

AMENITY MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF LANDSCAPE- ECOLOGY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Amenity migration is a specific type of migration that is not economically motivated. Rather it is brought about by a desire to render more valuable the natural or socio-cultural environment of the target territory, and it is often directed from metropolitan to rural areas. This phenomenon has been strongly supported by the spread and growing accessibility of mass information technologies. As with any other kind of migration, it can lead to changes in the spatial distribution of human activities in the target territory. Under specific conditions, it can become one of the driving societal forces determining the socio-economic development of a given rural region. In the European context, amenity migration appears to be in its early stages of development. As such, it has been the subject of theoretical debate rather than being documented by empirical evidence. Amenity migration can be seen as an ambiguous phenomenon. Optimistic hypotheses claim that it could support local development of rural space and thus diminish the disproportionate development of particular regions and that it can maintain or even improve these region's environmental and cultural quality. On the other hand, it can also lead to a massive invasion of urban behavioural patterns into rural areas, making them culturally uniform. Tried and tested GIS methods exist for identifying a landscape's potential for amenity migration. The use of qualitative and quantitative techniques is a useful and progressive approach to landscape ecological research. We can expect further progress in the methods used to study amenity migration and for evaluating rural development within a landscape context following further research on amenity migrants, which will take place over the coming years.

Keywords : Amenity migration, Landscape potential, Tourism, Rural development

INTRODUCTION

“Nowadays, all of us are in permanent motion,” says the philosopher and sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1995). Permanent travelling, however, presents both advantages and disadvantages, with negative impacts both on the environment and in the sphere of social relationships. Amenity migration can be an alternative to frequent travelling in the search for a better environment, at least for a certain group of people (Bartoš et al. 2005).

Migration, in general, has been rather narrowly conceptualised as a “relatively permanent” change of address or abode driven mainly by a desire to maximise one’s economic position. Reversal of rural-urban migration in the 1960s and 1970s, however, brought into question the singularity, or even the dominance, of economic motives and raised the possibility of a wider variety of reasons, including those related to quality of life (McIntyre et al. 2006).

Amenity migration is an emerging global phenomenon (Moss 2006). It is a specific type of migration that is not motivated by economic factors, but rather it is brought about by the desire to render more valuable the natural or socio-cultural environment of the target territory, and it is often directed from metropolitan to rural areas or to the historic hearts of cities. This phenomenon has been strongly supported by the spread and growing accessibility of mass information technologies (Glorioso 1999). As with any other kind of migration, it can lead to changes in the spatial distribution of human activities in the target territory. Under specific conditions, it can become one of the societal driving forces determining the socio-economic development of the given region. In a Central European context, amenity migration appears to be in its early stages of development (Bartoš and Kušová 2005).

The concept of amenity migration is founded on two basic forms (Moss 1994). Results of research carried out by Moss (1987) from the mid-1980s show that it is possible to distinguish two key factors that cause amenity migration. The first is migration motivated by the opportunity to live in a better natural environment (natural amenities). Moss (2006) specifies that: “Environmental amenities are the valued natural physical attributes of places, including terrestrial and aquatic landscapes, distinguishing topographical features, climate, air, water and biodiversity quality and quantity” (see Figure 1). Second, migration may be aimed at specific socio-cultural aspects of the target territory (cultural amenities). This includes, for example, a specific lifestyle or local community character, tradition, religious practice, or small-scale production practices of a specific character. Such socio-cultural amenities were the main reason for emigration among “neo-ruralists” in Western Europe in the 1970s. Currently, there appears to be a group of migrants that is focused exclusively on the cultural specifics, its “*genius loci*”. In this case, people migrate to historical towns and cultural centres.

Amenity migrants strive to change the place in which they live due to internal, psychological factors; it is an act of their personal indulgence. Indulgence, in this case, means being aware of the values of life in a natural environment, that is only moderately polluted and far from bustling civilization, being fascinated with rural life, or the desire to live in a culturally different community.

The process of amenity migration can be described as a motion with two driving forces, otherwise known as a push-pull theory: (1) “anti-urban” push factors from cities include crime, congestion, costs and low quality of environment, and (2) “pro-rural” pull factors include attraction of a better environment, a more tranquil lifestyle and/or a genuine move towards rurality “where the majority of daily needs can be met in local market towns” (Halliday and Coombes 1995). The first group of factors (anti-urban) is possible to understand as a push force for “environmental migration”. The term “environmental migrants” has been suggested to denote migration due to both environmental and non-environmental factors working together (Reuveny 2005). For example, at the present time, people are migrating from the North Bohemian region in the Czech Republic, from cities like Most, Chomutov or Ústí nad Labem, due to low environmental quality and its impact on children’s health.

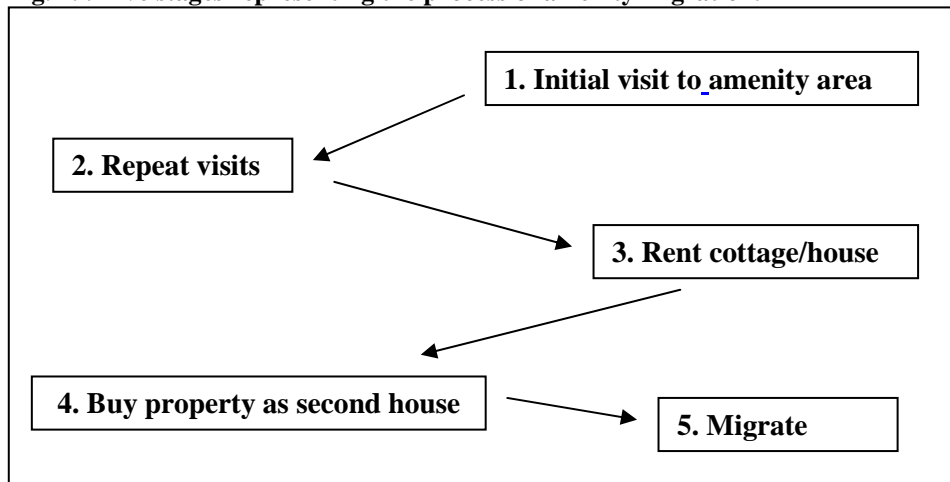
Fig. 1. :Environmental amenities are represented by the valued natural physical attributes of places, including terrestrial and aquatic landscapes.



Recently, other approaches have been formulated to describe and explain the origins of amenity migration. One of these is based on the general principles of tourism, i.e. getting to know new places during one's free time with a gradual transition to amenity migration (Steward 2002). A second phenomenon, which can be understood as an intermediate stage, is that of people with second homes (Bičík et al. 2001). The latter approach assumes that amenity migrants leave the places in which they currently live spontaneously, being dissatisfied with life in the city (Glück and Magel 1992; Librová 1994, 2003). The former category is informed about the place itself and the local community, whereas members of the latter group are heading for "the unknown" and their expectations are high.

Steward (2002) describes five basic steps leading to amenity migration (Figure 2), with its beginning being conditioned by yet another human activity, tourism. Steward assumes that the initial impulse bringing about amenity migration could be connected with experience mediated by a form of tourism. In this sense, as regards the visitors, the necessary preconditions would be free time and financial means. This indicates that amenity migrants come from a group who are "economically strong" or, in other words, "well-off", and whose presence in the territory can positively influence regional development (Blažek 2002).

Tourists usually visit places without the intention of residing or earning a living in their destinations. Amenity migrants, however, settle in their destination, where they reside permanently, seasonally or intermittently (Glorioso and Moss 2007). Others have defined amenity migrants differently. Chipeniuk (2006) and Buckley et al. (2006), for example, consider only those who move permanently to be amenity migrants. In some areas of North America, the development of amenity migration has been described differently. What tends to happen is that people who have the intention to move to some amenity-rich place keep their eyes open for a situation that might suit them; then they check out possibilities among communities or districts praised by word of mouth or in the media; and finally, when the time is right, they simply move to their selected place, full-time (Chipeniuk 2006)

Fig. 2. : Five stages representing the process of amenity migration.

Source: Steward (2002)

From landscape potential to amenity migration and its local development impact

Landscape attributes determine the potential for amenity migration. These attributes include environmental quality, visual aesthetic values, landscape management, the settlement system or recreational attractiveness (Kopp and Novotná 2007). Evaluation of landscape potential for amenity migration can be connected with the existing methodology for evaluation of visual landscape character or potential for tourism.

Van Dam et al. (2002) analysed the role of countryside images on residential preferences for rural living in the Netherlands. The respondents associated the countryside with a word in four categories: (1) morphological (e.g. green, cows or farms), (2) functional (agriculture, nature or recreation), (3) socio-cultural (quiet or dull), or (4) topographical (North Netherlands). The morphological aspects of the countryside were most frequently mentioned.

Landscape character is determined on the one hand by the natural environment and on the other by human activities that have lasted for thousands of years. The visual character of a landscape not only represents an aesthetic value but also testifies to the interrelation of cultural, economic and biological phenomena. We can analyse visual landscape attributes such as geomorphology, the size of fields and other character elements with geographical information system (GIS) tools. Many methodological approaches have been developed for evaluating landscape character in the Czech Republic, some of which use GIS (Bukáček and Matějka 1997; Vorel 1999; Löw and Míchal 2003).

The United States Department of Agriculture (McGranahan 1999) uses a natural amenity index for delimiting a landscape's potential for migration and economic growth in rural areas. This index accounts for water area, temperature, humidity, sunshine and terrain. The Center for the Study of Rural America (2006) measures human amenities by evaluating healthcare access, innovation, recreation areas, restaurants and natural amenities.

Gutmann et al. (2005) made use of a rich county-level dataset to analyse factors that affected net migration rates in counties in the US Great Plains between 1930 and 1990, emphasising the roles of weather (especially drought), environmental amenities, employment and population. His results showed that the environment was important in

population processes, with weather and agricultural change more important in the 1930s and 1940s, and environmental amenities more important in later time periods.

Amenity migration may also produce a range of impacts on the natural environment (Buckley 2004). Areas of forest or other relatively undisturbed native ecosystems may be fragmented through subdivision, fencing, access roads, electricity cabling and clearance for house and garden sites. Encroachment of fenced residential areas around national parks may restrict the movement of wildlife. Household pets become predators of native birds, reptiles and small mammals, and they may escape to create or add to feral populations within protected areas. Fire regimes and fire management options are changed. The consumption of freshwater increases, as does the production of sewage, together with associated water pollution. Road traffic also increases, with associated noise disturbance and road kills.

To date, amenity migration has been the subject of theoretical debate rather than being documented by empirical evidence. In its nature, amenity migration can be seen as an ambiguous phenomenon. Optimistic hypotheses (e.g. Chipeniuk 2004) claim that it could support local development of rural space and thus diminish disproportionate development of particular regions. It could also help to maintain, or even improve, the environmental and cultural quality of those areas. On the other hand, it can also lead to a massive invasion of urban behavioural patterns into rural areas, making them culturally uniform. The question remains, however, as to whether amenity migration to rural marginal areas is not merely an “episode” in migrants’ lives, as demographic findings show that the attraction of metropolitan areas, at least in Europe, is not decreasing (Vágner 2001).

In this paper, we publish our preliminary findings from the project: “Amenity migration as an emerging form of global human migration: Its role in the socio-economic development of rural areas in the Czech Republic”. In particular, we attempt to answer the following questions:

- Does the phenomenon of amenity migration exist in the Czech Republic, and what types of amenity migration can be identified within model territories?
- Is existing typology of amenity migrants, such as that based on criteria such as length of stay, attitude towards resource use and the source of discretionary time and income (Glorioso 1999), suitable for describing and evaluating amenity migrants within the said model territories?
- Are qualitative and quantitative techniques useful approaches for use in describing the amenity migration phenomenon in the Czech Republic?
- Which “landscape amenities” play a role in the development of amenity migration, and which methods are suitable for landscape potential evaluation?

METHODS SECTION

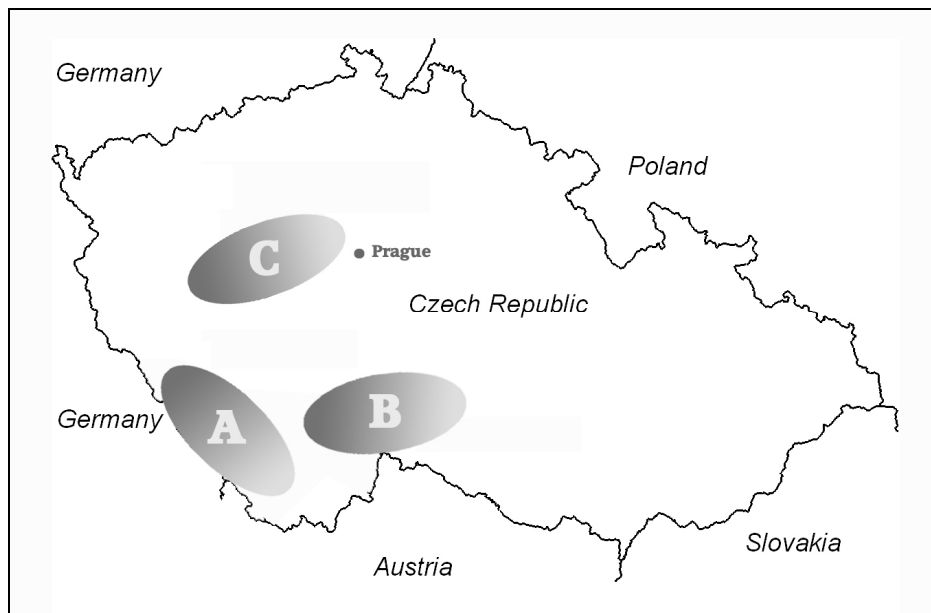
Study area

Though our study generally deals with the global phenomenon of amenity migration, we also undertook research within rural regions of the Czech Republic. Attention has been paid mostly to “lagging” areas, which are theoretically predisposed to become the targets of amenity migrants (Moss et al. 1999; Moss, 2006; Těšitel et al. 2001, 2003; Bartoš et al. 2005). Our initial hypothesis assumes that these areas display a specific comparative advantage, i.e. a better preserved environment, and, at the same time, they are characterised by parameters typical of marginal (Těšitel et al. 1999) or peripheral territories (Novotná 2004).

Three model territories were chosen for this empirical comparative study: a) the Šumava Mountains and their foothills; b) The Třeboňsko Protected Landscape Area and Biosphere Reserve, including the territory known as Česká Kanada (Czech Canada); and c) the territory along the borders of three regions (Pilsen, Ústi and Central Bohemia) known as “Inner Periphery West” (Figure 3).

The territories all have different geographical characteristics and varying local economies, including different levels of tourism development. In addition, they are each subject to differing levels of state-controlled nature protection. All the territories are considered to have economies that can be characterised as “less efficient”.

Fig. 3.: Location of the model areas. A) The Šumava Mountains and their foothills, B) The Třeboňsko Protected Landscape Area and Biosphere Reserve (including the territory known as Czech Canada), and C) the territory known as “Inner Periphery West”.



Methods for describing amenity migrants

Due to the complexity of the problem and the necessity of dealing with local knowledge, we decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Hendl 2005). A pilot field research project was used to test the mixed method approach. Semi-standardised interviews with key representatives of local communities (mainly with town mayors) were used to identify particular amenity migrants. Thirty key representatives were interviewed in two model areas, the Šumava Mountains and Inner Periphery West. Forty-six amenity migrants were identified based on the interviews with key representatives. During late summer and autumn of 2007, twenty-two amenity migrants were selected for interview to gain qualitative data concerning their lifestyles. In identifying the respondents, we used the principles of “maximal variety” and that of personal recommendation, a system that Patton (1990) termed “snow ball”. The number of amenity migrants addressed in each of the regions was proportional to the total number in each region. The data gathered in the

interviews with key representatives and selected amenity migrants were afterwards used as a guide for creating a structured questionnaire for amenity migration research in general. The questionnaire survey aims to reveal the lifestyle and lifetime strategies of amenity migrants and identify amenity migrant types, including their behavioural patterns and their expectations concerning their localities.

Methods evaluating landscape potential for amenity migration

Concurrently with the amenity migrant research, we tested methods for delimiting the landscape's potential for amenity migration using GIS (Novotná 2005; Kušová et al. 2008). We based our methodology on the initial results of a bibliographic search and on pilot field research. Theoretically, a landscape's potential for amenity migration is similar to that for tourism. The methodology comprises four stages: (1) the choice of appropriate variables to evaluate the potential for tourism, (2) processing of the chosen preconditions into map layers, (3) evaluation of geographic objects using a Delphi method (*a systematic, iterative method based upon expert opinions with feedback to the individual evaluators between rounds according to the views gathered in each previous round*) and (4) the use of map algebra (an analytical procedure of GIS) to provide a general evaluation of the potential for tourism in an area.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Categorisation of amenity migrants

Based on the interviews with the twenty-two selected amenity migrants, a number of migrant groups were classified and described qualitatively in such a way as to provide empirical groupings (see Table 1) to the already existing typology elaborated by Moss (1987), Price et al. (1997) and Glorioso (1999). These authors distinguish three basic criteria for categorization: length of stay, attitude towards resource use, the source of discretionary time and income. This typology also displays their potential roles in regional development. In the following boxes, we present descriptions of five selected examples of amenity migrant.

Table 1. Selected characteristics of amenity migrants

Characteristics (variable)	Variable value	Number
Length of stay	Permanent	2
	Seasonal	4
	Intermittent - more than 6 months	16
Source of income	Retiree	2
	Teleworker	1
	Locally employed	4
	Independently wealthy	10
	Other - combination	5
Attitude towards resource use	Resource-conservers	15
	Resource-consumers	5
	Unidentified	2

Source: own field research (2007); n = 22

Example 1

A seventy-three-year-old writer and his wife have been owners of a second home in region A for many years. Their old mountain house (situated at 780 m.a.s.l.) is situated very close to the former Iron Curtain, and they needed a permit to use the house for recreational purposes during the so-called Cold War period. Since retiring in the last few years, they have become independent of the city. They have rented their former apartment to their grown-up children and now live permanently in their typical secluded mountain house. Apart from writing books, they have also established a small restaurant where they offer local specialties to Czechs and foreign tourists, mainly from Bavaria and Upper Austria. "Thanks to our knowledge of the German language, we have made many new friends. We don't live in the back of beyond any more," says the writer. "Both the beautiful natural surroundings and our local food specialties attract tourists to visit us," continues his wife.

As regards source of discretionary time and income, these amenity migrants belong to the retirees (employed part-time) category.

Example 2

It was the beauty of the environment and the peace that attracted a former Prague architect and his family, persuading them to escape from the capital of the Czech Republic and settle in a small village in the central part of the Šumava Mountains. The village, named Prášily, lies at an altitude of 880 m.a.s.l. and has only 139 permanent inhabitants (100 years ago it had 460 inhabitants). It is situated in the middle of a former military training area. Between 1945 and 1990, the village was closed to the public and it was only possible to visit it with special permission. The 52-year-old architect now works at home as a creative designer and planner, using a computer with an internet connection to communicate with his clients. He seldom visits the clients or the partner firms personally. His second job is goat breeding (he has about 20 goats), and he is rebuilding his own old farmhouse (he is very skilful). His wife is still connected with Prague; she is a musician and lives partly in the Šumava Mountains and partly in the city. The village is presently undergoing a tourist and construction boom, however, and the architect says: "No more peace and quiet here; maybe I will move deeper into the forests." Amenity migrants using information technology represent a new class in the Czech Republic.

As regards source of discretionary time and income, these amenity migrants belong to the teleworker category.

Example 3

In a ghost town, among the ruins of former residences, shops, restaurants and even the church, there lives a fifty-seven-year-old man and his wife. Last year, he finished constructing his house and he hopes that soon they will be followed by other settlers. Together, they would like to renew the extinct little town of Pohोří na Šumavě, where it was once possible to find 186 residences at the end of the 19th century. "The natural scenery is beautiful here," he explains as the reason why he and his wife moved to this extinct town from a very distant place, the industrial city of Ústí nad Labem. The nearest settlement, ten kilometres from here, is Pohorská Ves, which can be reached from Pohoří along a narrow road running between mountain peat meadows and forest. Life in such a place can be pretty complicated. There are problems with electricity and water, and mobile phones do not work due to the lack of a signal. Tourists mainly visit the place in the summer. "In summer, we work in the buffet that we opened here. I am not sure what to do next," says the new settler. This type has all the features of a typical amenity migrant with some pioneering

characteristics. They become so fascinated by the amenity environment that they decide to renew extinct settlements or secluded houses in mountain environments along the border.

As regards source of discretionary time and income, these amenity migrants belong to the locally employed category.

Example 4

Just after World War II, a small, solitary 18th century castle, situated in the foothills of the Šumava Mountains at an altitude of 800 m.a.s.l., was used as a block of flats for agricultural workers and their families. After 1948, the state took over ownership and the castle was used by a large state agricultural farm. Poor living conditions and the distance from the next small town (3 km from the town of Hartmanice) meant that by 1990 the castle was being used as a storehouse for agricultural fertilisers. Only one Romany family was settled in the castle at that time. In 1993, the castle was sold to private owners. The new owners were a university-educated couple. The husband is an agricultural scientist from Prague with no experience of living in the countryside, though his wife is a veterinary doctor with a long practice in the Šumava Mountains. Now, after more than ten years, the castle is totally renovated and serves as a home for the couple, their two children and their eight horses. The main financial income is from outside – a building lease in a different part of the country. “For us, the main reasons for settling here were the amazing natural surroundings, the peace and the possibility to put into practice our hobby – horse breeding,” explains the man when asked why they are living so far from other people.

As regards source of discretionary time and income, these amenity migrants belong to the independently wealthy category.

Example 5

Following the events of 1989, it is now possible to find many amenity migrants from abroad in the south-western part of the Czech Republic, particularly from neighbouring countries such as Germany (Bavaria) and Austria. In addition to inhabitants from these two countries, many Dutch people have found a new home in the hills and woods of the Czech landscape. One such person is a 35-year-old man from The Hague who settled in the Czech countryside in the Šumava foothills. He mentioned a sense of security in comparison to his previous life in a less prosperous neighbourhood of The Hague as the main advantage of his new lifestyle. The second reason for moving was the fact that a friend from the Netherlands already lives in the same locality. He is fascinated by the country lifestyle, and he tries to be active in the local community. Despite his poor knowledge of the language, he has established a music club in the village to increase the local cultural life. He works in a local pub, which is his current main source of income. It is questionable how long he will survive as an amenity migrant in the Czech territory.

As regards source of discretionary time and income, this amenity migrant belongs to the locally employed category.

In a previous publication, Bartoš et al. (2008) briefly mention other types of permanent amenity migrant that have been identified in the model areas under these criteria, e.g. businessmen engaged in tourism; mayors of local municipalities in the Šumava National Park; professional sportsmen who invest their capital in the reconstruction of mountains hotels in winter sport centres and owners of private agriculture farms.

Evaluation of landscape potential

We used the test area of Pilsen to evaluate the landscape's potential for amenity migration. Our GIS database for delimiting the natural potential of tourism includes seven polygon layers (relief slope, protected areas of natural and aesthetic value, air quality, main forested areas, areas for water recreation, watercourses for water sports and fishing, and areas for winter sports) and one point layer (mineral springs) (Figure 4). The cultural and historical potential for tourism is represented by three point layers (cultural and historical objects, sites for sports activities and sites for cultural activities) (Figure 5).

We evaluated the Pilsen landscape's potential for amenity migration based on "positive categories", i.e. those factors that might attract amenity migrants. Moreover, as recreation areas that are visited often by many tourists can have a negative effect on potential amenity migrants, we also examined a number of "negative categories", i.e. those factors that might deter amenity migrants (Table 2). Various GIS layers are available (see Kopp and Novotná 2008) to analyse the various categories as regards landscape potential for amenity migration (Table 2).

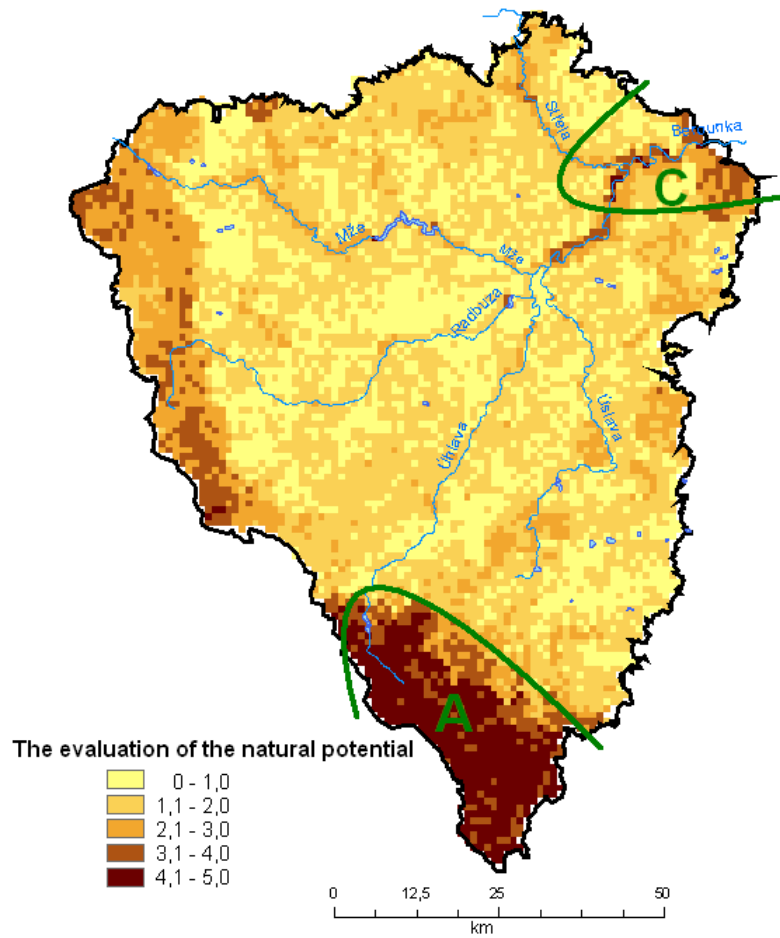
Within the Pilsen region, both mountainous areas and those areas along rivers show a high potential for amenity tourism, while the lowest potential is found in the hilly areas to the north and west of Pilsen itself (Figure 4). More specifically, the Šumava, Český les and Brdy mountain ranges and the area along the River Berounka, downstream of Pilsen, all display the highest natural potential for tourism, while the hilly agricultural area along the drainage divide between the rivers Mže, Radbuza, Úhlava and Úslava displays the lowest potential. There is a clear difference between the model area of the Šumava Mountains in the south and that of Inner Periphery West in the north (Figure 4). The highest concentration of tourist attractions is in the areas around the towns of Pilsen, Domažlice and Klatovy (Figure 5).

Table 2. : Positive and negative categories for delimiting landscape potential for amenity migration, and the GIS sources used to analyse these categories.

Positive landscape potential categories	Negative landscape potential categories	GIS source
Areas with potential for recreation and tourism. Landscapes with excellent landscape character.	Negative impact of tourism on quiet and idyllic landscapes. Different and subjective living preferences.	Own methodology (Novotná 2005), various sources. Digital relief model, biochores of the Czech Republic, CORINE databases.
Protected landscape.	Limits of the housing market and individual activities in the landscape.	All categories of Landscape Protected Areas, NATURA 2000, EECONET.
Low-density of settlement and marginal areas.	Insufficient technical and commercial infrastructure.	Traffic networks, settlement and population distribution, map of cell phone signals.

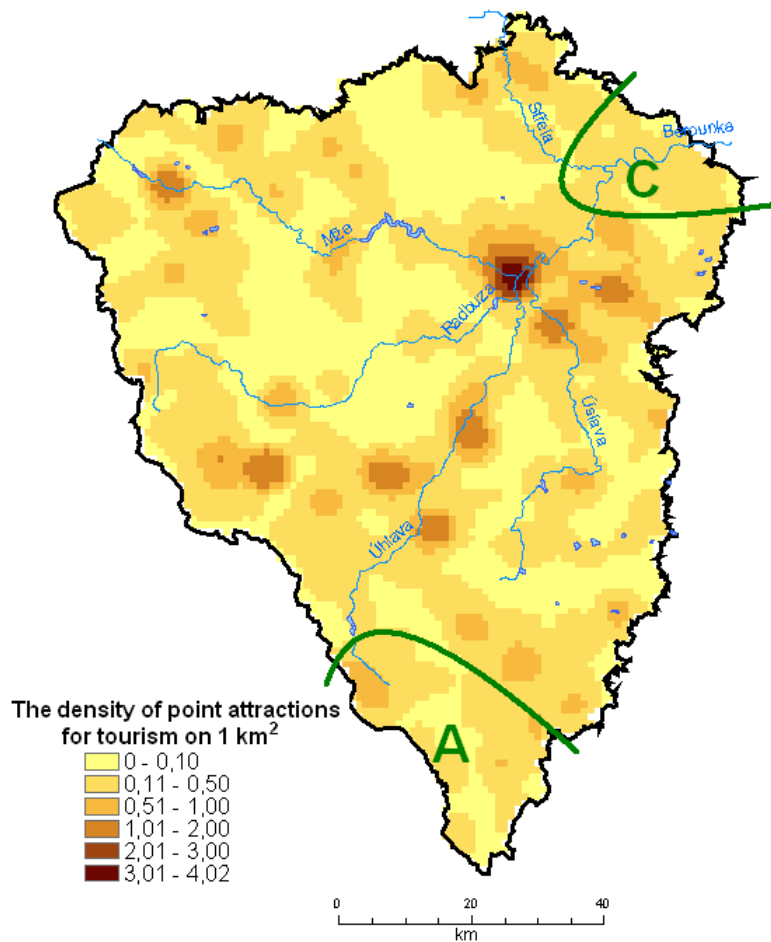
Source: Kopp and Novotná (2007)

Fig. 4. : Evaluation of the natural potential for tourism in the Pilsen Region (The Pilsen Region partly overlaps with model areas A and C).



Source: Novotná (2005)

Fig. 5. : Evaluation of the cultural and historical potential for tourism in the Pilsen Region (The Pilsen Region partly overlaps with model areas A and C).



Source: Novotná (2005)

DISCUSSION

The expression “amenity migration” is not in general use in Central Europe. Czech scientific terminology has not yet created an equivalent for the term “amenity”, possibly because, in the Czech Republic, the phenomenon itself occurs, and is described, in its proto-form (i.e. proto-amenity migration, Glorioso 1999), where it displays some characteristics identical with the phenomenon of second home ownership (Bičík et al. 2001, Novotná 2004). The problems associated with second homes in the Czech Republic have been the subject of geographical and sociological study since the second half of the 20th century (e.g. Gardavský 1983; Bičík et al. 2001; Vágner and Fialová 2004), while the phenomenon of urban citizens’ voluntarily moving to rural areas (natural amenities) has

been investigated by Librová (1994, 2003). In the broader European context, a temporary stay at a place is usually described as a second home and not amenity migration (Flognfeldt 2006; Perlik 2006). The phenomenon of mass exploitation of rural space by urban people was recognised in Czech literature by Honzík (1965), who expressively named it “escape from the city”. This phenomenon has increased since that time, primarily because its causes – a “non-habitable” urban environment and the possibility of leaving it (in the sense of time, economy and transport) – have become more pronounced.

Up to 1990, the criterion of amenity migrant was only applicable to native Czech people. During the last 19 years, however, the criterion now applies also to foreigners, mostly from economically developed countries, who have settled in the Czech Republic for various reasons (see example 5). This mainly results from the fact that after 1990 the Czech Republic underwent a process of transformation into a developed democratic society, guaranteeing the rights of potential amenity migrants from abroad and generally causing a rapid increase in international migration (Drbohlav 1999, 2002). A further factor that may have stimulated the development of rural areas, and thus also facilitated amenity migration, has been the introduction of information and communication technologies (Reinöhllová 2005).

As part of the literature search for this study, the authors found very few relevant publications dealing with the phenomenon of amenity migration in Europe. Perlik (2006) provided an important insight into amenity migration in the European Alps. In this study, amenity migration was looked at in the context of “economically balanced regional development, creating mixed societal structures with active citizens and creative stakeholders”. The author suggested that primary efforts should be made to keep the inhabitants in the region, after their external knowledge enhancement, to avoid “brain drain”. This should include helping people to “re-migrate”. Müller (2006) explored and explained the complex relationship between tourism development, in-migration and local labour markets in rural Sweden. Tourism forms an important precondition for in-migration, in the sense that it provides service jobs with relatively low entrance barriers (Riley et al. 2001). The empirical evidence from our pilot project demonstrates similar trends. The results gained from our field research show that amenity migration could slow the depopulation of rural areas in the Czech Republic, thereby reducing disproportionate development of particular regions, as well as maintain or even improve a region’s environmental and/or cultural quality.

On the other hand, amenity migration can also lead to a massive invasion of urban behavioural patterns into rural areas, making them culturally uniform. The question remains, however, as to whether amenity migration to rural areas is not merely a temporary “episode” in migrants’ lives, as recent demographic data shows a high level of attraction to metropolitan areas, at least in Europe (Vágner 2001). In our pilot research, we found some respondents who underwent amenity migration as part of their life cycles. At the same time, the results verified the applicability of the amenity migrant typologies published by Moss (1987), Price et al. (1997) and Glorioso (1999).

Researching amenity migration is complicated due to the complex nature of the factors that affect amenity migration. Three basic factors can be identified: household characteristics, economy and state policy, and landscape potential. Household characteristics might include age, education, income position, number of children, residential history, frequency of target area visits, and personal relationships. Economy and state policy represent, for example, housing policy, policy and legal system for rural development, the building industry, personal income, and landscape protection strategy. The landscape’s potential for amenity migration can be represented by attributes such as

environmental quality, visual aesthetic values, landscape management and settlement system, and attractiveness for recreation. During 2008 and 2009, we will continue to research the factors mentioned above, whereupon we expect further methodological progress in evaluating a landscape's potential toward amenity migrants.

CONCLUSION

Despite this being a pilot research project, it is clear that it is possible to explain the phenomenon of amenity migration in the context of landscape-ecology research. Qualitative and quantitative techniques for identifying particular amenity migrants were tested in model areas. The preliminary results show that amenity migration does exist in the Czech Republic and may play a role in the socio-economic development of rural areas. The significance of its role in socio-economic development will be the focus of future research.

The previously published typology of amenity migrants produced by Glorioso (1999) was found to be applicable in our research context. The typology will be made more specific for conditions in the Czech Republic based on the preliminary results presented herein. Whereas the methodological experience gained from such external studies as those of McGranahan (1999) or the Center for the Study of Rural America (2006) can serve as inspiration, adaptations have to be made as our evolution, social conditions and environment are all unique.

Methods were tested for delimiting a landscape's potential for amenity migration using GIS tools. Our preliminary results prove that it is possible to use such GIS tools for analysing landscape potential. Future research will be focused on the exact definition of amenity migration factors and their appropriate weighting as inputs to map algebra in GIS analysis.

The state of the natural or cultural environment plays an important role within the model areas. In this context, the peripheral, rural regions or communities with strong "*genius loci*" have potential competitive advantages as desirable destinations since the nature of their economic, social, cultural and natural resources may be especially appropriate to cultural co-modification and the re-valorisation of place.

This article presents the results of preliminary analysis within the "amenity migration" research project, a collaboration between the Institute of Systems Biology and Ecology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. In the future, the research project will focus on evaluating the role that amenity migration plays in regional development. Achieving this objective requires the following steps: a) a follow-up study on the description of forms of amenity migration, b) analysis of the factors facilitating this phenomenon, c) prediction of possible developments in amenity migration, and d) estimating the potential impacts (both positive and negative) of amenity migration on the target territory.

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