

EXPLORING THE SHIFTING MOTIVATIONS FOR COUNTERURBANIZATION MOVES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Šárka Tesařová and Hynek Jeřábek
(both Charles University)

Abstract: Building upon Peter Rossi's foundational research on migration motivations in the 1950s, this study examines the main reasons for counterurbanization moves. Rossi, employing the reason analysis methodology pioneered by Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, identified core factors influencing relocation decisions. We utilize a similar approach, adapted to the contemporary context, to explore the composition of motives for counterurbanization movements and compare Rossi's findings with data collected in recent years. This comparative analysis sheds light on how the main motives for relocation have changed over time.

The research explores the factors driving individuals to pursue lifestyle changes through migration, analysing the relative importance of various motivations in the current landscape. While our findings suggest that core factors like physical space (size) and home ownership remain relevant, the social environment holds a different significance today. Unlike the past focus on the social status of neighbours, contemporary lifestyle migrants prioritize how a location aligns with their occupational and leisure pursuits. Hobbies, which often contribute to household income, now factor into the social environment equation, shaping the desired community characteristics. By examining historical and contemporary trends, this study reveals the evolving nature of human mobility and the factors shaping people's decisions to relocate for improved quality of life.

Keywords: *Lifestyle Migration, Migration Patterns, Quality of Life, Motivations, Rossi's Theory, Comparative Analysis, Reason Analysis*

1 Introduction

Leaving the city for the countryside is something we know people have been doing since antiquity. Socrates reportedly owned a small estate in a village called “Gúdi”, where he used to travel in order to get rest from all the commotion, in the capital city, Athens.

Nowadays, this phenomenon is occurring on a large scale. In the literature, the standard version of this practice is referred to as the “counterurbanization story” and is driven by motives that relate to several basic family needs (Mitchell 2004). The phenomenon of counterurbanization is often observed among socio-economically advantaged individuals whose financial stability facilitates such relocation. Consequently, this migration can be conceptualized as a privileged form of spatial mobility. The main reasons for moving are usually that people need more space and want to own their own home, where they will be better able to decide how to use that space (Rossi 1980 [1955]).

However, in its standard version, the “counterurbanization story” also encompasses motives that involve finding solutions to several other needs, such as the wish to move to a quieter and safer environment, which the countryside offers. When these migrants move to a certain location that meets their demands, this step is also accompanied by an increase in social status, if they are moving to a location that is one of the more sought-after places to live (Benson, O’Reilly 2009). The process of making the decision to move is by no means uniform across individual cases, and there exists a wide range of factors that influence individuals and families to select a certain location for his or her – or more often, their shared – new home.

1.1 Research question

The world is in a constant flux, reshaping human society at its core. Now more than ever, people are on the move, driven by a complex interplay of factors. While the underlying motivations for migration remain relatively consistent, their relative importance is shifting dramatically, which is a testament to the dynamic nature of our interconnected world.

We propose two main research questions:

*Is family well-being still the most important motive in the decision to move?
What are the primary factors that influence people’s decisions when searching for a house outside the city?*

2 Overview

2.1 What do we mean by well-being?

Given the strong correlation between motivations for relocation and perceived well-being, it is imperative to establish a clear definition of this term as employed within this study. For the purposes of this analysis, well-being is defined as the combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment, as well as the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships (Garci-Garzon, 2020).

2.2 What is counterurbanization?

From a sociological standpoint, counterurbanization narratives transcend simplistic portrayals of unidirectional migration from urban to rural settings. Scholars emphasize the concept's inherent heterogeneity, acknowledging the diverse motivations, locations, and cultural contexts that shape these mobility patterns. Counterurbanization is not solely driven by a search for an idyllic rural escape; rather, it encompasses a spectrum of reasons, including economic hardship, lifestyle preferences, and familial ties (Bijker 2012).

Early conceptualizations often positioned counterurbanization as a binary opposite to urban living, emphasizing the allure of a rural idyll. Contemporary sociological perspectives challenge this view, recognizing counterurbanization as just one component within a broader phenomenon of rural population dynamics. Individuals engage in rural mobility for multifaceted reasons, and the destinations they choose to move to may not always represent traditionally isolated rural areas. The sociological lens further illuminates the co-construction of new ruralities through counterurbanization. These processes contribute to the formation of hybrid identities and communities, blurring the lines between traditional rural and urban lifestyles. Sociologists examine the ways in which counterurbanization disrupts notions of a static rural population and fosters the emergence of novel rural social formations (Halfacree 2024).

2.3 Development of the concept in time

These research questions bring us back to the now-classic study that Peter Rossi carried out in the mid-1950s, more than seventy years ago in the USA (Rossi 1980 [1955]). In our study, we note some similarities in the decision-making processes of migrating families (today and then) and seek explanations for

them – both in contemporary theories, and in the mechanisms that were already described by Peter Rossi in his famous book: *Why Families Move*. The methodological guideline we chose to follow is the method of “reason analysis”. Peter Rossi applied this method in his study of residential change in Philadelphia in the 1950s, and we also apply the same method in the present day to the reasons why families move from the similarly large city of Prague.

If we inquire as to what people are looking for when they move to the countryside, the question that most obviously presents itself is to ask why they leave their current abode, and most importantly: what is it that they do not like about it? Peter Rossi’s study (Rossi 1980 [1955]) indicates that over sixty years ago, people were predominantly motivated to move because they did not like the neighbourhood they were living in and did not have enough space. Today we can describe these as factors that have a very significant influence on the decision to move as “push factors”; that is to say, when looking for the right place to move to, people’s decisions are primarily guided by the problems they see in the place where they are currently living. The initial objective, then, is to solve these unpleasant problems by moving to a better place.

In the 1950s, Rossi also drew attention to a second group of reasons that people have for moving, namely “pull effects”. The results of the most recent studies have shown that today it is these “pull effects” that rank among the main factors people take into consideration when deciding to move. Migrants today thus give more attention to the characteristics of the location they are moving to than they do to any shortcomings in the place where they currently reside (Halliday, Coombes 1995). Since the 1950s, the methods used to closely analyse the decision-making processes of migrant families and households have differed, but qualitative studies have nonetheless shown that the decision-making process in this case has not changed in any notable ways.

Nowadays, we can no longer work with just the simple model presented by the “counterurbanization story”, and it’s to be expected that there is a much wider range of reasons and combinations of reasons that influence people’s decision to move (Halfacree 2012). In the case of what is called “lifestyle migration” (Benson 2015), people who move to the countryside aren’t only looking for places that present just a convenient opportunity, or an increase in their living space.

On the contrary, they are looking for a community that suits them and that feels close to them, which is how Mari Korpela described the situation in northern India in the city of Varanasi (Mari Korpela in: Benson 2016). Or they

are searching for a place with a feeling of authenticity, an authenticity that is lost through mass settlement; they are thus looking for “undiscovered” places with specific characteristics (Osbaldiston 2012). Their choice of location is based on the lifestyle they want to live, which they themselves refer to as “the good life”.

Another group of motives, according to Moss, is espoused by “amenities migrants”. These people are searching for something very specific and they often look for remote places, such as idyllic, pristine landscapes in the mountains, where they can live according to their own notion of the spiritual dimension of a place (Moss 2006). According to Moss’s observations, they are motivated by higher aspirations and a desire for transcendence (Moss 2006; Osbaldiston 2011).

3 Methodology

3.1 The methodology of Peter Rossi’s 1955 Philadelphia project

Peter Rossi considered whether to study residential change retrospectively, i.e., residence that had already taken place, or residential change that was planned to take place in the near future. He decided in favour of the latter option. He asked inhabitants of Philadelphia in individual households questions about their plans: whether they planned to move or not, and why they planned to move. Eight months later, Peter Rossi returned to the same addresses to find out whether any planned moves had in fact occurred and thus his research exercised sufficient control over properly checking up on the fulfilment of these plans.

Rossi was, among other things, studying the conditions under which the motivation to move is transformed into action. He discovered that it was more often those who had only been renting their housing who moved, and less often those who owned the housing they were in (Rossi 1980: 120 [1955]). It would be natural to expect that the households most likely to move were households that were renting and wanted to buy their own home. Also, the younger the family, and the larger the family, the more likely they were to move (ibid., p. 124). Large families living in small flats were especially interested in moving. A particularly significant factor was that of an increase in the number of family members, with a consequent need for more space and ownership of one’s home, i.e., where the parents had already had, or were expecting to have, another child. Both circumstances led to an increased likelihood of moving.

Peter Rossi deemed it important to select representatives from four different social and urban environments in Philadelphia. He interviewed four groups

of inhabitants of the city of Philadelphia who resided in four different areas of the city. “Four areas and their census tracts were to be chosen: one of high mobility and high socioeconomic status, one of high mobility and low socioeconomic status, one of low mobility and high socioeconomic status, and one of low mobility and low socioeconomic status” (Rossi 1980: 65). “The median monthly rental was thus used as an index of the socioeconomic status of the census tracts, and the proportion of owner-occupied dwelling units formed an index of mobility’ (Rossi 1980: 66 [1955]). Drawing on census data from 1940, he selected four relatively compact areas in the city and picked one census tract from each area. He then selected households and families to interview from each area.

Moving is a far more frequent phenomenon in the United States than it is, for example, in the Czech Republic, so it was logical that Peter Rossi focused on “current data” and decided firstly, to compare socioeconomic status in the environments that people were moving out of and secondly, to compare the mobility plans of families in areas with above-average mobility to the plans of families in areas with below-average mobility (Rossi 1980: 65–68 [1955]).

3.2 The adjusted method

By contrast, our project is based on the situation in the Czech Republic, where the average rate of residential mobility is much lower, and moving residence is not as common as it is in the United States. Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, which currently has a population of 1.2 million inhabitants, was selected for comparison with Philadelphia. In our research, we were not interested in just any kind of relocation from one place to another; for this Czech study, we tried to select the kinds of families for which residential change would represent a situation comparable to that of the situation in the USA in the 1950s, when many households there lived in family homes, which they either owned or rented. This is not the situation for the majority of the population in Prague.

In the Czech sample of families, we focused on what is called “privileged migration” (O’Reilly 2016). Given the lower rate of residential change, selecting areas and asking families about their current plans to move would have produced very few affirmative responses. We therefore decided to collect our data in the reverse order from what Rossi did and ask about migration that had already taken place. We questioned families that had moved from the urban area of Prague to a surrounding area outside the metropolitan area within the past five years.

Our research employs a methodological approach similar to that utilized by Peter Rossi's seminal 1950s study. This approach focuses on deconstructing the motivations underlying residential relocation decisions. Leveraging the findings from the initial qualitative phase of our survey allows us to now explore prominent trends in this area. The qualitative data not only provides a rich foundation for understanding the key drivers of migration choices, but also serves to create an accounting scheme for the second part of the survey.

4 Context

4.1 The task in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is generally characterized by lower rates of population mobility compared to many other nations, and while historical and cultural factors contribute to this phenomenon, the country's relatively small size and well-developed public transportation system also play a role. Czech citizens tend to prioritize established social and familial networks and demonstrate a greater reluctance to relocate for employment opportunities (Sunega, 2009). These characteristics differentiate Czech migration patterns from those observed elsewhere.

Nevertheless – or perhaps for this very reason – it makes sense to ask what motives the Czechs who do migrate have for moving. Our objective is to find an answer to the basic question underlying our research: Is family well-being still the most important motive in the decision to move? The escalating rental market in Prague places significant financial strain on a great many families, pushing them to the limits of their budgets; consequently, relocation to rural areas may represent a pragmatic adaptive strategy for mitigating this economic pressure.

Given the differences in time and place, we decided to follow a modified methodological approach. Reason analysis is the shared methodological foundation of both projects and is a method that allows us to also ask today: what are people's motives for migrating out of the big city – in this case, the city of Prague, in the centre of Europe? We can then compare the motives identified in the research with the results of Peter Rossi's project. Our specific objective is to compare how much of a difference there is between the motives that drive the privileged migration of a portion of the Czech population in Prague and the motives that drove the migration of Americans who moved out of the similarly large city of Philadelphia seventy-five-years ago. We also try to determine

whether there exists any basic pattern of motives that recur irrespective of time and place. We are searching to discover the basic objectives behind why a certain part of the population wants to move out of the city.

In studying the concepts of privileged migration more closely, the possibility suggests itself to link interpretations of these concepts to Maslow's pyramid of hierarchical needs (Maslow 1987). One example is the case of migrants who are trying to attain a "good life", which is also a part of the "well-being concept", because there is a clear connection to the top level of the pyramid associated with self-actualization. Migrants of this type diametrically transform their lifestyle in order to move closer to discovering their own sense of life and meaning in life (Benson 2016).

Conversely, the standard version of the "counterurbanization story" relates mainly to families in the productive period of their lives who are planning to have children, or already have children. Their attempt to acquire more living space simultaneously entails an increase in status – if they choose the right locality (Halfacree 2012). A strong correlation can be observed between the motivations for migration and Maslow's second level of the hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1987), which encompasses feelings of satisfaction, social achievement, and recognition. This aligns with the pursuit of "family well-being", albeit at a distinct level of analysis.

However, this connection alone fails to explain the counter urban migration trend towards rural localities that do not traditionally confer high social status (Bijker & Haartsen, 2012). The question of how specific addresses or localities contribute to social status within Czech society remains open. Drawing on Lefebvre's concept of perceived space, Štefánková and Drbohlav (2014) demonstrate that the popularity of certain localities, despite their visual similarities, reflects subjective perceptions rather than objective attributes. Consequently, a multidimensional approach, as advocated by Bijker and Haartsen (2012), is essential for comprehending the drivers of this migration.

Beyond the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, several additional factors contribute to the counterurbanization process, including the potential pursuit of a nineteenth-century rural idyll.

This idealization may represent an escape from the perceived uncertainties of contemporary "risk society" (Beck, 2009). The sense of insecurity and societal alienation experienced by some migrating families can lead to a desire for physical isolation which may manifest as the construction of exclusionary barriers, such as high walls, or voluntary social withdrawal from local

communities. Furthermore, the motivations of “amenity migrants” (Moss, 2006) remain ambiguous.

While often attributed to the pursuit of transcendence (Maslow, 1987), it is plausible that a latent need for security, achieved through spatial detachment from the perceived disorientation of urban environments, also plays a significant role. This motive may parallel that of those seeking physical barriers, with spatial remoteness serving as a functional equivalent to a physical wall.

In the frame of privileged migration in a rural direction, choosing where to move to is a question that encompasses a great variety of motives, and although the story may look similar from the outside, because it has resulted in the choice of the same locality, it may, in its course and its key milestones, be a very different story. Unsurprisingly, in one locality it is possible to find very different types of migrants with wholly distinct decision-making schemas, which nevertheless led them to the same place.

4.2 Motives classification

The sheer volume of potential migration motives necessitates their classification within a specific framework. This framework serves a dual purpose: firstly, it facilitates the systematic comparison and measurement of these motives, and secondly, it allows us to visualize their relationship to individual well-being and the specific needs they aim to address or augment. Building upon an existing typology defined by Martin Šimon, which classifies counterurbanization migrants by their motivational strategies (ex-urbanization, anti-urbanization, family livelihood, and rural entrepreneurship), our research proposes an alternative framework. While Šimon’s work highlights the interplay between lifestyle, economic factors, and urban connections, our typology shifts the focus to the psychological profiles of migrants, aiming to understand how their specific needs are addressed through their relocation.

Drawing upon Maslow’s well-known Hierarchy of Needs, we can categorize human needs into a foundational tier encompassing physiological and safety needs, followed by a tier emphasizing social belonging and love, self-esteem, and sharing one’s gifts with others. The hierarchy then progresses to needs for self-actualization, including cognitive and aesthetic fulfilment, ultimately culminating in the need for transcendence. To understand the role and significance of various motivations in housing decisions, we utilize Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as a framework for categorizing and analysing these driving forces.

Within the context of counterurbanization or amenity migration, it might appear suitable to consider Maslow's distinction to B-needs and D-needs. B-needs, rooted in a desire for personal growth and contribution to society, are fulfilled through activities that align with one's passions and strengths. D-needs on the other hand, are driven by a fear of deprivation and seek to maintain a state of homeostasis. While the two types of needs are theoretically distinct, their empirical manifestation can be intertwined, making it challenging to disentangle their respective contributions to human behaviour.

While our analysis utilizes Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to categorize the full range of motivations and specifically employs the D-needs and B-needs dichotomy to compare deficiency-driven and growth-oriented motives (Maslow, 1943, 1954), we recognize that this is one framework among many within the wider academic debate.

Contemporary migration studies utilize a range of more recent, multidimensional analytic approaches. For instance, Benson and O'Reilly's (2009, 2016) seminal work on *lifestyle migration* offers a crucial alternative lens, focusing on how migrants actively search for "the good life" or seek relocation that results in an increase in social status.

A further essential framework is provided by Martin Šimon (2014), whose typology classifies counterurbanization migrants based on their distinct motivational strategies, including ex-urbanization, anti-urbanization, family livelihood, and rural entrepreneurship.

Additionally, other sociological concepts, such as Beck's (1992) idea of the contemporary "risk society", offer explanations for complex drivers like the desire for physical isolation or security through spatial detachment. Recognizing these diverse frameworks is essential for a comprehensive understanding of how current motivations transcend the basic push/pull factors identified in historical studies (Lee, 1966).

4.3 Motive development in time

A number of motives and impulses in our consciousness have remained largely unchanged and appear to be valid even across countries and perhaps even continents. One principle methodological similarity of our approach and the old one which Peter Rossi designed is the difference between push effects and pull effects. This principal similarity between Peter Rossi's project and our analytical approach is in the methodological design set out by Peter Rossi, based on his sociological and sociopsychological arguments. These arguments

and findings were later validated by many authors in subsequent decades. In our sociological project, we see the repetition of this principal difference as desirable.

One of these constants, which very significantly affects our thinking about housing, is ownership. Peter Rossi's research highlights the distinction between tenure status (tenancy versus ownership) and its influence on residential mobility. He posits that individuals are more likely to relocate when confronted with dissatisfaction stemming from unchangeable circumstances. Notably, these circumstances vary between tenants and owners. While owners tend to prioritize neighborhood factors, tenants are more likely to be influenced by dwelling unit size. These disparities in concerns remain primary drivers of residential mobility decisions even today.

Compared to the situation in earlier years, the approach to ownership is generally similar, but we might encounter a more reserved attitude in the sense that people perceive that the house that is encumbered with a mortgage is actually still the banks and not theirs. Within the context of modern relativism certain individuals adopt an existential perspective and question the very nature of possession and impermanence of human existence by asking themselves: *"What is actually ours here? We are only here for a moment and everything we have is only borrowed from the universe."* (Sirius) However, the ability to customise your own home according to your own ideas remains a very important and even a key factor and therefore adapting the layout of an apartment or house to one's own needs plays a big role in the preferences of owner-occupied housing over rented housing.

It seems almost impossible to miss the greater feeling of security that comes with ownership versus renting, and this factor is universal both for the situation in the USA during the period when Peter Rossi published his research, and for current citizens of the Czech Republic who are looking for their home and are leaving the cities for non-metropolitan areas. *"So, for that money, whatever happens – I don't know, I don't want to call it up – at least I'll have some property; you get nothing from rent..."* (Aldebaran)

From the answers of our interviewees it follows that the possibility of owning an abode, that they would not normally be able to afford in Prague, is an important motive in most cases, which reflects a subconscious effort to secure oneself i.e., it is a solution to one of Maslow's lower needs - namely safety. *"Although it's still like a bank – we have a mortgage – we're at least sure no one's going to kick us out..."* (Vega)

However, we also encountered specific cases where people were not interested in owning their own house and moved to rental housing in a location outside of Prague; these were usually individuals whose motivation was very much connected with their lifestyle and direction i.e., they were writers and filmmakers who needed space for their activities and at the same time were looking for the spiritual dimension of the place. *“I just feel connected with the universe, and my creativity rises – I can write better under the stars, it just flows so easily...”* (Deneb) It was therefore a specific fulfillment of one of the higher needs of the pyramid. However, it is important to mention that these were usually individuals who could not financially afford ownership.

Another universal reason that has a strong influence on the decision to move is the size of the original home, where the same equation applies for different periods and regardless of location. If the family feels that the dwelling is too small for them then this is a much stronger reason for moving than the feeling that the dwelling is too big. In general, the spatial requirements of families and individuals increase over time, and what was a very comfortable space in the given area 50 years ago, is currently completely unsuitable for the same number of people. It is no longer so easy to compare the real dimensions within the location because the spatial requirements for living space developed differently in the USA than in the Czech Republic.

However, the same consideration remains relevant with regards to the issue of the layout of the space compared to its real size. The number of rooms and their arrangement that a family needs for their life plays a much greater role in assessing the satisfaction of housing than the net area in square meters: *“We like the house because both of our sons have their own rooms now...”* (Regulus) This view is again universal and dependent on the type of kinship relationship that we can distinguish within one family. The needs of a standard nuclear family with children are very different, where the space subsidy may not be as large as in a three-generation family, and the youngest generation are already adults. In such a case the need for a room of one's own is perceived for each member, while for small children, this motive is rather a certain necessary view into the future (Rossi, 1955).

Compared to the past, however, this need has also changed and diversified, while on the one hand we encounter the trend of minimalism (i.e., owning a minimum of things and the need for as little space as possible [Chayka 2020]), on the other hand we also perceive the motivations of some individuals who are interested in running a space-intensive hobby i.e., renovation of furniture or

the production of herbal mixtures and tinctures: *“Come and have a look – here I have an herb dryer...”* (Castor) These hobbies, however, often become professions, or a desire to run social events focused on the presentation of one’s own products, or the cultivation of one’s own spirit or body and therefore necessitate the need for large spaces and usually a large garden, which is not only economically unavailable in larger cities, but often impossible due to the large degree of urbanization.

This motive can therefore be perceived as a solution to the need for self-realization, i.e., moving from the sphere of dependent gainful activity to the sphere of independence and is therefore a visible career motive that increases self-esteem, and generally the relationship with oneself and self-actualisation. *“We gradually started organizing events here and then we reduced the time spent watching television...”* (Electra)

In some cases, we can also see an overlap in the effort to use one’s own potential to serve other people (i.e., self-actualization), where having a job whilst also engaged in fulfilling hobbies and pastimes utilizes the individual’s potential better than just a standard civilian job by itself – so we can therefore also talk about the need for self-actualization. *“The work in the garden fulfils us much more than sitting in the office. We create different mixtures of herbs and we are really happy that it helps people; it all goes together. Sometimes we hold a workshop and people buy our products there. It’s a fantastic feeling...”* (Pollux)

In recent times, a compelling motivation for seeking extra-urban housing has emerged; the pursuit of self-actualization, or the satisfaction of higher-order needs as proposed by Maslow’s hierarchy (Maslow 1987). This desire is especially evident among individuals who aspire to radical career shifts by transforming hobbies into professional endeavours. Such individuals seek housing that can support or even inspire these transformations. Rossi’s seminal work, however, does not explicitly acknowledge this particular motivation, indicating that it may have been less significant in the period he studied.

A significant difference between Rossi’s conclusions and the current Czech environment can be observed in the choice of location according to the socio-economic status of the residents in the neighbourhood. While Peter Rossi documented the influence of “blue-collar” and “white-collar” residential patterns in the 1950s, Michaela Benson (Reilly & Benson, 2014) shows that comparable social dynamics continue to shape migration today. Specifically, Benson finds that the consequences of migration in a given area are influenced by shifts in

the social composition of new residents, particularly those resulting from the influx of “lifestyle migrants” and subsequent gentrification.

In our sample, we found this reason for choosing a location to be marginal, but occasionally we can meet people who deliberately look for more expensive locations for the sake of safety. *“We were looking for a location where the land was not completely cheap, so that no one will move there...”* (Ascella) However, this sentence from the interview typically meant a question of safety, and not social status. *“I want to let my children out freely and not be afraid that some drug addicts or strange entities will bother you here...”* (Ascella) So even in this unique case of searching for an attractive address, social status was not mentioned as a motive. This motive could rather be characterized as the fulfilment of a need for security rather than as an attempt to improve self-esteem through the attainment of a good address. We might find the same trend in other countries (Ackerlund 2015).

Many of these people are actually economic migrants, and although their original intention was not to leave the urban environment at all, they often end up finding their current housing much more pleasant than their previous residence – wherever it was. The economic factors were a significant factor for movement during Rossi’s research, but we might observe an increase in this trend compared to the past because of developing opportunities for online jobs or working from home in general. This opportunity enables people to leave the metropolitan environment more frequently than in the past.

Economic considerations now significantly influence housing decisions, with many respondents citing the lower cost of building or buying a house outside Prague, in comparison to purchasing an apartment within the city limits, as reasons. While some of these individuals may be economic migrants because their original intention was not to leave the urban environment at all. Interestingly, despite initial preferences for urban living, many of these individuals now find their suburban or rural residences more satisfying, and they often end up finding their new housing much more pleasant than their previous residence in the city. While economic factors were a primary driver of residential mobility during Rossi’s research, the increasing prevalence of remote work and online job opportunities has likely amplified this trend. This shift enables individuals to escape the constraints of metropolitan living more readily than in the past.

In the Czech environment, we can also define a certain dominance of prejudices generally created or reflected by the media, and a long-standing awareness of the “ugly north and attractive south” (Štefánková, Drbohlav. 2014). Part of

the respondents had an image of an ugly landscape without hills and forests on the northern outskirts of Prague. *“It’s ugly in the north – it’s such a boring patch without forests...”* (Bellatrix) Furthermore, she wasn’t even interested in visiting these places, or she visited only a few of them. It was also evident that the initial dislike for these places shown by this section of the interviewees didn’t change in any way after they actually visited them.

The interviewees gave the impression that the visits to these locations were a formality merely for show, mainly just to confirm to the clients that they really don’t like it there. *“Yes, we went there once or twice, but nothing much really – well, we weren’t interested anymore...”* (Bellatrix) In this case, we can ask ourselves about the extent to which the interviewees satisfy their aesthetic needs, and the extent to which it is the result of prejudices in society. This phenomenon will be examined in greater detail in subsequent phases of this research.

One important factor for choosing a given location, as Peter Rossi discovered in his research, was the presence of having relatives, or at least friends, in the same place – although this reason is somewhat weakened nowadays by the influence of technology on everyday life. *“We didn’t even think about where relatives or friends are. Everything is within driving distance these days. And especially now in the age of various WhatsApps and Facebooks, [distance] doesn’t really matter anymore...”* (Bellatrix) On the other hand, the majority of respondents still perceive the importance of personal contact. *“Well, I like it here better than in Prague, I have friends here. I’m happy with them. Sometimes we go to the pub, sometimes we go for a bike ride or do some joint event. I’m not the organizational type, but I like to help when someone organizes something, for example moving chairs or cleaning up and so on. Then I feel like I’m a part of it all...”* (Azaleh)

The question of how far away relatives will be after moving is important for families with children, as it was in Rossi’s research, and surprisingly, the direction in which those relatives live plays a significant role. Due to the small area of the Czech Republic, and the location of the capital city in the middle, living on the southern or northern edge actually plays a big role for all respondents when they consider where to travel. A number of them regularly visit their relatives, who live, for example, in Moravia or southern Bohemia, so if they have to go around the city, it can then mean a difference of at least an hour’s extra journey. A situation can then easily arise that taking a wrong direction then doubles the time of these journeys.

While some similarities exist between our findings and Rossi's research regarding the factors influencing residential choices, some differences are also evident. In Rossi's study, proximity to the city centre and the socioeconomic status of neighbourhoods were crucial determinants for a choice in locality. In contrast, our research participants exhibited less concern for socioeconomic status, prioritizing factors such as scenic landscapes and lower pollution levels. This divergence may be attributed to evolving societal attitudes towards class and socioeconomic distinctions. It is important to acknowledge that Rossi's research employed a different questionnaire methodology than the present study. Consequently, certain motivational factors may not be captured within his findings.

In addition to the already-mentioned factors that influence the search for a place to live in the Czech environment, there are other factors that were not mentioned in Rossi's research, but were described by other researchers, especially Moss (2006) and Osbaldiston (2012), who in their concept of amenity migration describe individuals who are looking for certain specific qualities of the environment. However, only a very small, specific segment of migrants fit into this context because they are really consciously looking for certain qualities of the place where they will live.

Based on the interviews conducted with the respondents, it is possible to trace certain parallels, although the whole situation is somewhat distorted by the Czech cultural tradition of secondary living. In practice this means that a large part of citizens permanently living in the territory of the metropolitan area of Prague actually have their need for a certain amenity migration fulfilled by secondary housing, which is often a cottage in the woods, or a country estate somewhere in a small village where they live a community life and thereby solve their need for socialization. *"Everyone is in a rush, I don't like it, no one is willing to stop and talk to you, it is just hideous..."* (Electra)

Interviewees who decided to leave Prague for the countryside were all looking for peace and a lower population density, rating Prague as an overcrowded place, especially in public green spaces such as parks. The need for peace was mentioned by all, without exception. In a closer specification of what peace means, they say it means to be rid of ubiquitous noise – especially from cars and the city's overall hustle and bustle. However, they cannot define exactly what the rush is; for them, it seems to mean a certain mood created by streets full of people who are rushing somewhere and don't actually notice the people they pass. It is more about the feelings that the respondents describe than about any real tangible characteristic.

They also see a certain overcrowding in the standard urban development, where it is unpleasant for them to live with other people separated only by a thin wall, and the permeability of various smells and sounds through the risers of housing estates. *“I used to live in a block of flats on Jižní Město. It was terrible. The neighbour used to go to the toilet and you could smell it all throughout the house. I even had his rat fall there once...”* (Vega) So one big reason to leave is not to be disturbed by your neighbours, but also not to disturb your neighbours in turn. *“Hey, I’m glad that I can play music here. The nearest neighbours are so far away and I don’t disturb anyone and it’s peaceful...”* (Vega)

Thus the motive of not being disturbed, and at the same time not disturbing anyone, is demonstrated well by a sentence that was said independently by several respondents. *“We actually like it best here in the winter, when no one is here...”* (Taygeta) This sentence is actually a reaction to the specific situation in the Czech Republic where many properties are used only for recreational housing. Although they are full-fledged houses their residents have jobs in Prague, so they often don’t even visit their building or heat it during the winter months; rather, they use it only in the summer and often decide definitively to move there only when they end their working careers. As long as their working career lasts, the building is inhabited only in the summer, and many migrants who have moved to the location permanently welcome and appreciate this.

Respondents also rated the landscape around the house they chose, and hills and forests were rated as the most popular type of landscape. Another important element of their perception of the place are birds and forest animals, such as deer, squirrels, and hedgehogs. *“I can watch the squirrels chasing around the garden. It’s wonderful – I can stand watching them for a really long time...”* (Polaris) Agricultural landscape is not very sought after, and landscapes with industrial objects are rather discouraging and perceived as undesirable.

We can observe that a number of people’s attitudes and behavioural patterns regarding the change of residence remain unchanged for many years, but many of them are now changing, especially based on current technological possibilities. It is not such a surprise that the range of attractive places to live is increasing, thanks to the possibility for many people to work remotely or partially remotely i.e., to sometimes have a so-called “home office”. People who no longer have children of school age can and do pay more attention to the landscape and social relations in a place than to its transport accessibility and civic amenities. However, families with small children are still under a lot of pressure to choose a place that is easily accessible, where there is a functioning school

and kindergarten, and where the children will eventually be able to commute by themselves. This list of necessities is so long and complex that families with children have less freedom to evaluate the quality of the environment.

5 Discussion

If we want to summarize the development that took place in the motivations for changing housing, we can notice that the practical reasons that saturate the feeling of security and physiological well-being have certainly not disappeared, but are more disguised in a flood of other reasons that are directed more towards needs of socialization and self-actualization. An important factor in choosing a place is also the way in which couples or individuals came to this choice. Based on our interviewees' responses, we can identify two distinct models of decision-making, categorized by whether they prioritize the fulfilment of B-needs or D-needs.

As previously noted, it is challenging to definitively categorize individuals into distinct groups based solely on their motivations – as these factors often intertwine. While some individuals primarily prioritize developmental needs, practical considerations also play a role. Conversely, others may appear to be driven by pragmatic concerns, but also express self-developmental aspirations, and consequently a more nuanced understanding emerges, recognizing two ideal types at the extremes and two hybrid types that exhibit elements of both.

The first is a typical pragmatic model that exhibits similar features to those described by Rossi in his research. In our case, these are also mainly families who are planning to have children, or already have them and want to maintain their current lifestyle and do not want to change jobs and are not even looking for specific spiritual values; they just need to address their space requirements and find that they will pay more for an apartment in the city than for a house within driving distance. So these people often do not plan their move for a long time, but rather it is a fairly quick decision based on rational reasons.

The main criteria for choosing a location are, above all: price, distance, transport connections, social composition of the population, and civic amenities. Surprisingly, price can play a role either way. A location with higher land prices can become a target, as this guarantees a certain social composition of the neighbourhood, which will be safer than a place where land is cheaper. On the contrary, cheaper land attracts young families looking for affordable housing with certain benefits of civic amenities or specific characteristics of

the surroundings. *“I’m crazy about bikes, so I appreciate that it’s a piece of cake and I ride well here... I also love our oval, which we have behind the house, where I can go jogging, but I can also go there to kick a ball with the children... It’s great here, I’m excited here... So clearly, I didn’t really come here for the panoramas!”* (Izar) Part of the respondents from this group find themselves in a situation suddenly as a result of some event, usually an unexpected financial influx. *“If dad hadn’t given us the money, we wouldn’t have even started thinking about it...”* (Errai)

These people also often start by looking for an apartment in Prague, and after finding out the price ranges of real estate in the city, they decide to relocate to the countryside. This decision is more often influenced by the negative characteristics of the previous place, so they decide to go elsewhere, but their idea of the destination location is not fully formed and therefore they approach the choice of place also completely rationally by creating a list of pros and cons. They do not often let emotions and feelings decide, although even in this group they are not completely excluded.

This group also includes people who follow their partner. The partners of men who have children from their first relationship and want to see them usually find themselves in this situation. Then they move to where the mother of their children lives and the new partner moves in with them. Again, this model does not include a long stage of planning and site selection. In these cases, the features of the property itself, and perhaps the immediate neighbourhood, are usually the most important, but the site selection phase in the wider context is omitted.

The second group are people who usually plan their departure for a longer period of time, sometimes from early childhood, and it is often a process that lasts for decades, and the departure happens when this decision to leave has matured in them. This group often includes everyone who seeks to change their lifestyle and move their professional life to a new abode. They often have some basic criteria for how the abode should look, and how the surroundings should look, and they have a general idea of the profession or life change they want to initiate.

These people are usually partners or single people without children, but some families with children also fit into this category. If it is a change of profession, the economic activity usually results from the type of abode that these people end up buying, or the abode is selected according to the planned economic activity. The plan may be different, but in the end, it will change,

considering that the abode is of a different type than they planned. *“Well, originally we had a beautiful cottage in the mountains and we wanted to have a guest house there, but in the end, we bought a monument... Actually, what I do is rescue monuments, which also makes sense of the general direction I had before...”* (Arkturus) In the context of the pyramid of needs, it is a search for one's own place in society.

In this group, which is gradually getting ready to move, we can also find individuals and couples who have always wanted to move away and who perceive life in the countryside as a journey for themselves. They often have their standard jobs, which they do not want to change, but also, they want to use their free time to pursue some creative hobby or artistic activity, which over time becomes a contribution to the family budget. This is usually gardening or making decorations at home, but also writing or filmmaking.

This aspect has changed the most over time. A number of people who have a creative profession, or any profession that can be performed remotely via the Internet, perceive that their main reason for having their headquarters in Prague, or generally in the city, weakens with the development of technology because they can perform all their work duties remotely. These individuals and couples deal with the highest levels of the pyramid of needs, and that is the theme of self-actualization and transcendence, and their decision-making process includes this element as well.

They often define only the basic characteristics that they want their new home to include, and the vast majority of them are influenced by the way of thinking that says “the universe will give them what they need.” *“We were in Thailand when we finally decided to take this step. We wrote down on paper what we would like from the house and I went to meditate at the Buddha statue, which was not far from where we lived. When we finished the meditation, we were returning home and met our Czech neighbours, who also happened to be there. We hadn't met them before, but we started talking and the conversation revealed that their neighbour was selling a house in the village where they lived. They arranged a visit from Thailand. We didn't choose anything at all. We looked at the house and it was clear to us that this was what we wanted. So we bought it and we are grateful... Every day we discover new advantages to being here...”* (Castor and Pollux)

Some of these people are influenced by their childhood, and when they start to think about the topic in an interview, they realize that they were always looking for something similar to what they were used to from childhood, i.e., where

they went to see their grandparents, or where they went with their parents. They usually choose a location based on these criteria. *“Yeah, I never thought about it, but now I realize that I was actually imagining something like when we went on trips with ours when I was little...”* (Canopus)

All representatives of the second group, i.e., all those for whom finding the right place is a process and not a one-time decision, prefer a hilly poetic landscape with a water reservoir or river nearby. On the contrary, the first group has preferences regarding the distance to services and sports or cultural activities, so their preferences may be different according to the type of activities they engage in.

While the two previously discussed groups represent polar extremes, the majority of individuals may exhibit a more nuanced approach. Based on prior findings we have provisionally identified several subtypes. These will be further specified in subsequent research. A significant segment of the population, while recognizing the practical advantages of rural living, also envisions a future in the countryside as a means of personal fulfilment.

This subtype aspires to transition to a more fulfilling lifestyle upon their children's independence, combining their current professional pursuits with their true passions. A rural residence would serve as an enabling factor in this transition. *“I see myself growing plants and taking care of the garden when I get older. It was always my big passion; unfortunately, I don't have much time for it. You know, when I spend time in the garden, it's like time is not running anymore and I feel like I have found myself...”* (Izar) These people are quite practical, and they think about the present moment with regards to taking care of their families. Still, they also see the future, and they anticipate needing a different life goal when their circumstances change.

The other subtype is primarily motivated by a desire for self-actualization, yet they remain constrained by unmet basic needs, particularly spatial requirements. These individuals seek personal growth and often relocate to pursue their life goals. However, they maintain a degree of practicality in their decision-making process. *“It is like killing two birds with one stone. We left the city, we can work on our projects easily here, and we also have separate rooms for both sons...”* (Regulus)

Occasionally, financial constraints hinder these individuals' pursuit of self-actualization. In such cases, they may prioritize cost-effective locations that offer the desired characteristics balancing their aspirations with practical considerations. *“We had to count when we wanted to get the right locality. Some places are great but really expensive, but we found a place which is not that expensive but just perfect for us...”* (Spica)

The strong influence of local socio-environmental factors on these decisions, and the enduring prevalence of second homes in the Czech Republic, has fostered a distinct scenario for the third group wherein familial ownership of such properties is often perceived as a viable housing alternative. Individuals fortunate enough to inherit these assets may utilize them in various ways; some, possessing well-appointed cottages near urban centres, effectively enjoy dual residences, retaining their city dwellings while simultaneously benefiting from the rural setting.

Others may view these countryside properties as a means of transitioning from rental accommodations to home ownership requiring a comparatively modest investment in renovation. Furthermore, the option exists to demolish existing structures, such as rudimentary sheds or outdated houses, and rebuild to meet contemporary living standards. A unifying characteristic across these diverse situations is a profound connection to the local community and environment, frequently established during childhood. Consequently, the decision-making process is strongly influenced by the previous circumstances and often leads individuals to retain inherited properties despite potential drawbacks, rather than pursuing alternative housing solutions.

The relocation of this fourth migrant typology from the metropolis was driven primarily by significant external factors, encompassing both unforeseen events and pressures arising from planned or executed circumstantial changes. While events such as lease terminations or employment changes may instigate relocation within a given area, they are infrequently the primary drivers of counter urban migration. More commonly, such moves are influenced by the desire to maintain or establish social connections. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that proximity to friends and relatives can be a factor in locational choices, familial ties remain the most potent determinant.

Contemporary trends, such as shared parenting arrangements, necessitate residential choices predicated on school catchment areas. Furthermore, family dissolution, often followed by the primary caregiver (typically the mother) relocating with a new partner, is a not-uncommon occurrence. The non-custodial parent (frequently the father) may subsequently choose to reside closer to his children, contingent upon feasibility, particularly if telework options obviate the need for daily commuting. This decision in turn influences other people – such as the new partner. Consequently, a cascading effect may be observed, potentially altering the housing circumstances of families with only tenuous links to the initial relocation impetus.

6 Conclusion

A comparison of decision-making patterns in Rossi's research with the contemporary Czech context reveals a substantial overlap in migrant behaviour and rationale. A significant proportion of counter urban migrants, mirroring Rossi's findings, prioritize the price-performance ratio. This group exhibits limited intrinsic interest in rural living and lacks self-actualization motives for relocation. Given the opportunity to acquire a house with a garden within an urban setting, they would in most cases remain.

Conversely, evolving trends in well-being, which include self-actualization, interpersonal harmony and spiritual development, have fostered a second group of migrants driven by the pursuit of lifestyle change. While this group encompasses several subtypes and mixed categories, the emphasis on self-development and the search for a locale conducive to individual meaning are considerably more prominent today than during the 1950s, the period of Rossi's research. As material well-being and life comfort have progressively increased, individuals possess greater leisure time for hobbies and increased capacity for reflection on personal potential, aspirations, and purpose. These factors can significantly influence migration decisions and motivations.

This shift in motivational drivers can be analysed through the lens of Maslow's concepts of Deficiency-needs (D-needs) and Being-needs (B-needs), effectively differentiating the two migrant groups discussed previously. The first group's motivations are predominantly rooted in perceived deficiencies, such as inadequate space, safety concerns, or a suboptimal health environment. Conversely, the second group is more strongly motivated by growth needs (B-needs). The increasing prevalence of these growth-oriented motives compared to Rossi's era is notable, as mobility research at that time did not explicitly consider this type of motivation. This trend likely reflects an overall improvement in quality of life, where basic deficiencies are less pressing, allowing for pursuits beyond the fulfilment of fundamental needs.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this focus on self-actualization remains, in many cases, a privilege often afforded to individuals in later life stages – such as those whose children have reached adulthood, or those without familial obligations. Interviewee data suggests that primary caregivers facing the demands of family life typically experience migration motivations driven by the resolution of daily challenges; their motivations tend to be anchored in D-needs, with the pursuit of self-actualization often deferred until their children achieve independence.

Since we have not yet carried out the quantitative part of our research, we cannot make any qualified estimate of how large the single groups are within the total number of migrants outside metropolitan areas. However, this basic typology corresponds with the development of the trend of counter-urbanization over time with regard to the development of communication technologies, urban and rural areas, employment policy, and society itself.

Šárka Tesařová completed her Master's degree in Sociology at Charles University, Prague, in 1998, with a specialisation in housing. Following graduation, she worked in the real estate sector, gaining practical experience in housing markets. She is currently pursuing a doctoral dissertation on lifestyle migration and well-being. Email: sarka.tesarova@fsv.cuni.cz

Hynek Jeřábek has long been involved in methodological issues in sociology. He also teaches about the development of sociological research in the twentieth century at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, and at the Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. He has published books in Czech and English with SLON, Karolinum, and Routledge. He has published numerous articles in Czech and English in the International Journal of Communication, Theory of Science, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Sociologický časopis, Czech Sociological Review, Sociológia, and Historická sociologie.

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