

# Urbanization and suburbanization in urban regions of Prague and Vienna

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## Abstract

This PhD thesis is focused on the research of the urbanization and suburbanization processes in the urban regions of Prague and Vienna. It analyses, compares and evaluates the urbanization and suburbanization in the urban regions of Prague and Vienna before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The objective of the thesis is to follow several intersecting levels of comparison. The comparison aims at showing the difference between the urbanization process in a former socialist and contemporary post-socialist city and the urbanization process in a capital city the development of which was not influenced by the principles of a directive social system.

The thesis consists of two major parts. In the first part, general approaches to urbanization and suburbanization research are introduced and the results of an analysis of Prague and Vienna urban regions are summarized. The second part consists of six published or submitted papers analyzing the spatial distribution of population, housing, new housing construction in Prague urban region as well as comparing urbanization in Prague and Vienna urban regions in 1980s and 1990s.

The introductory chapter presents the focus of the thesis and the development of my approach to the research of suburbanization within the post-socialist urban development context. The chapter on general perspectives summarizes the state of the art in the field and shows the application of such approaches on the cases of Prague and Vienna. The last chapter focuses on a comparison between Prague and Vienna, stressing the different historical and political-economic causes of the development in these cities and urban regions.

During my research of urbanization in the urban regions of Prague and Vienna, I used four approaches on how to understand urbanization, suburbanization and other urban processes. The first approach classifies the form of urbanization according to changes in the structure of the region during the process. This level of analysis was used as a basis for the comparative analysis of Prague and Vienna urban regions. The second approach sees urbanization and suburbanization as processes taking place in the urban region simultaneously. I used the perspective mainly for the study of the spatial distribution of new housing constructions and population respectively. Similarly to the first approach, the growth of the core and the hinterland is examined. Unlike the structural assessment, which results in one form of urbanization, the second approach looks on the absolute and relative growth of both parts of the region and their share on total growth. The third approach looks on spatial patterns of metropolitan regions, based on the morphology of built-up areas. This approach was used for an analysis of new housing constructions. The fourth approach stresses migration as an explanatory factor influencing urban processes.

General approaches are used in the research of urbanization and suburbanization processes in the urban regions of Prague and Vienna in the period 1980-2006.

The final chapter on the comparison of both urban regions in 1980-2002 summarizes the research and adds some new information, which could not be included in the published papers. The historical introduction shows the conditions of differences and similarities between the studied cities. After that, both cities are introduced as parts of the respective national settlement systems of the Czech Republic and Austria. Selected results of a comparative analysis are also presented together with the political-economic explanation of the conditions of urbanization process.