

## **CURRENT TENDENCIES IN THE HIERARCHY OF REGIONAL SYSTEMS: EXAMPLE OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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**Abstract:** The paper is devoted to the assessment of changes in geographical concentration of population and economic phenomena in the first years of economic transformation in the Czech Republic. This period has been marked with a radical reversal of social development, which has also brought about an increasingly selective orientation of regional development. Current regional tendencies are also consistent with a long-standing orientation of the development shaping the geographical organization of society as well as a general, qualitative transformation of forms of this development, expressed by the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial society.

**Key words:** regional system hierarchy societal transformation uneven development

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Fundamental social changes in the former Communist bloc countries, which have appeared since 1989, have attracted an increased interest of geographers in short-term development processes in regional organization. There is a frequent stress on intensifying regional differences in economic efficiency and social well-being, transformation of macrolocational exposure of regions due to the "inversion" of geopolitical and geoeconomic circumstances, etc. Special attention has been devoted to new types of problems and processes such as international migration, unemployment and cross-border cooperation. This is proved by a number of studies and the choice of issues at international conferences (e.g., Carter, Maik eds., 1999, Carter, Jordan and Rey eds. 1996, Mládek ed. 1996) as well as the focus of national researches (in the Czech

Republic, e.g., Hampl et al. 1996, 1999). However, there is a prevalence of "monitoring" studies focusing on geographical forms of differentiation of societal transformations, especially of the economic situation. This orientation of research is no surprise because the brevity of recent transformation period has limited the opportunities for a generalized assessment and the fundamental character of political and economic changes has made the issue of social organization considerably more attractive than the issue of geographical organization itself. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to increase the interest of research just in the development of geographical organization of society itself, because it should be the main field of concern for human geography. These are mainly the questions of the situation and changes in spatial concentration of population and related activities, especially the questions of hierarchical organization of regional systems. This kind of research immediately suggests a generalized examination of current development tendencies in sociogeographical systems. In placing these tendencies into a broader development framework on the one hand and through its structuration from the scale and functional viewpoint on the other hand, one can set out on the path toward their comprehensive understanding. This paper intends to be an attempt at this type of study.

## **2. GEOGRAPHICAL CONCENTRATION OF POPULATION AND ECONOMY AND ITS CURRENT CHANGES**

The original, but sufficiently generalizing characteristics describing the state and tendencies of geographical differentiation of societal activities are provided by data in Table 1. This covers the regional level of differentiation in the distribution of population and economy, both in the long run (population) and the short run (economy) from the development viewpoint. Attention was paid to the extent of spatial concentration of selected phenomena within the whole of the Czech Republic, subdividing according to "adjusted" districts: for the sake of increased organicity of the units under consideration districts roughly corresponding to main metropolitan areas were merged. Special importance was given to the choice of observed phenomena; it was taken into account whether they were sufficiently representative and whether they could be mutually distinguished according to the "progressiveness" of relevant functions. The progressiveness was reviewed according to the importance of functions for regional centrality and at the same time according to the general tendency in the development of economy (in the sense of the development of economic sectors). The relevant order is as follows: residential function (population number)—working function (number of labour opportunities)—total economic efficiency (expressed by "weighing" the working function by the level of salaries) extent of quaternary functions, here only represented by the number of jobs in the financial sector. Understandably, the choice of characteristics was in a number of respects limited by the available data basis. All of this extended

among others into relevant development comparisons, in which long-standing time series are only available for the distribution of population.

Table 1 Long-standing tendencies in geographical concentration of population and current tendencies in concentration of economy

Regional concentration (H)			
Year	Population	Year	Economic characteristic
1869	62,1		a) Labour opportunity
1890	64,6	1989	79,8
1910	68,7	1996	80,7
1930	71,6		b) Economic aggregate
1950	74,6	1989	81,8
1970	76,5	1996	85,0
1991	77,2		c) Financial sector
1998	77,1	1989	90,7
		1996	93,1

Notes:

1. Spatial concentration (H) is expressed by the proportion (%) of area with the "unconcentrated" one half of phenomena under observation (the value 50 amounts to entirely even distribution, while 100 means maximum unevenness)
2. The data refer to the assessment of the whole of the Czech Republic subdivided into 68 units, corresponding to districts. In the case of metropolitan areas, the districts were merged into bigger units. Prague was merged with relevant country districts (Praha-východ and Praha-západ), Plzeň with the district Plzeň-sever (due to a substantial area of Plzeň s country districts the district of Plzeň-jih was considered separately). Most with Chomutov, Ústí nad Labem with Teplice (given significant qualitative differences between the western and eastern parts two units were delineated within the North Bohemian coal-mining basin), Liberec with Jablonec n. N., Brno with the district of Brno-venkov and Ostrava with the districts of Frýdek-Místek and Karviná. The rest of metropolitan areas were identified with relevant districts: České Budějovice, Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Olomouc and Zlín or the "weakest" Karlovy Vary.
3. The districts were related to the division from 1996 (i.e., including the new district of Jeseník and some changes in the delineation of central Bohemian districts in particular). The figures were recalculated or estimated for the relevant development comparisons.
4. The "economic aggregate" was defined as a product of the number of labour opportunities and average salaries (for more detail see Hampl et al., 1999). It roughly represents data on GDP so far not provided by the statistics. The financial sector was described by means of the number of labour opportunities in banking and insurance spheres.

It follows from the comparison of data in Table 1 that in initial stages of societal transformation concentration/selective tendencies in the distribution of the economy increased, while spatial distribution of population relatively stagnated. Generally, one can speak about positive correlation between the progressiveness of functions and level of their spatial concentration as well as relatively high growth rate of this concentration. The described regularity only has a seeming disturbance in the form of a higher increase in the value of spatial concentration in total economic efficiency ("economic aggregate") than in the financial sector. However, if these changes are relativized, the result is contrary: in the case of the economic aggregate its concentrated half was localized in 18.2 % of the area of the Czech Republic in 1989 and the figure fell to 15.0 % by 1996 (this means that the extent diminished to 82 % of the original area), while analogous values for the financial sector amounted to 9.3 % and 6.9 % respectively. As a result, in 1996 the scope of the area concentrating one half of the phenomenon under observation

only made up 74 % of the area from 1989. Enormous growth of spatial concentration both in economic efficiency and in the financial sector is striking especially in comparison with long-standing changes in geographical concentration of population. Even the period of the fastest growth of concentration of population (1890-1910) did not see the current growth rate achieved in the concentration of economy and the financial sector (however, average annual changes must be compared).

The described dramatic changes in geographical distribution of economy in the initial stage of transformation can be rightly explained both by a sudden change in the assessment of economic efficiency of spatial units due to the "opening" to the market economy and a rapid appearance of intensification tendencies, and the relevant narrowing of the development delay in formerly isolated Czech Republic. However, if the extent of described changes can be called as a specificity of transformation, the basic orientation of changes and geographical structuration of functions must be explained from the position of a general theory of the development of sociogeographical systems. In this sense, one can formulate at least two major regularities:

1. A general agreement of development and structural differentiation/hierarchization of sociogeographical systems in the "modernization" era, i.e., in the time of industrial and postindustrial societies. Just as the hierarchically organized unevenness in the distribution of population or social activities increased, the same goes for this hierarchization from the viewpoint of "temporally parallel" organization of individual types of activities/functions, depending on their progressiveness or importance (see also Korčák, 1973, Dostál, Hampl, 1994, Hampl, 1998).
2. The described agreement of development and structural differentiations is also a sign of a qualitative transformation of the development of sociogeographical systems from extensive forms (prevailing in the era of industrial society) into intensive forms, typical of postindustrial societies. While in the first period the development of main centres and regions occurred through their "quantitative" growth, which involved the growing concentration of phenomena (population as well as related activities), in the second period one can stress the growth of "organizational power" of leading units through increased importance/influence of progressive activities (strongly spatially concentrated) on whole social as well as regional systems. One can basically speak about the transformation of concentration of "phenomena" into a concentration of "relationships." It is inevitable that this kind of transformation integrally includes another two types of processes. On the one hand, it is increased interconnectedness of elements of regional systems (growing spatial mobility of people, products and, in particular, information see also Törnqvist, 1970), which is a condition of increased influence of controlling units or controlling functions. On the other hand, this is qualitative structuration of the "content" of the concentration process itself: a gradual functional differentiation of an accelerated rate of concentration processes first leading to relative stagnation in the distribution of qualitatively less important functions (residential functions) and later to the limitation or loss of the "importance" attached to increasing spatial concentration in general (differences in spatial concentration are "replaced" with differences in scope and intensity of spatial influencing).

### 3. SCALE HIERARCHY OF SOCIOGEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENTIATIONS

The stressed general regularities in the development and functional structuration of sociogeographical systems can also be further elaborated (and at the same time verified) in another dimension. It is the scale dimension (settlements-microregions-mesoregions - macroregions). Results of this assessment are of two types. First, general regularities are confirmed on all scale levels, which means that basic forms of differentiation of sociogeographical units with a varying size are repeated. Second, one can see here significant differences in the extent of unevenness and rapidity of its growth. However, in this case, too, the organization of relevant differences is regular (lawful): within national systems the extent of differentiations and rapidity of their growth increases depending on the lowering size of the units under observation, even if the influence of varying frequency of these units is eliminated (unevenness of a unit of the N+1 order is assessed only according to differences between included units of the N order). Since this general regularity in the differentiation of geographical systems of various scales was broadly explained in other studies (see, e.g., Hampl, 1998), in this survey it will be sufficient to add simplified empirical examples or verifications. Table 2 presents relevant development as well as structural characteristics for two basic scale levels: communities and regions (adjusted districts).

If the values from Table 2 are compared, it is of course necessary to take into account big differences in the frequency of communities and regions. In the case of communities the observed 12 biggest units only make up 0.2 % of all units, while in the case of regions the analogous proportion only amounts to 17.6 %, i.e., it is by two orders higher. In this sense, the extent of differentiation (concentration) into the biggest units is significantly higher at the level of communities than at the level of regions. The same is true of the rate of concentration of population: in the case of regions the increase in the proportion of the 12 biggest units was less than double, while in the case of communities it more than trebled. However, the choice of 12 biggest units as representatives of concentration and its development has a special reason. If these units are divided into three categories according to their rank in a size series, one can also basically characterize the hierarchization of relevant systems (sets), i.e., the size differentiation of the most significant units, specifically the dominance of the highest unit. Just the degree of this dominance expresses to a large extent the degree of hierarchical differentiation of the sets under observation. In this way the formerly mentioned regularities were confirmed again:

1. the level of hierarchization is higher by communities than by regions;
2. in both cases hierarchization deepened between 1869 and 1991;
3. the extent of hierarchization increases depending on the "progressivity" of functions;
4. it is generally true that the extent of spatial concentration corresponds with the extent of hierarchical differentiation/organization of elements of geographical systems.

**Table 2** Development and structural differences in concentration of selected phenomena according to regions and communities

Spatial concentration (proportion of 12 biggest units in the Czech Republic in %)				
Spatial units	Population		KFV 1991	Non-productive sphere 1991
	1869,0	1991,0		
Regions	24,9	45,3	49,9	55,8
Communities	8,5	27,7	34,7	43,2
Differences	16,4	17,6	15,2	12,6
Size category (rank)	Size differentiation of biggest units (1 <sup>st</sup> unit = 100)			
a) Regions				
1	100	100	100	100
2. - 4.	168	118	98	75
5. - 12.	233	120	97	72
b) Communities				
1	100	100	100	100
2. - 4.	73	73	67	55
5. - 12.	65	62	56	48

Notes: The set of 12 "biggest" units was defined according to their KFV in 1991

KFV (complex functional size) was defined as the average of proportions of units in the whole of the Czech Republic from the viewpoint of population + number of labour opportunities + number of labour opportunities without agriculture, forestry, industry, construction, transport and communications (this is also the definition of the specifically observed "non-productive sphere"). Regions were identified with "adjusted districts" (see -notes to Table 1). The set of 12 biggest units regions and -communities (defined as of March 3, 1991) were subdivided into three categories defined by their rank in the size series (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> units). The choice of these categories was made in order to make the relevant size categories roughly equal in the sense of theoretical assumptions of the rank/size rule (of towns). This method of assessment makes it possible to specify the extent of dominance of the biggest unit (1<sup>st</sup> unit = 100), which involves the level of hierarchization within the biggest units.

Sources: Hampel et al., 1996, Výsledky sčítání k 3.3.1991, Statistický lexikon obcí České republiky 1992, ČSÚ, Praha, 1994

#### 4. HIERARCHICAL DIFFERENTIATION AND ITS CURRENT CHANGES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

The basic characteristics and regularities of development and structural differentiation of sociogeographical systems, established in the previous text, can be further elaborated at the level of regional differentiation of the Czech Republic. The choice of just this level of spatial differentiation was enforced by the lack of available data for smaller spatial units, but it was also caused by the issue under consideration. After several decades of equalizing orientation of socialist regional policy "new opportunities opened" also for the effect of significant selective tendencies at the inter-district level in the 1990s. Due to this, one can stress in a number of respects that just the differentiated development of metropolitan and other regions as well as a differentiated development within the metropolitan areas themselves were the most marked signs of regional development in the Czech Republic in the first stages of transformation. This was accompanied with a scale shift in the development of

integrative processes in the settlement system as well as an increased creation of a hierarchy of a higher (supra-nodal) order of centres of settlement. Both the size and qualitative intensification of hierarchical differentiation of regions are synthetic expressions of a combined effect of all above-mentioned processes.

The main characteristics of size differentiation of 68 observed regional units and their changes are presented in Tables 3 and 4. The categories of these units were defined with a view to highlight the crucial importance of hierarchically highest units, both in terms of their size and their rate of growth. The set of these highest units was identified with 12 biggest regions, which roughly correspond to metropolitan regions. There are only two exceptions here: the metropolitan area of the North Bohemian coal mining region was divided into two parts due to its scope and internal differences (the merger of the districts of Ústí n. L. and Teplice on the one hand and the districts of Most and Chomutov on the other). By contrast, the metropolitan area of Karlovy Vary-Sokolov, whose importance is the weakest, was not specified and since the districts were considered separately, they could not have been included into the choice of 12 biggest units in any assessment. The 12 biggest units in all aspects (indicators) of assessment only embraced the metropolitan areas, except one: the district of Opava replaced the district of Hradec Králové according to the population size.

**Table 3** Changes in functional hierarchization of regions in transformation era

Size categories (rank)	Relativized size of categories (1 <sup>st</sup> unit = 100)							
	Population		Labour opportunities		Economic aggregate		Financial sector	
1 <sup>st</sup>	1991	1998	1989	1996	1989	1996	1989	1996
2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	118	119	114	100	115	82	44	43
13 <sup>th</sup> -34 <sup>th</sup>	121	123	115	98	108	76	45	43
Proportion of 1 <sup>st</sup> -34 <sup>th</sup> in Czech Rep. (%)	206	209	175	148	160	104	62	44
	73,1	73,2	74,9	75,4	76,2	77,7	82,3	84,5

Notes: Definition of regions (adjusted districts) and considered functions see Table 1. The size categories of regions were given by the rank in the size series according to the relevant indicator and year so that the relevant categories with a roughly equal size comply with the assumptions of the rank-size rule.<sup>5</sup>

Sources: Hampel et al., 1999, and here mentioned references to figures released by regional statistics of ČSÚ, Statistická ročenka České republiky 98, ČSÚ, Praha, 1998

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Data from Tables 3 and 4 have proved again the validity of earlier mentioned general regularities: depending on the progressiveness of functions the hierarchical differentiation of units deepens, while the dominance of the biggest units, especially of the highest one, grows. The development in the transformation era strongly enhanced the hierarchization of regions. The dramatic deepening of hierarchization at the regional level was due not only to the initial, and therefore enormously selective, stage of transformations, but, first and foremost, to strengthened qualitative aspects of "size" as well as "growth" within intensification, i.e., within the transformation of an industrial

society into a postindustrial society. In geographical organization of society, these transformations first of all involved the development of a higher (supra-nodal) hierarchy of centres (metropolitan areas) on the one hand and a replacement of previously largely "quantitative" hierarchization with a markedly "qualitative" hierarchization on the other. In both cases, one could see that the development belatedness in the organization of settlements was "caught up with."

**Table 4** Changes in proportions of 12 biggest regions in transformation era according to basic characteristics

Size categories (rank)	Proportion in the Czech Republic in %							
	Population		Labour opportunities		Economic aggregate		Financial sector	
	1991	1998	1989	1996	1989	1996	1989	1996
1 <sup>st</sup>	13,4	13,3	14,9	16,9	15,8	21,5	32,8	36,6
2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>	15,8	15,8	16,9	16,9	18,2	17,5	14,3	15,7
5 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	27,6	27,8	17,1	16,5	17	16	14,8	15,9
Total	56,8	56,9	48,9	50,3	51	55	61,9	68,2
Rest of Czech Rep.	43,2	43,1	51,1	49,7	49	45	38,1	31,8

Notes and sources: see Table 3

If changes in the proportions of individual size categories are compared in a greater detail, one can see a strong dependence between the hierarchical position and development rate of units, and especially quite a dominant role of the highest unit. A significant increase in proportions of the Prague metropolitan area in all basic functions, except the residential one, on the one hand, and often stagnating proportions of other metropolitan regions on the other suggest the idea of a limited proportionality of the whole hierarchization process at its regional level as well as the level of supra-nodal centres (metropolitan areas). This, too, is largely due to initial stages of transformation processes, in which the acceleration of development primarily occurs in capitals (a similar situation -appears in other posttotalitarian Central European countries see Hampl et al., 1999). However, it is also due to a growth polarization amongst other metropolitan areas themselves. In this case, it largely relates to an unfavourable development in coal mining metropolitan areas which worsen the characteristics of relevant size categories: within the framework of the category of units at the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> places it is the region of Ostrava, and within the next category these are both metropolitan units of the North Bohemian coal mining region. If these units were excluded, there could be seen a more significant and "continual" dependence between the development rate and hierarchical position of units. In general, one can therefore rightly express the most substantial features of growth hierarchization at the regional level by this succession: Prague metropolitan region—other metropolitan regions without the regions of the two biggest coal mining areas—non-metropolitan and coal mining regions.

A special remark must be made about the development of regional distribution of the population itself. Relative stagnation in the distribution of population may reflect the



declining importance of the residential function in the qualitatively higher stage within the development of organization of settlement, but it is also caused by the deformation of transformation processes themselves. In this case, there is the problem of inconsistent solution to the housing shortage. On the one hand, subsidies for housing construction were abolished, while regulated rents were maintained on the other. A plummeting housing construction caused a rapidly falling migration of population, also afflicting the free movement of labour force. This has impeded and will strongly impede both the development of backward regions (growing unemployment) and, first and foremost, the development of growing regions (shortage of labour force, which naturally extends into the working discipline and efficiency). Although at the current development level of society one cannot assume any dramatic changes in geographical distribution of population, it is beyond doubt that certain transfers are desirable. This largely means the long-standing problem of "withheld" development of suburbanization and the population strengthening of attractive metropolitan regions as well as the corresponding harmonization in the distribution of needs and resources of labour force.

However, there is also a need to have a close look at another problem of previous assessments: the issue of different nature of hierarchization of "real" sociogeographical regions and "normative" administrative regions! Available statistical data enforced the use of districts as the basic unit of assessment. However, this has only complied with the need of involving a sufficiently representative (sensitive) scale of regional differentiation, but not the need of sociogeographical organicity of regional units. In order to achieve a more natural character of these units some districts were merged, whereby the polarity of metropolitan (core) regional units and other (relatively peripheral) regional units was at least basically expressed. However, as in this way only the most fundamental diversity of units in their specialization was depicted, the regions under observation do not constitute integral sociogeographical wholes, but only functionally specialized wholes, which were in most cases normatively defined. Administrative regions (and it can also be said normatively defined units in general) are basically always defined in an "equalizing" way, given the uniformity of their functions, powers etc. As a result, their hierarchical heterogeneity is curbed. It is therefore substantially lower than in "natural" sociogeographical regions. This is why the previous assessment found disturbances in the proportionality of hierarchical differentiation in the categories of units at the 13<sup>th</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> place of the size series, especially when population size was observed (here the values were almost double compared to theoretical assumptions of the rank-size rule). As a result, the general validity of the difference between "suppressed" hierarchization of administrative/normative spatial units and "fully developed" hierarchization of natural/real sociogeographical wholes must be necessarily taken into account when seeming disturbances of hierarchical organization of sociogeographical systems is assessed.

## 5. ASSUMPTIONS OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL DIFFERENTIATION. CONCLUDING REMARKS

All of this research was basically devised to prove the essential importance of hierarchical regularities in the organization of sociogeographical systems on the one hand, and to specify development tendencies in regional differentiation/hierarchization in the Czech Republic during the transformation era on the other. Moreover, special emphasis was laid on verifying whether hierarchical structures are formed on a multilevel scale. The ascertained general nature of hierarchization of sociogeographical (environmental) systems also suggests ideas about future forms of geographical organization of society. Undoubtedly, there is primarily a reproduction of hierarchical structures, connected with their relevant qualitative development. Together with this, it is right to stress the natural/lawful character of selective orientation of regional development as a source of development impulses as well as a mechanism of finding efficient forms of spatial division of labour in the broadest sense.

Intensity of selective tendencies in regional development depends in a number of ways on development stages of a social system. Especially in the periods of basic transformations these tendencies are strengthened because heterogeneity of social elements, let alone elements of geosocietal systems, is unusual, specifically from the viewpoint of ability to be adjusted to changed conditions, competitiveness under new circumstances, etc. This is why differentiation processes were so dramatic in the 1990s. They can be expected to continue in the near future as well because the completion of basic transformation processes will require at least another 10-15 years, among others due to the current postponement of radical changes. One can therefore also expect a significant deepening of differences between regions, which may bring about serious social destabilization. On these grounds, one has to stress the growing importance of regional policy in the Czech Republic in which hardly any importance has so far been attached to this kind of policy.

However, a one-sided emphasis on the "compensation" role of regional policy as well as a one-sided stress on selective orientation of uncontrolled ("natural") regional development would be wrong. After all, "objective" spatial differentiation of the development potential as well as "subjective" effect of agents of spatial development, leading to various regulatory measures, are just organic components of integral regional development or integral development of society. This approach gives rise to a crucial principle, according to which a strategy of regional policy and "natural" tendencies in regional development must be relatively harmonized. In fact, not a one-sided growth of unevenness/hierarchization, but qualitative reproduction of hierarchical organizations at more complex development levels is the most substantial sign of this development. This reproduction includes an inseparable part in the form of an increased role of cooperation, internal interconnection of elements, spread of innovations from controlling elements into the whole system, etc. However, this movement toward higher forms of hierarchical organization is not linear or determinist, but stochastic, and it is based on a combination of various ways/alternatives, on the process of "learning," etc. All the more

a well-conceived regional policy can play the role of a certain accelerator of development if there is orientation to strengthening of co-operative mechanisms (spatial division of labour), interconnection of systems, support to diffusion processes, etc., on the one hand and mitigating of temporarily strengthened social/regional disturbances on the other.

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### **Resume**

#### **Současné tendence vývoje hierarchie regionálních systémů: příklad transformace v České republice**

Zásadní společenské změny v zemích bývalého komunistického bloku, ke kterým došlo po r. 1989, vyvolaly i zvýšený zájem geografů o krátkodobé vývojové procesy v regionální organizaci. Všeobecně však převládají "monitorovací" studie postihující

geografické formy diferenciace společenských proměn, zvláště pak ekonomických poměrů. Proto je žádoucí zvýšit zájem studia právě o problematiku vývoje vlastní geografické organizace společnosti, neboť ta by měla ležet v těžišti pozornosti sociálně geografie. Zejména se jedná o otázky úrovně a změn územní koncentrace obyvatelstva a navazujících aktivit, a zvláště pak o otázky hierarchické organizace regionálních systémů.

Generalizující charakteristiky o stavu i tendencích geografické diferenciace společenských aktivit podávají údaje v tab. I. Je zde postižena regionální úroveň diferenciace v rozmístění obyvatelstva a ekonomiky, a to jak v dlouhodobém (obyvatelstvo), tak i v krátkodobém (ekonomika) vývojovém pohledu. Zvláštní význam byl přisouzen výběru sledovaných jevů, a to jednak z hlediska jejich významové reprezentativnosti a jednak z hlediska jejich vzájemné rozlišitelnosti podle "progresivity" odpovídajících funkcí. Tato progresivita byla posuzována podle významu funkcí pro regionální střediskovost a současně podle obecné tendence v rozvoji ekonomiky (ve smyslu vývoje ekonomických sektorů). Odpovídající pořadí je tedy následující: obytné funkce (počet obyvatel) - pracovní funkce (počet pracovních příležitostí) - celková ekonomická výkonnost (vyjádřená prostřednictvím "vážení" funkce pracovní mzdovou úrovní) - rozsah kvartérních funkcí reprezentovaných zde ovšem jen počtem pracovních příležitostí ve finančním sektoru. Z porovnání údajů v tab. I vyplývá, že v počátečních fázích společenské transformace došlo k zesílení koncentračních / selektivních tendencí v rozmístění ekonomiky a naopak k relativní stagnaci v územní distribuci obyvatelstva. Všeobecně je možno hovořit o pozitivní korelaci mezi progresivitou funkcí a úrovní jejich územní koncentrace i relativní dynamikou růstu této koncentrace.

Dramatické změny v geografickém rozložení ekonomiky v počátečním období transformace je oprávněně vysvětlovat jak skokovitou proměnou v hodnocení ekonomické výkonnosti územních jednotek v důsledku "otevření se" tržní ekonomice, tak i rychlým nástupem intenzifikačních tendencí a odpovídajícím doháněním vývojového zpoždění v dříve izolované ČR. Jestliže však míru uvedených změn lze označovat za specifikum transformace, pak základní orientaci změn a územní strukturaci funkcí je nutno vysvětlovat z pozice obecné teorie vývoje geosociálních systémů. V tomto smyslu se nabízí formulace přinejmenším dvou významných pravidelností/zákonitostí:

1. Za prvé je to obecná souhlasnost vývojové a strukturální diferenciace/hierarchizace sociálněgeografických systémů v "modernizačním" období, tj. v období industriální i postindustriální společnosti. Obdobně jako se zvyšovala hierarchicky uspořádaná nerovnoměrnost v rozmístění obyvatelstva, resp. společenských aktivit, tak se zvyšuje tato hierarchizace z hlediska "časově souhlasného" uspořádání jednotlivých typů aktivit/funkcí, a to v závislosti na jejich progresivitě, resp. významnosti.
2. Zmíněná souhlasnost vývojové a strukturální diferenciace je zároveň výrazem kvalitativní transformace vývoje sociálněgeografických systémů z extenzivních forem (dominujících v období industriální společnosti) na normy intenzivní, charakteristické pro společnost postindustriální. Jestliže v prvním období byl rozvoj hlavních center i regionů realizován jejich "kvantitativním" růstem, a tedy koncentrace jevů (obyvatelstva i navazujících aktivit), pak v období druhém je možno zdůrazňovat růst "organizační moci" vůdčích jednotek prostřednictvím zvyšování významu/vlivu progresivních - územně zvýrazněně koncentrovaných - aktivit na celé společenské, resp. regionální systémy. V zásadě se tedy jedná o transformaci koncentrace "jevů" na koncentraci vztahů.