

RESEARCH ON PERIPHERAL REGIONS IN CZECHIA THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS AND BASIC RESULTS

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Abstract: Attention is paid as to theoretic-methodological base of the research (primarily of the core-periphery conceptions) as to their use when studying space polarisation in Czechia. Authors perceive periphery as territory not sufficiently integrated into – at given place and time dominating – structures, processes and systems. As specific territory with disordered relations of function-space and social-space characters, which are the results of uneven influence of mutually conditioned social, economic, political, cultural and physic-geographical factors. Totally 11 model areas have been selected for the detailed study in Czechia. The selected model micro regions thus reflect real differentiation of the evaluated circumstances in Czechia. There are questionnaires in the selected model areas evaluated in the article.

Key words: space polarisation – peripheral region – model areas – perception of landscape aspects – Czechia

1. PERIPHERAL REGIONS AS A PART OF THE SPACE POLARISATION: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The representatives of the core-periphery group of theories emphasise the polarity of core-periphery as inevitable for further development of the given area (e.g. Myrdal, 1957, Hirschman, 1958, Perroux, 1955). Friedmann (1966, 1973) described besides others also the transformation of relations between core and periphery with the stress on convergent tendencies. In the frame of development there are four main phases of territorial organisation of economy and/or geographical environment generally in the dependency on grow or further development:

- a) pre-industrial society with local economies,
- b) the origin and increase of core-periphery polarity,
- c) the diffusion of economic activities while also periphery is partly involved in directing mechanisms,

d) the spatial integration and the increase of mutual dependency of core and periphery (Havlíček, 2005).

Leimgruber (2001, 2004) considers polarisation core-periphery theory referring to increasing differences between the rich and the poor as a better model for understanding current state in the world than theoretical conceptions of neoclassicism, assuming equalising differences between social and spatial aspects through the impact of market mechanisms. He attributes key importance to human decisions based on subjective interests and values (Leimgruber, 1998). Except that dichotomy terms core and periphery are often anchored in thinking and images of involved subjects (Heintel, 1998).

We can summarise, that polarised space with poles, core and periphery standing against each other is a result of uneven development of the society in the environs. Due to a lot of factors (historical, political, geopolitical, economic and other) asymmetric arrangement of settlement structure has formed resulting at the origin of core and periphery areas. Classical periphery is the area lying out of economically intensively used areas, which is characterized by high rate of unemployment along with higher employment at primary economic sectors (particularly in basic agricultural production) and generally lower living standard. Peripheral regions are thus the areas not sufficiently integrated at the given place and time of dominating structures, processes and systems (Schmidt, 1998).

Sometimes peripheral (lying "at the edge", geometrically distant from the centre) and marginal (separated out of the regional system) areas differ conceptually. Though peripheral regions are in a subordinate position towards the centre (particularly from the decision making point of view) on the contrary to the marginal regions they are partially integrated to the system. Thus problems of marginal regions are deeper and the interference of an outer agent is necessary for their solving.

These two terms are not distinguished in our conception and/or we put equals sign between them because marginal regions are difficult to find in Czechia besides other. Specifying of the factors, on the basis of which basic types of peripheral regions, possibly overlaying in their territorial delimitation, can be distinguished, is more substantial from the content point of view. Generally subjective and objective factors can be distinguished. While e.g. sense of belonging of inhabitants to peripheral regions (resistance) belongs to the former ones, objective factors play the decisive role. The basic "objective" factor is geographical location (inner and outer).

The factors negatively influencing the life of population (altitude, relief segmentation, climate) dominate if the periphery is delimited on the basis of physic-geographical factors. The main factor for geometric delimitation of periphery is its distance from the core. Series of researches demonstrate peripheries also e.g. along administrative borders inside the state. "Economic periphery" is based on regional differentiation of economic activities in the area, "social periphery" then on marginalisation of social groups, which socialising process has been somehow disturbed from different reasons (Leimgruber, 1994). A special form of "social periphery" is "culture periphery" based on segregation of culture minorities. The area at "political periphery" is from various reasons out of the interest of the state administration or it has a special position from this point of view. From this point of view the core is the area of the high-quality environment of little or no use of man (from the perspective of economic activities of periphery) and in contrast there are areas densely populated, altered to rather extent or devastated by human activities (from the perspective of economic activities of the core).

Only partial approaches to the delimitation of peripheral regions are characterised in the given overview. Space polarity however is a complex phenomenon therefore it is desirable to approach the study of peripheral areas in a complex way. Geographical approach, based on the effort to joint individual partial approaches to the delimitation of periphery, enables that.

The degree of peripherality of the given area, or even a simple classification whether it is a peripheral area or not, depends on the selected scale of view, on the degree of the level of hierarchy of regions. The current dynamic process of globalisation is for example accompanied by the increasing concentration of administrative functions into the core, which can intensely strengthen the importance of the mezzo-regional core, that is macro-regional periphery at the same time (Havlíček, Chromý, 2001). Post-industrial society prefers territorial concentration of progressive and administrative functions (change of agents of space polarisation mechanism) and on the other hand also the development of modern information technologies (the internet, mobile phones and other) that on the contrary help to integrate "problem" (marginal, peripheral) regions into the regional system.

The evaluation of factors of objective character through multidimensional statistical analysis has demonstrated that the peripherality is the feature of the areas occurring as in border areas as in inland in Czechia (Marada, 2001; Havlíček, Marada, 2004). Thus we can distinguish "inner peripheries" situated in inland (often along the borders of administrative regions) from "outer peripheries" lying along the state borders of Czechia.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF SPACE POLARISATION

The occurrence of problem regions in the territory of Czechia has its historical roots. These can be find first in the development of settlement structure – colonisation processes in the Middle Ages and in modern times, mainly in the connection with industrial, agricultural, transport and demographic revolutions and/or industrialisation (forming of industrial regions) and the concentration of population into cities (urbanisation) since the first half of the 19th century. These processes deepened the regional differentiation of the territory of Czechia and consequently led to the sharpening of the dichotomy between more developed northern and less developed southern part of the republic being obvious up to now. The role of the development of transport system (firstly railroad, roads and motorways then in the 20th century) at deepening of differences among regions (namely particularly on the lowest – micro-regional level) cannot be neglected.

The impact of the processes of general character has led to forming of several main zones of concentration and exposed areas and developmental zones/axes (Hampl, Gardavský, Kühnl, 1987). The important (specific) interference in the development of the settlement system have been the events connected with the Second World War particularly the post-war transfer of the Czech Germans and consequent insufficient resettlement of the borderland amplified by the origin of the so called Iron Curtain. Besides destruction of hundreds of settlements the mentioned events have projected themselves not only into the quantitative (low population density) but also to the

qualitative state of the borderland (the population show different demographic characteristics – by age, the level of education, religion and the like) compared to inland.

The differences inside borderlands have become more apparent from economic point of view. On the one hand there has been significant support of "industrial" borderlands (north-western and northern Czechia) and on the other hand there has been even bigger decline of traditional (poor) "agricultural" and/or "rural" borderlands (e.g. Šumava, the Czech-Slovakian borderland). Socialistic industrialisation and artificial levelling of differences among regions, directed by the state, helped the reduction of differences.

The change of political system after the year 1989 and the impact of the processes of transformation have proved also by the change of geographical differentiation of the territory. The fall of artificial barriers and increasing importance of neighbourhood of Czechia with the countries of the EU brought about the cardinal turn in the tendencies of polarisation. Deepening of macro-regional polarisation namely in view of the position of individual areas towards the core areas of the EU can be seen in the period of transformation. The micro-regional polarisation is getting weaker. A new process, touching particularly the peripheral areas in the hinterlands of great cities, is suburbanisation. Limited and/or regulated flat market and traditional conservative approach of inhabitants to labour migration slow down the deepening of regional differences.

Long-term and complicated development of geographical organisation of Czechia has led to the forming of core and peripheral areas of various levels and types. Problem areas, called by Hampel (2003) "old", "classic", "rural" peripheries and peripheries "new" or "industrial" have originated.

3. THE ASSESSMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE ASPECTS BY THE RESIDENTS OF PERIPHERAL REGIONS

Totally 11 model areas (Figure 1) have been selected for the detailed study in Czechia. These can be further distinguished as inner peripheries lying mostly along the boundaries of "VÚSC" (regions) (Nečtínsko model area, Bukovina model area, Sedlecko-Prčicko model area, Kralovice model area) – outer, lying along the state border (Tachovsko model area, Jílovice model area, Východní Krušnohoří model area, Moravské Kopanice model area, Osoblažsko model area, Novobystřicko model area), traditional, rural, economically weak (Nečtínsko model area, Bukovina model area, Sedlecko-Prčicko model area, Kralovice model area, Tachovsko model area, Moravské Kopanice model area, Novobystřicko model area) – structurally affected (Nečtínsko model area, Tachovsko model area, Bílinsko model area, Jílovice model area, Východní Krušnohoří model area).

The selected model micro regions thus reflect real differentiation of the evaluated circumstances in Czechia. The first group is formed by the areas economically weak, of which the below-average level of industrial development has been influenced by worse natural conditions over the course of centuries and consequently by lower productivity of agriculture as well. Besides the borderlands (e.g. the Jeseníky region, Šumava) often also areas of "inner" peripheries (the region of Vysočina, the boundary of the middle and

southern Czechia, southern and western Czechia; Musil 1988, Jančák 2001) are concerned. The second group is formed then by the peripheries formed in the connection with the transfer of original inhabitants and the decline of industrial base during the 20th century. These are some structurally affected industrial agglomerations (e.g. Ore mountains basin, Ostrava region), where the high rate of unemployment is the main problem nowadays.



Figure 1 Model areas

The population over 15 has been taken as a target group for the inquiry, while individual respondents have been chosen on the basis of the combination of random and quota sampling according to sex, age and place of residence. To get the group of respondents corresponding to actual population has been the objective, which was basically met. Inquirers network was formed by geography students of the universities participating in the grant project. Totally 2,163 questionnaires were evaluated (Moravské Kopanice model area 138, Jílovicko model area 56, Osoblažsko model area 82, Sedlecko model area 112, Říčansko model area 223, Podkozákovsko model area 281, Radnicko model area 193, Ústecké Krušnohoří model area 244, Tachovsko model area 268, Bystřicko model area 354, Kralovicko model area 212).

The landscape is a dynamic system. Not only changes of use themselves conditioned primarily by socio-economic situation and measurable e.g. through the observations of land use changes (see Bičík, Chromý, Jančák, Jeleček, Kupková, Štěpánek, Winklerová, 2001; Bičík, Chromý, Jeleček, Kupková, Šefrna, 2002), but also changes in the perception of the landscape changes by residents (part of socio-cultural aspects) are assumed to give such information, which can make a basis for drawing conclusions about the process of space polarisation.

The comparison of perception of the landscape by the residents of individual model (peripheral) areas in Czechia was handled in the relatively extensive inquiry carried out

in the frame of the grant project GA ČR No. 403/03/1369 "The peripheral regions in Czechia as the part of spatial polarization in frames of European integration" in the years 2003 – 2005. The questions, in which the respondents always evaluated the landscape by choosing from two offered possibilities of answers (expression of the characteristic of the territory/landscape) were included into the questionnaire.

The following summarising commentaries can be formulated from the assessment of the inquiry:

Nice x ugly: The respondents evaluate the landscape as nice (80 – 90 %) in all model areas except the Říčansko model area (in the close neighbourhood of Prague, periphery of the capitol). Only in the case of the Říčansko model area the share between the evaluation "nice" and "neither nice, nor ugly" is 61:36 %. Almost nobody (except several respondents in the Říčansko model area) answered that the landscape of his/her domicile seemed ugly to him/her.

Exceptional x ordinary: Nearly half of the respondents stated that their landscape is exceptional in the area of Moravské Kopanice model area (the Czech-Slovak borderland; "outer" periphery) and the Podkozákovsko model area (the boundary of central, northern and eastern Bohemia; "inner" periphery); about 40 % claimed this about the landscape in the Jílovicko model area (Třeboňsko; outer periphery) and the Sedlecko model area (central-southern Bohemia boundary; inner periphery) however with the more strongly prevailing category "normal" here. Hardly anybody considered the landscape "ordinary", majority evaluated it as "normal".

Quickly changing x unchangeable: The landscape is changing "most rapidly" in the Říčansko model area according to the respondents' statements. On the contrary "stagnation" of the landscape is perceived mostly in the Osoblažsko model area (the Czech-Polish borderland; outer periphery) and the Radnicko model area (the west Bohemian-central Bohemian boundary; inner periphery). Still rather considerable share of the responses "stagnating" can be recorded also in the Jílovicko and Sedlecko model areas even though with prevailing evaluation "changing slowly", which is markedly leading in the other regions.

The development of the landscape since the year 1989: The landscape has not been remarkably worsening in none of the regions. Even though the non-disregardable one fourth of the respondents claimed that the landscape had been getting worse (yet other answers are prevailing) in the model areas of Moravské Kopanice and Jílovicko. The Jílovicko model area and Podkozákovsko model area are the areas, where the situation has been getting better, majority of the answer "stagnating" is in other areas. When comparing the share "getting better" versus "getting worse", the trend towards improving the landscape (which corresponds to general development) can be recorded unambiguously.

The respondents didn't state that conditions were bad in any model area, mostly the answer "average" prevailed when evaluating natural conditions for the life of inhabitants. Only in the Jílovicko and Podkozákovsko model areas the answers "excellent" were leading.

The respondents see the land use biggest potential in tourism (which can be perceived as a well established "spell" and cliché in the context of the development in Czechia in the period of transformation after the year 1989; for further see Bičík, Jančák, 2005) in all the regions except the Osoblažsko and Jílovicko. Na Osoblažsku a Jílovicku převažuje názor, že nejlepší by byla intenzivní zemědělská výroba. The opinion that the intensive agricultural production would be the best is in majority there. A relatively

significant share of responses (nearly 40 %) "economically non-used" in the area of Moravské Kopanice is interesting.

The landscape perception is more or less positive, in the accordance with the objective state of the territory of all the model peripheral areas can be considered rather core areas from the ecological point of view. That, which is perceived by the inhabitants as the landscape potential in their own region, thus mostly for tourism use, though is possible from natural potential point of view but at the same time is strongly limited by human and social capital and the state (power) of local economy.

4. CONCLUSION: DEVELOPMENTAL PROSPECTS OF PERIPHERAL AREAS

Problem areas seem to be particularly rural, economic weak areas from the land use potential and possibilities of development points of view. Right their landscape is often under various levels of protection (national parks, protected landscape areas, biospheric reserves, but also natural parks) while facing various pressures of commercial sphere. The tension, which can be understood in the sense of the core-periphery polarisation (on institutional level) sense, increases here. While the municipalities and the population in the peripheries solve economic problems and the deficiency of employment opportunities and welcome the interest of investors, the centre presented by central bodies of the state administration (the bodies of the landscape and the environment conservation in particular) try to maintain the current state. Thus the municipalities meet restricting of activities, the nature and the landscape conservation represent for them the barrier in their development. Considering the fact that peripheral regions mostly demonstrate also higher concentration of recreational buildings for the second housing (Fialová, 2001) predominantly used by the inhabitants of the centres, the tension on the level of human relations (local population versus holidaymakers) can increase as well. Even more difficult situation arises in the areas, of which the future use is in connection only with agricultural activities (with a low potential for recreational use). Right here, particularly in the sector of agriculture, the problems in the sense of traditional economic activities arise.

Similar pressure can be expected also in the areas with a specific regime – military training areas. Also these arouse predominantly in peripheral areas and/or areas sparsely populated, possibly in the areas insufficiently resettled after the transfer of the Czech Germans. Therefore it is legitimate to ask a question, how these areas, frequently valuable from natural point of view, would have developed in case the conducted regime had been released and the areas of today's military training areas had become the part of regional structures. Being aware of the fact that these areas are not of a little extent (e.g. Doupovské hory, Brdy, Boletice) it is supposable that the total area of problem regions would become even greater.

Human and social capital is one of the key factors determining the process of space polarisation, respectively the existence of problematic regions. The research into the phenomenon of periphery is based mainly on the relation of core and its background. The model of polarity of centre and periphery has nevertheless number of specific forms, both from the viewpoint of development and order or scale.

With the growing importance of gathering and sorting information, the degree of activity of subjects/actors in the territory is thus decisive. The periphery is therefore determined by the ability and velocity to accept new information and innovations. Besides that, the dichotomic concepts core and periphery are often anchored in mind and ideas of the involved subjects. The role of distance/position factors (horizontal element) is thus getting weaker and, on the contrary, the significance of the hierarchy of political, social, economical and cultural organization of geographical activities (vertical element) is growing. Besides that, concentration processes within globalisation form only one of the possible development tendencies. Opposite to propagation and homogenisation of thinking and activities of the western world, there is polarisation (centre-periphery) or multipolarisation of the space which gives more importance to differentiation in the globalisation process.

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Výzkum periferních regionů v Česku, teoretický a metodologický poznámky a základní výsledky

Resume

Studium periferie vychází především z teoretických koncepcí skupiny jádro-periferie. Z těchto koncepcí je největší pozornost věnována teorii polarizovaného rozvoje J. Friedmanna. V polarizaci prostoru typu jádro-periferie slábne role distančního/polo-

hového faktoru (horizontální prvek) a naopak roste význam hierarchie politické, společenské, ekonomické a kulturní organizace geografických aktivit (vertikální prvek).

Leimgruber (2001) považuje také polarizační teorii jádro-periferie poukazující na zvyšování rozdílů mezi bohatými a chudými za lepší model pro pochopení současného vývoje než neoklasické teoretické koncepce, předpokládající vyrovnávání rozdílů mezi sociálními i prostorovými aspekty působením tržních mechanismů. Přisuzuje přitom klíčový význam lidským rozhodnutím, založeným na subjektivních zájmech a hodnotách (Leimgruber, 1998).

S narůstajícím významem sběru a třídění informací je tedy rozhodující míra aktivity subjektů/aktérů v území. Periferie je přitom determinována schopností a rychlostí přijímat nové informace a inovace. Kromě toho jsou dichotomické pojmy jádro a periferie často zakotvené v myšlení a představách zainteresovaných subjektů (Heintel, 1998). Naproti šíření a homogenizaci myšlení a aktivit západního světa stojí polarizace (centrum-periferie) resp. multipolarizace (např. Huntington, 1997) prostoru.

Periferie je územím nedostatečně integrace do – v daném místě a čase dominujících – struktur, procesů a systémů (Schmidt, 1998); je specifickým územím s poruchou funkčně-prostorových a sociálně-prostorových vztahů, které jsou výsledkem nerovnoměrného působení vzájemně se podmiňujících sociálních, ekonomických, politických, kulturních i fyzickogeografických faktorů. Periferii je označováno území na okraji systému, které je však integrováno do jeho ekonomických struktur.

Model polarity centra a periferie má ovšem řadu specifických forem:

- a) z hlediska vývojového,
- b) z hlediska strukturálního a
- c) z hlediska řádovosti, resp. měřítka.

Obecně však vždy vyjadřuje jejich asymetrický vztah. Z počátku byly periferie popisovány na úrovni makrostruktur, přičemž hlavní aspekty, které se uplatnily při jejich vymezení, byly primárně fyzickogeografického typu, byť transformovaného do antropogeografických a politickogeografických důsledků. K posunu vnímání periferních území do měřítkově nižších územních řádů (nodální regiony) dochází až počátkem 20. století, a to v rámci výzkumu vývoje systému osídlení, utváření vazeb mezi sídly a jejich hierarchizace (Havlíček, Chromý, 2001). V současnosti velmi dynamický proces globalizace je např. provázen zvyšující se koncentrací řídicích funkcí do jádra, čímž může docházet k silnému zesílení významu mezoregionálního jádra, jenž je současně makroregionální periferií. Výzvy postindustriální společnosti upřednostňují koncentraci progresivních a řídicích funkcí (změna činitelů mechanismu polarizace prostoru), na druhé straně však i rozvoj moderních informačních technologií (internetu, mobilních telefonů ad.), které naopak napomáhají začlenit „problémové“ (marginální, periferní) oblasti do regionálního systému.

Z obsahového hlediska je podstatnější vymezení faktorů, na jejichž základě rozlišujeme základní typy periferních oblastí, které se mohou ve svém územním vymezení překrývat. Obecně lze rozlišit faktory subjektivní a objektivní povahy. Zatímco k prvním náleží např. vědomí příslušnosti obyvatel k periferním oblastem, tj. pocit sounáležitosti a rezistence (Chromý, Janů, 2003), rozhodující roli hrají faktory objektivní (zejména geografická poloha; vnitřní i vnější).

Z metodologického hlediska je proto žádoucí kombinovat při výzkumu periferních oblastí formy extenzivního a intenzivního výzkumu (ve smyslu kritického realizmu). Zatímco extenzivní výzkum je zaměřen na odhalení společných vlastností a empirických pravidelností a za cíl si klade nabídnout jejich generalizace/zevšeobecnění (spoléhá se zejména na kvantitativní metody; dotazníková šetření a interviu, prováděná ve velkém měřítku), intenzivní výzkum zahrnuje výzkumné strategie, jež se zabývají rekonstrukcí příčinných řetězců, které spojují sociální struktury, sociální prak-

tiky a jednotlivé činitele v konkrétních souvislostech (zahrnuje hlavně kvalitativní výzkumné metody). Oba zmiňované typy výzkumů se vzájemně doplňují. To názorně doložila např. i diskuze o lokalitách, která logicky zdůvodnila (a empiricky doložila) nemožnost vytvoření jednoho univerzálně platného návodu na rozvoj regionu, a to ani na základě empirické generalizace, ani na základě strukturálně založeného přístupu.

Nezbytným směrem výzkumu polarizace prostoru je studium vybraných aspektů v modelových mikroregionech (Jančák 2001, Hurbánek 2004, Spišiak, 2005). Pro detailní studium jsme v rámci Česka zvolili celkem 11 modelových území (viz obr. 1), mezi nimiž rozlišujeme periferie vnitřní, ležící většinou při hranicích VÚSC (Nečtínsko, Bukovina, Sedlecko-Prčicko, Kralovice) – vnější, ležící při státní hranici (Tachovsko, Jílovice, Východní Krušnohoří, Moravské Kopanice, Osoblažsko, Novobystřicko), tradiční, venkovské, hospodářsky slabé (Nečtínsko, Bukovina, Sedlecko-Prčicko, Kralovice, Tachovsko, Moravské Kopanice, Novobystřicko) – strukturálně postižené (Nečtínsko, Tachovsko, Bílinsko, Jílovice, Východní Krušnohoří). Cílovou skupinou pro anketární šetření bylo obyvatelstvo starší 15 let, přičemž jednotlivé respondenty jsme vybírali na základě kombinace náhodného a kvótního výběru podle pohlaví, věku a místa bydliště. Celkem bylo zpracováno 2 163 dotazníků. Z dotazníkového šetření vyplynulo, že percepce krajiny obyvatelstvem je víceméně kladná ve všech modelových oblastech. V souladu s objektivním stavem území tak lze hovořit o – z ekologického hlediska – spíše jádrových oblastech. To, co obyvatelé vnímají jako potenciál krajiny ve svém regionu, totiž většinou využití pro cestovní ruch, je z hlediska přírodního potenciálu sice možné, ale zároveň silně limitované lidským a sociálním kapitálem a stavem (silou) místní ekonomiky.