

Abstract

Czechia has become a noteworthy case study of international migration within Central and Eastern Europe. With a steadily increasing inflow of international migrants, it is anticipated that their contribution to the societal and urban dynamics will become more pronounced. This influx has led to a rise in socio-economic and ethnic heterogeneity, reflected in spatial patterns where distinctive population groups are localized. The experiences from traditional immigration countries indicate that the voluntary concentration of foreigners into ethnic enclaves often serves as an intermediary phase in the integration process. However, it can also pose significant risks in situations where immigrants are not willing to participate in broader society or face exclusion.

The primary goal of this dissertation is to enhance the comprehension of the spatial distribution of foreigners across selected Czech metropolitan areas and to explain the related phenomena on multiple scales within the urban hierarchy. The investigation seeks suitable data sources and methodological frameworks to analyze the current state, trajectory, determinants, and particularities of socio-spatial differentiation and segregation. Furthermore, a significant focus lies in the nuanced and theoretically grounded interpretation of results, which aids in crafting effective national and local integration policies. The research aspires not only to enrich the academic discourse but also to explore innovative analytical methodologies relevant to urban settings in Czechia.

Comprising two sections, the thesis first situates the research within a comprehensive theoretical context, delineates the backdrop, and outlines the data and methods utilized. Subsequently, the second section presents six thematically interlinked publications that constitute the core of the dissertation. These publications are provided as an appendix.

The findings indicate that foreigners are increasingly becoming an integral element of the Czech population in various aspects, with their presence and influence in urban development becoming comparable to, and in some instances surpassing, that of their peers in Western Europe. The research suggests a trend towards spatial assimilation among foreigners, as their residential distribution patterns progressively align with those of the native population. Furthermore, the level of ethnic residential segregation seems to be declining across different scales within Czechia, with secondary centres reflecting the segregation dynamics observed in Prague. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, these patterns may signify successful integration, negating the immediate risk of ghettoization observed in socio-economically disadvantaged immigrant communities in Western Europe and the United States. The distinct socio-cultural proximity and connections prevalent among the majority of foreigners in Czechia might play a pivotal role in this context.

Keywords: residential segregation; foreigners; migration; metropolitan areas; urban geography, Czechia