

## **Abstract**

The perception of American and Czech reality by long-time members of the Czech community in the USA is the purpose of this diploma thesis. The thesis will focus on the possibilities of using cognitive maps in the study of spatial preferences of two groups of migrants. The year 1989 is one of the most important milestones in Czechoslovakian and Czech history, so it was set as a determining date in this thesis as well. This year divided the respondents into two groups – the incoming migrants to the USA before 1989 (inclusive) and incoming migrants to the USA after 1989. Distribution of respondents into two groups then allowed comparison of preferences using both qualitative methods – assessment of cognitive maps, and quantitative methods – statistical testing of the hypothesis. An important part of the thesis has also become demonstrating possible ways of linking qualitative and quantitative research to achieve a deeper understanding of the issue.

**Key words:** cognitive map, perception, preferences, migration, Czechia, USA