NW) and Northeast (NE) peripheries have been losing the population naturally on a long-term basis (average of natural increase NI=-3.1‰ between 1991 and 2015), i.e. the natality does not cover the mortality of the population It is therefore obvious that the state of demographic condition of the region is mainly influenced by migration (Fig. 2). The intensity of the migration turnover indicates relatively high migration activity in the region. Over the investigated period between 1991 and 2010, the migration intensity in this territory (migration turnover rate MTR=42.0‰) was higher than in South Bohemia (30.2), respectively in the migration region of its centre: the metropolis of České Budějovice (33.5). MTR of the region has grown over the last five years (48.1‰ between 2011 and 2015).

The migration turnover is higher in NW periphery. The smallest municipalities have the lower migration turnover in absolute terms (see also Fig. 1).

6,985 migrants had immigrated to both parts of the northern peripheral region between 1991 and 2015. The average in-immigration rate (IR) reached 20.9‰. For the last twenty years, immigration has an increasing tendency, with maximum amount for the last five years ($IR_{2011-2015}$=25.6‰). In the NW part, which is more active in the sense of immigration, the IR was even 28.9‰ in the last five years. On the other hand, the emigration has a more stable character. 7,419 people moved out of the region (average out-emigration rate $ER_{1991-2015}$=22.2‰). For the last five years, the out-emigration from NW Belčicko-Mirovicko region has moderately grown and on the opposite has dropped in the less active NE Mladovožicko part of the peripheral region.

It is not only the number of migrants which has been growing overall, but also the importance of migration. Migration thus greatly improves the population change (Fig. 2). If during the twenty year period between 1991 and 2010 the net migration rate (NMR) has achieved -2.4‰ and the region lost population due to migration, its value is positive (3.1‰) in the last five years. This is the first time the region has gained in population, all owing to migration factors. In comparing the NW Belčicko-Mirovicko and NE Mladovožicko regions, there is no great difference in migration intensity over the whole period (Fig. 3). Over the past five years, the gap has been growing slightly. The rate of migration gains is higher in the NW than in the NE part of the periphery (NMR = 4.4 vs. 1.1‰). The number of municipalities with positive net migration has almost doubled (to 26). It is obvious that the favourable development of the net migration of the peripheral region is mainly connected with municipalities of the smallest size categories, up to 100 inhabitants (Fig. 4). This is the only category of municipalities that has grown on average over the entire period between 1991 and 2015. This fact is even more important, taking into the consideration the situation from the first period under review, in the 1990s, when the population of these municipalities continuously declined.

According to the migration importance index (Tab. 1, Fig. 5), the number of municipalities with a more significant impact of migration on their total population change increased in the region. The category of municipalities with migration importance index III, IV and, above all, V has increased (i.e. the municipalities with migratory gains or in which the migration has at least a minimal positive influence on the overall balance of the population). At the same time, the transfer of some municipalities from the category II to I was recognized. It means that the number of municipalities where the total population decline is balanced by the migration (NM>NI) has decreased (Cat. II) and the number of municipalities with a total population decline, in which the net migration does not reach their natural increase levels (NM<NI) has increased (Cat. I). The migration importance index of Northern

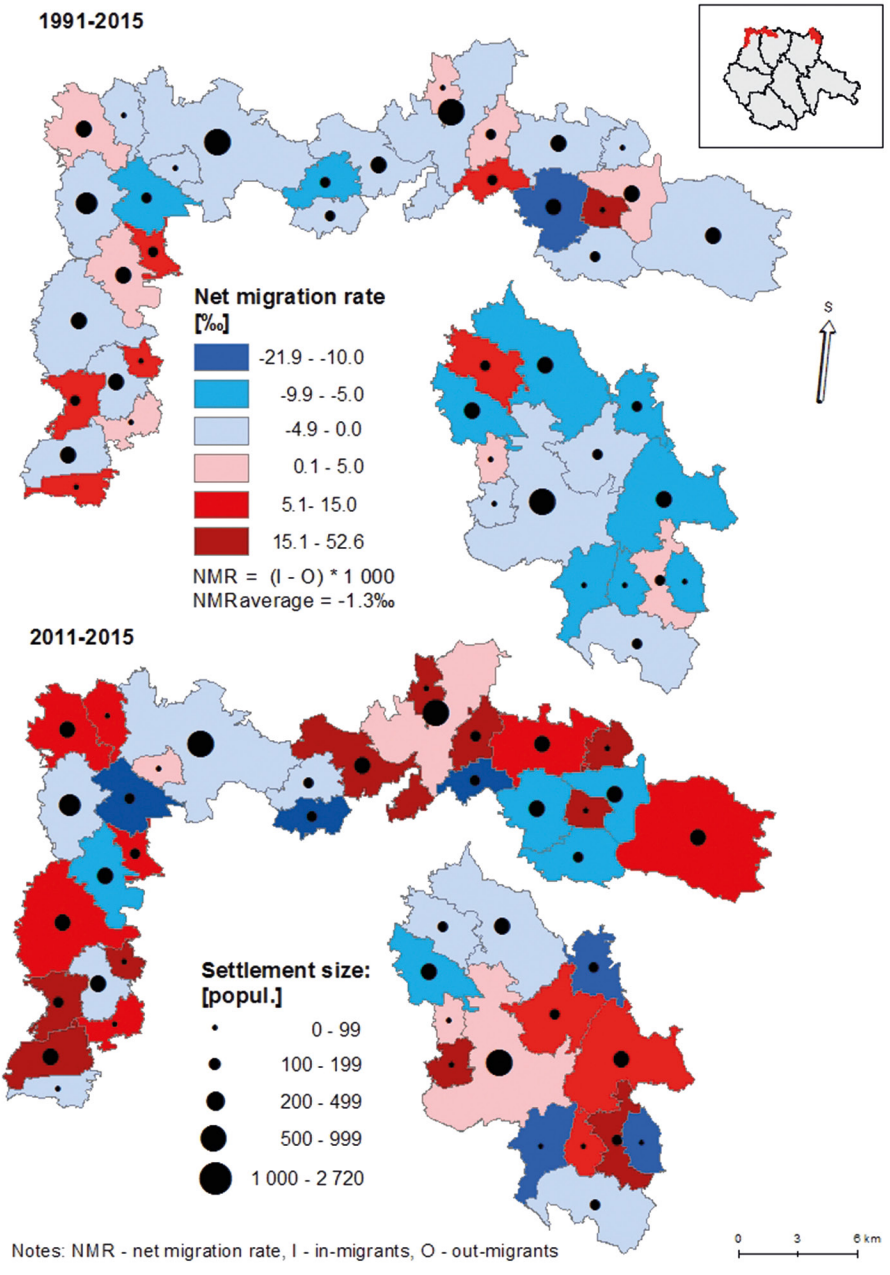

Figure 3
Net migration in the northern peripheral regions of South Bohemia between 1991 and 2015
Source: ČSÚ, 2016

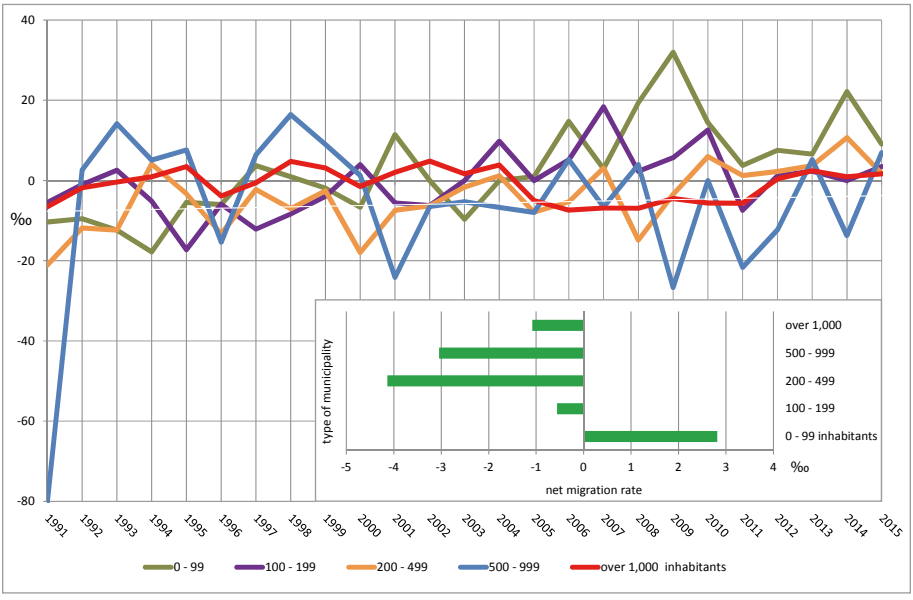

Figure 4
Net migration by size categories of municipalities in the northern peripheral regions of South Bohemia between 1991 and 2015
Source: ČSÚ, 2016

peripheral region shifted from the negative level (Cat. II - between 1991 and 2015) to the preservative level (Cat. III - between 2011 and 2015).

When examining migration flows of the evaluated region, the strongest ones are confirmed with the capital city of Prague. Average distance from the northern periphery of South Bohemia to Prague is about 85 km. Among Czech towns and settlements, Prague is the most important migration centre for the Northern periphery of South Bohemia. Prague is where the most significant part of migrants comes from (almost 10% of in-migrants). However, it should be noted that the migration balance regarding reaches the negative values. Therefore, counter-urbanisation for the whole region and for the whole period under review is not confirmed. However, counterurban flows with Prague have been confirmed for the NE Mladovožicko region, which has the positive migration balance with Prague for the whole period between 1991 and 2015 and a slightly increasing trend in recent years. The importance of České Budějovice as a South Bohemian metropolis has not been confirmed. Migration flows between České Budějovice and northern peripheral part of South Bohemia are weak. The region has a stronger migration turnover with several smaller regional migration centres geographically more or less remote. It is for example Blatná – average distance 15 km; Písek – 35 km; Příbram – 27 km, for the NW part of region. And Tábor – average distance 20 km;

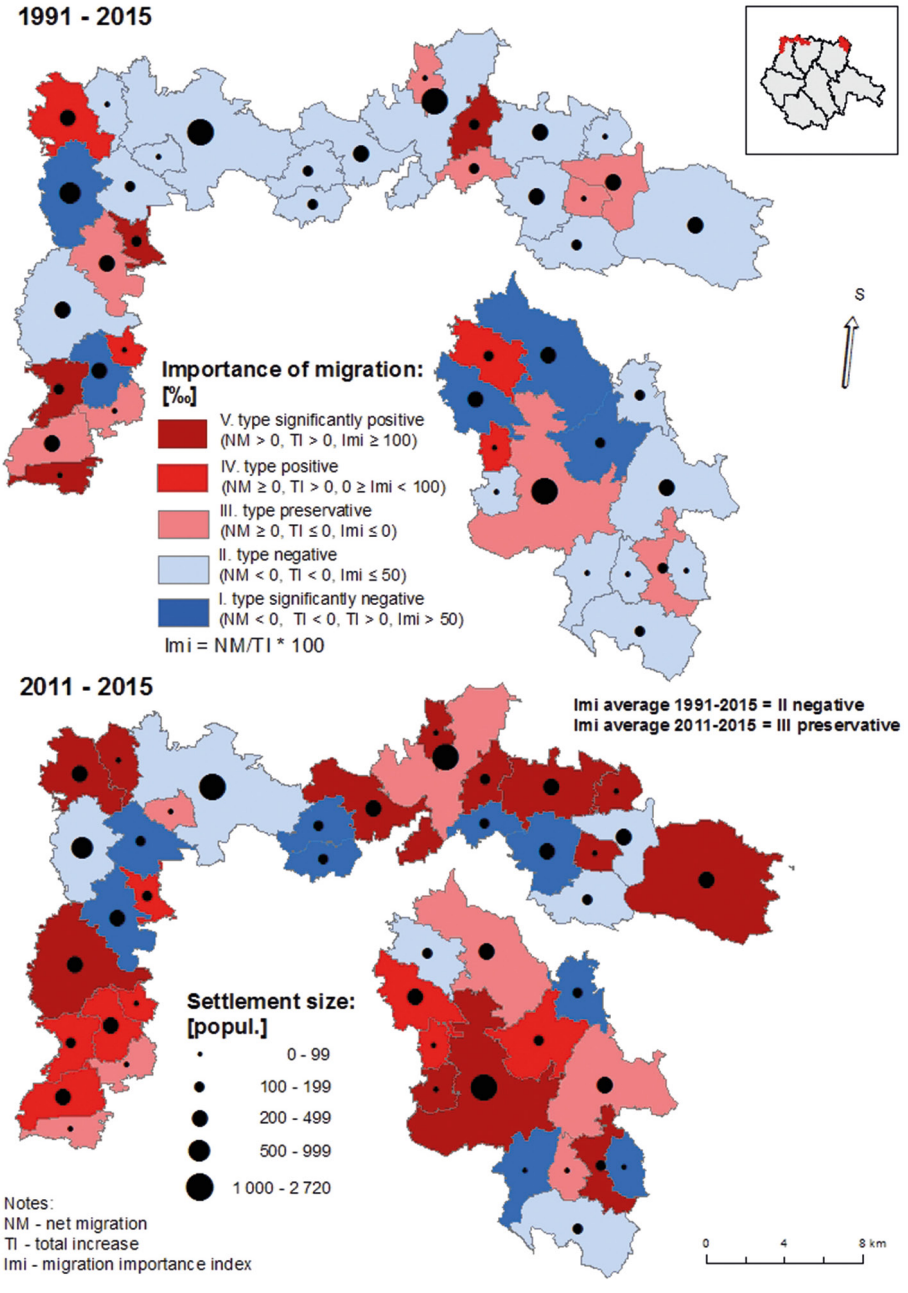

Figure 5
Importance of migration in the northern peripheral regions of South Bohemia between 1991 and 2015
Source: ČSÚ, 2016

Miličín – 12 km; Pacov – 27 km, for the NE part of region. As a result of the analysis, it is the closest small regional centres – Blatná in the NW and Mladá Vožice in the NE region itself which represent the most important centres of migration, especially in the recent years. Along with Prague (for the NE part of the region), next counterurban centres of the north periphery of South Bohemia are confirmed: Příbram and Milevsko (for the NW part) and Miličín and Pacov (for the NE part). These centres have a positive migration balance with the peripheral region.

The importance of net gains from migration and counterurbanisation in terms of age structure objectively cannot be directly evaluated. However, the age structure of in-migrants is very favourable. The major part of in-migrants (77 %) is under 45 years; there are the families with children. The share of in-migrants under the age of 15 is almost 23%. The major part of out-migrants under 45 years is also very high (even up to 81%). The share of out-migrants up to 15 years is a little bit lower (22%). When examining the autochthonic population, the share of the children component is more important in the NE region (27%); the proportion of the population aged over 45 is slightly higher in the NW region (24%). According to the study Čekal (2006), in the northern part of the South Bohemian region in 1992-1998, the majority of migrants were over 45, mainly over 60 years old. However, according to the official statistics (ČSÚ, 2016), the average share of these older age groups of migrants for the whole 1991-2015 period is significantly lower, only a quarter (23%). The in-migrants over 65 represent only 7% and the out-migrants over 65 constitute more than 9%. These facts may potentially become a more significant factor in terms of positive influence on the development of the natural change of the population, especially the natality in the near future.

CONCLUSIONS

The region of the northern periphery of South Bohemia, as an example of a remote rural area, has seen a major turning point in its demographic development. In recent years, it has grown with positive net in-migration. The importance of migration has grown in terms of its impact on population change from negative (II type) to preservative levels (III type). The size of migration has been able to hide the natural loss of population to such an extent that after a period of long-term depopulation, the population had risen for the first time in 2013 and 2015. Although the region has recorded an average total population decline in recent years (crude rates of total change -0.7‰ between 2011 and 2015), we can evaluate this reversal in the demographic development of this type of peripheral region of Czechia as crucial, regardless of the evolution of population change in the coming years. For the region, what Beale has observed and commented on was the example of the USA 40 years ago (1976, p. 953), that it was not apparent in the modern history of our country to ever have had a previous time when nonmetropolitan population

growth rates exceeded metropolitan rates. There has been some population stabilization in the region, although perhaps only of a temporary nature.

The growth of the net migration rate (4.0‰ between 2012 and 2015) confirms counterurbanisation in certain cases in the northern periphery of Southern Bohemia in recent years. Although counterurbanisation means a relatively small intensive migration and urban process, mainly in comparison with urbanisation and although it was not confirmed in the case of all the migration centres, the counterurban flows contribute to the population's stability in the region. Taking into consideration the fact that the share of out-migrants under 25 years is high (44.7%), it is proven that the share of in-migrants under 25 years is almost on the same level (43.1%). Contrary to previous research (Čekal, 2006; Šimon, 2014), the majority of in-migrants moving to the Northern peripheral region of Southern Bohemia are not older people, but younger age group in-migrants. This means that there has been a radical change in the type of counterurban migrants over the last 15-20 years. Primarily young families with children under 15 are coming to the remote rural areas.

For the whole surveyed period of 2011-2015, most of the migrants came to the smallest municipalities with up to 100 inhabitants, while in the 1990s, their numbers were still decreasing. These municipalities, however, were not the most active in terms of migration: they had a relatively lower migration turnover rate and a lower absolute number of in-migrants. Overall, the number of municipalities that gained inhabitants has increased due to migration. On the other hand, the number of municipalities with a total population decline has also increased and the migration contributes to unfavourable demographic developments in these municipalities as well.

The overall population mood of the region is adversely affected by a low and continually negative natural increase. The population has not grown naturally, but only through migration. In the periphery, fewer children are born. Although the above-mentioned positive age structure of in-migrants and the prevalence of in-migration of younger families trigger some optimism, the future evolution of the overall population change of the region may not be unambiguously favourable in the future.

Taking into consideration the experience of counterurbanisation in the US and Western Europe, it is not possible to think of the counterurbanisation as an "emergent phenomenon" (Beal, 1976). The current positive demographic developments can be only "a periodic exceptions over the last several decades" (Johnson, 2003). Still, it is not possible to agree with the opinion of Champion (1992) about the insignificance of counter-urbanization on the grounds with the argument that "at the time when the country grows demographically, cities are also growing." When assessing the importance of migration and counterurbanisation at this stage of population change, it is not important to compare the country with cities.

More important is the fact that besides the stagnation of decline in metropolitan areas and cities, there is also stabilization of remote rural areas. This development suggests an attenuation of the suburbanization process.

Acknowledgement

The paper was supported by Grant Agency of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice No. 160/2016/S: *Key competencies in the context of the inter-linkages of science subjects*, the research grant KEGA 015UMB-4/2018: *Geography Interactive E-books for Lower Secondary Schools* and the research grant KEGA 011PU-4/2017: *Integration of teaching and increase of the content coherence of the related disciplines of the specialized module of Regional development and regional policy*.

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