

Abstract

This thesis aims to understand, in the case of the Czech people living along the borders, the extent to which they are, and have become, more “internationally minded” in recent decades. Three theoretical approaches to understand the attitudes of those living along the boundaries are identified as the Realist Securitisation, Liberal Openness and Bordering as a Process paradigms. Descriptions are presented of the historical and demographic nature of the Czech borderlands as well as developments in Czech politics and attitudes to foreigners in the last two decades. Detailed regression analysis at the level of 6,300 individual municipalities is undertaken to empirically test the theoretical paradigms and to control for other factors so as to understand the specific impact of the boundary on the attitudes of those living alongside it. The formation of attitudes is a complex process in which history still seems important and not all interactions with foreigners are seen as improving attitudes towards them. However, against a backdrop of lower support for EU integration and greater concern over immigration in the Czech Republic as a whole, open borders since accession to the EU have coincided with border dwellers becoming in many, but not all, cases less Eurosceptic and less opposed to migrants than is the case for the rest of the country.