

Abstract

Counterurbanisation research, which is a central topic of this thesis, represents an appropriate field where transformations of contemporary societies and their socio-spatial organization can be examined. The dynamics of social and societal changes creates a demand for developing new methods and tools which helps us to understand contemporary change. Counterurbanisation is a multi-faceted concept which has been controversial since its initial use. An introduction of the concept of counterurbanisation in the field of population geography provoked a general debate on new and emerging trends in development of settlement system. Different logics of concentration and deconcentration of human activities has been challenged. Counterurbanisation operationalized as a migration poses a challenge for many standard conceptualizations of migration. The logic of non-economically motivated migration from the centre to the periphery requires a search for alternative explanatory mechanisms. Impact assessment and the impact of counterurbanisation in rural communities are analogous to the classical social science studies evaluating the integration of immigrants from rural areas in the cities.

The thesis is composed of two basic sections. The first section presents a broader theoretical and methodological introduction to the research questions. Counterurbanisation is elaborated as both spatial and social phenomena. Furthermore, counterurbanisation is analysed as a process in the settlement system, as a form of spatial mobility, and as a process of changing population and social structures in localities and communities. Particular attention is paid to contemporary societies, relationships between mobility, lifestyles and value orientations as well as to discursive production of counterurbanisation. The second section, which forms the main part of the thesis, is compiled of author's publications. Attached publications consist of three articles with IF and one chapter in a book. All of them are briefly presented in its basic characteristics and then attached in the original version. Publications show not only the great diversity of counterurbanisation research but also diversity in methodological approaches, which can be used for counterurbanisation research.