

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BORDERLAND RURAL TERRITORY: A CASE STUDY OF THE HLUČÍN REGION

MILADA ŠTASTNÁ , ANTONÍN VAISHAR 

Department of Applied and Landscape Ecology, Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic

Manuscript received: January 14, 2023

Revised version: May 4, 2023

ŠTASTNÁ M., VAISHAR A., 2023. Opportunities for the development of a borderland rural territory: A case study of the Hlučín region. *Questiones Geographicae* 42(4), Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznań, pp. 91–106. 2 figs, 3 photos, 1 table.

ABSTRACT: The study evaluates the regional development potential of a specific rural micro-region with regard to its qualitative aspect. It aims to set a general strategy for further development. The method is a geographical analysis using the migration balance as an indicator of the region's attractiveness for housing. Main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified. Generally accessible statistical data was used. The proposed strategy is to support the development of the human capital. In addition to the generally valid recommendations for the development of rural areas, it is always necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the geographical location, path dependency, natural, economic and social potential, the state of the environment, cultural factors or other specifics. The regional and local decision-making levels play an important role in this process.

KEYWORDS: rural development, regional culture, housing, quality of life, Hlučín, Czechia

Corresponding author: Milada Štastná, Department of Applied and Landscape Ecology, Faculty of AgriSciences, Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 1, 61300 Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: stastna@mendelu.cz

Introduction

Rural development is a specific part of regional development and therefore an important domain of geography. As such, it is always a combination of general tendencies and rules and individual characteristics of the studied region at a given time. Therefore, the general instruments of rural development can be related to specific micro-regions¹ only to a limited extent, and it is always necessary to study the specific conditions of a given area. Individual rural micro-regions differ in their natural and human resources, as well as

their location potential. Human resources relate not only to the number and demographic and qualification structures of the population but also to specific cultural and historical developments.

Culture is a complex concept, including the level of civilisation, religion, ethnicity, economy and other factors associated with the historical development and current focus of the micro-region. However, migration trends must also be taken into account. For this reason, urban culture, which is more globalised, is different from the culture of rural micro-regions, which is more traditional as a rule.

Our attention is paid to the Hlučín micro-region in the Czech part of Silesia, in the borderland with present Poland. The micro-region is specific in several ways. Above all, it is a

¹ We use the term micro-region to distinguish the studied functional territorial units from administrative regions, which are significantly larger.

traditional micro-region in the hinterland of the Ostrava Industrial Agglomeration, which represents a diverse mix of migrants from various regions of former Czechoslovakia. In addition, it is a micro-region that has undergone a specific development in the last century, different from the surrounding areas. The micro-region is an exception within the northern border of Czechia, from which most of the original population was displaced after World War II and replaced by new settlers. An important motivation for the research is the fact that this micro-region has so far been out of the attention of researchers as it was neither progressively industrial nor socially and economically problematic. In addition, it seems that the micro-region has also been neglected by researchers in terms of historical development.

Our contribution is focused on the specification of the conditions of the Hlučín micro-region in comparison with the surrounding rural micro-regions. The main research question is how the main government regional development document Strategy 2021+ could be specifically applied in this micro-region. We will deal with the natural, demographic, economic and social parameters of the area and make an attempt to see these parameters also from the point of view of the cultural specifics of the region. The result will be a general proposal for a strategy for the further development of the Hlučín region in a qualitative sense.

Theory

The definition of rural areas is ambiguous and evolves over time (Woods 2010). Originally, it was a space outside the cities, which was defined by the monarch and usually delimited by walls. Later, definitions were applied, emphasising poorer rural infrastructure and employment of the population in primary sectors. Today, there is also a sociological concept that defines the countryside as a place where people feel to be in the countryside. Novotný et al. (2015) used three approaches for Visegrád countries: functional, rural as a locality and rural as a social representation. The determination of the spatial line delimiting the countryside is similarly problematic as the border of the countryside compared to the city is becoming increasingly blurred. The development

seems to be moving towards a kind of urban-rural continuum (Pahl 1966), in which both urban and rural elements are located, and it depends more on their mutual relationship whether a particular area can be described as urban or rural. For practical reasons, the European Union uses the criterion of population density.

Rural development is a specific discipline within regional development. At present, a new paradigm has been formulated (Guinjoan et al. 2016). The main current problem of rural development is its adaptation to the process of transition from the modern to the postmodern phase of development. What is associated with this are the issues of shifting jobs and forces from manufacturing to non-manufacturing branches. This shift is accompanied by significant changes in the way of life of the rural population. The transition from modern to postmodern society also means a change in the evaluation of (rural) development from purely economic criteria of permanent growth to qualitative criteria of personal development and the quality of life of individuals. Even de-growth tendencies are beginning to appear (Gerber 2020).

At present, it is not so important to define the countryside in contradiction to the city but to take into account the differences between the various types of countryside. Some authors use a whole range of indicators and statistical tools (Bogdanov et al. 2008; Perlín 2010). The countryside can be divided based on a number of criteria such as natural conditions, historical development, economic orientation and ethnographic characteristics. From the point of view of geography, the position of the countryside in relation to regional centres is essential. According to it, the countryside can be divided into suburbanised, peripheral and intermediate. A specific case of peripheral rural development is the border countryside – especially in the case of excesses (hostility, the Iron Curtain) or changes in the border and its character.

While in the past, rural development was linked almost exclusively to the economy of agriculture or other primary activities, today, the importance of the human factor is generally recognised in Europe. The current EU rural development policy prioritises the preservation of natural values and biodiversity, while payments tend to be based on agricultural factors (Zasada

et al. 2018). There is relatively little talk about the development of the rural population, which today in European countries (perhaps except some Eastern European countries) is usually dependent on agriculture only to a limited extent. The discrepancy between the economic interests of the agricultural lobby, the interests of nature protection and the interests of the rural population does hardly allow any effective assessment of the success of EU agricultural policy (Andersson et al. 2017). However, Dax and Fischer (2018) rightly emphasise that the needs of the rural population are key to rural development. The result is the EU LEADER programme (*Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale*) and its current form of Community Lead Local Development (Konečný 2019; Pollermann et al. 2021). Local Action Groups (LAGs) are its territorial expression (Menconi et al. 2018).

A condition for receiving support is that LAGs have a developed and properly discussed strategic plan. Although there may sometimes be doubts about the quality of these plans, their conditionality and the interests of local players, as well as about the attempts of some states to influence the activities of LAGs from the position of the centre, the local level remains the one that can also take into account cultural peculiarities that cannot be included in statistical indicators. Konečný et al. (2019), however, using the example of Czechia, point out that the new concept of community-led local development secretly seeks to restore central control over local strategic planning. Servillo (2019) adds that the meta-governance dimensions locate the bottom-up constituency of this institutional technology in the shadow of the hierarchy of the state. Of course, local strategic plans have their pitfalls. If the reality of their success is overestimated, there is a risk of unnecessary expenditure of resources for a small effect (Rodriguez et al. 2019).

Economic approaches emphasise at least human capital (Wosiek 2020), which can be more or less identified with qualifications in the broadest sense (i.e. not only with formal education but also with experience, motivation and other aspects). The concept of the so-called creative class (Florida 2002) is derived from this approach, but it is associated primarily with large cities. Another aspect is social capital (Rivera et al. 2019), which can be defined as a set of relationships among actors,

which could be used for development. Assuming that the measure of rural development in terms of its quality is to improve the quality of life of local people (or local entrepreneurs and visitors), we should focus on what we mean by the quality of rural life (Vaishar et al. 2018).

Al-Qawasmi (2020) defines the quality of life as "the general well-being of people and the quality of the environment in which they live". The quality of life is a complex concept, encompassing both objective and subjective factors, only some of which are measurable. Factors such as access to education, access to health care, access to employment opportunities, participation in governance, the level of wealth (poverty) and, more recently, the state of the environment are monitored internationally. However, it turns out that subjective factors such as freedom, happiness, satisfaction and the feeling of identification with the local society are more important. Since 1990, the Human Development Index has been used as a statistical assessment of the quality of life, which takes into account health status (life expectancy), access to education and standard of living (income). Researchers are aware of the relativity of this indicator and are trying to calibrate it (e.g. Lind 2019). However, this index is usually used for nation-states and large regions. There is no real data for its detection on a small scale nor would such an approach be informative. Michalska-Żyła and Marks-Krzyszowska (2018) distinguish between the quality of life (individuals) and quality of living (communities) and point out that people can be satisfied with their quality of life, but not with the quality of living, or vice versa. At the same time, the quality of life of local people and the possibilities for its improvement should be a decisive indicator for local politicians for their activities or electoral programmes. Mitrică et al. (2020) propose to evaluate the regional disparities of rural regions based on the Social Disadvantage Index, which includes unemployment, belonging to primary industries, quality of housing, education and health. However, in our opinion, one of the most significant problems in rural areas is access to services of public interest and basic commercial services. Casadio Tarabusi and Guarini (2013) consider the imbalance between individual dimensions of people's lives to be the main problem.

The issue of life satisfaction is clearly related to local culture (Brennan et al. 2009). The culture of the population, in a broad sense, seems to be an extremely important factor in (rural) development. By culture, we understand a wide range of attributes including ethnicity, religiosity, regional identity, civilisation level, history, traditions, customs, local culture and way of life.

The importance of EU cohesion policy for local strategic planning was pointed out by Rinaldi (2016). A local strategic plan for an association of 40 municipalities in the Nebrodi area in Italy was presented by Ioppolo et al. (2016). The plan was focused on sustainable competitiveness to create a new environmental governance that would truly represent the local system. Dąbrowski (2014) identifies the factors that prevent the effective transfer of strategic planning powers to the local level: an overestimation of the importance of local planning for drawing EU resources, the influence of local client networks and the low willingness of central institutions to transfer decision-making powers to a lower level. Furmankiewicz et al. (2021) draw attention to the problem of the relationship between the distribution of European and national funds and local unwritten rules applying 'justice' according to the number of inhabitants.

Short historical context

The Czech-Polish border area was dealt with by several Polish and Czech authors, who stated that it was either peripheralisation or marginalisation. Some authors talk about desolated villages (Heffner, Latocha 2020). However, a large part of the problems of this territory are caused by the post-war population exchange on an ethnic basis. This is not the case in the Hlučín area. On the other hand, Szmytkie and Tomczak (2017) talk about the revival of rural settlement in Kłodzko, but this cannot be applied to the Hlučín area because there was no decline before that. To understand the specifics of the Hlučín area, the knowledge of the historical development during the era of productive society is key. It is an application of the concept of path dependency within evolutionary economic geography (MacKinnon 2008).

The Hlučín micro-region is a historical territory located in the Czech part of Silesia. After

the demolition of the Landek castle in Ostrava by Hungarian troops, Hlučín became the centre of the Landek estate. Until 1742, it was a part of Opava principality. After the defeat of Austria-Hungary in the Austro-Prussian War, it was torn from the Lands of the Czech Crown and became part of the Prussian province of Silesia. However, the inhabitants maintained a certain ethnic identity as they, through Germanisation pressures, retained their language (a variant of Czech with Polish elements) in the German environment and retained the Catholic faith in the Evangelical Prussian environment (Mečiar 2017). Churchly, the micro-region fell under the Olomouc archbishopric, commissioner in Kietrz. These influences were weakened only by the unification of Germany under Bismarck in the 1870s (Maler 2015). According to Wiskermann (1938: 116), "about 80 per cent of the Hlučín people speak a Moravian-Czech dialect and they used to give the Prussian authorities a good deal of trouble. The Hlučín country is mainly agricultural and of no particular value; the population are for the most part poor agricultural workers, and described as unreliable and querulous". At the census in 1905, 87.3% of the population subscribed to Moravian as their mother language. On the other hand, they fully adopted the Prussian mentality and way of thought step by step.

After World War I, the newly emerging Czechoslovakia claimed the territory of the Hlučín region (in a dispute with Germany, but also Poland), and based on the Treaty of Versailles, it actually acquired them in 1920 without any referendum. The inhabitants of the town Hlučín and 37 surrounding rural municipalities accepted the connection to Czechoslovakia coldly and retained their cultural specificity. The industrial development of their own territory was insignificant. The seeds of the textile industry soon disappeared. That is why many people went to work outside the Hlučín region – both to German industrial centres and to Ostrava. Although the character of the area was agricultural, the majority of the population became industrial workers at that time (Binar 2014). Therefore, the interruption of relations with German centres meant a significant economic decline. Efforts for economic upliftment by the Czechoslovak authorities were ended by the Great Depression. Under the Munich Agreement of 1938, the Hlučín area was

annexed to the German Empire, and unlike other withdrawn areas, it was incorporated directly into the territory of the Third Reich. Residents welcomed the change with enthusiasm supported by the short but intensive economic growth, which declined with increasing numbers of those killed in the war within Wehrmacht.

After World War II, the Hlučín area, as the only region annexed by Germany as a result of the Munich Agreement, managed to avoid mass population displacement. Out of about 50,000 inhabitants, only <1500 were displaced. The inhabitants were presented more as victims of Germanisation because after World War I, they were declared Slavs to justify the connection of the micro-region to Czechoslovakia. The war losses were more serious, which accounted for more than a quarter of the men drafted into the war and several hundred civilian victims of the crossing of the front – a total of about 4,000 people. About 1,000 widows and 2,000 orphans remained after the fallen soldiers, and additionally, there were about 2,000 war invalids. Owing to the fact that the most intensive war operation in the Czech territory – the Ostrava operation – took place on the territory of the micro-region, the housing stock, agricultural property and transport infrastructure were devastated. The locals were also significantly affected by the monetary reform in 1945 as they had savings mainly in the imperial marks, which were exchanged at an unfavourable exchange rate. The situation continued to be complicated by epidemics because of poor hygiene and the mixing of local people, refugees and soldiers.

The situation was not easy because the inhabitants had to withstand various pressures for relocation within Czechoslovakia and for the confiscation of land, which ended up mostly in collective farms. The locals also had to deal with the distrust of other residents and state power. Nevertheless, the Hlučín region became the subject of economic aid, first by the UNRRA organisation and also by the Czechoslovak state. A specific feature of the region is that aid was received or rejected with distrust, and local people preferred to repair their property themselves. Many residents found employment in the rapidly developing Ostrava.

The Hlučín administrative district has disappeared, and the institutional identity is maintained

only through a voluntary association of municipalities and also through the LAG Hlučínsko within the EU LEADER programme. However, specific cultures and historical memory persist in the area to this day. It is also reinforced by the fact that local residents (including offspring to the second generation in the male line) can apply for citizenship of the Federal Republic of Germany so they have two citizenships. The situation has also changed in that Germany is no longer on the opposite side of the border, but Poland. Cross-border cooperation is institutionally supported within the Silesia Euroregion. Owing to historical and cultural development, the Hlučín micro-region differs from other micro-regions of the northern border. There were neither devastated nor extinct villages. The inhabitants of the Hlučín area strongly identify themselves with their region and society (Kubátová 2016). In the context of the Czech lands, the Hlučín region still represents an atypical historical and socio-cultural phenomenon (Jung, Neminář 2017).

The region under study

Today's Hlučín region occupies the functional gravitation areas of two small towns of Hlučín (population 13,800) and Kravaře (population 6,700)² in the district of Opava in the Moravian-Silesian region. The territory occupies about 266 km² and has about 62,000 inhabitants, which represents a population density of 233 persons per km². Such population density far exceeds the European criterion for rural areas. However, the nature of the settlements and the landscape shows that the Hlučín region is still a rural area.

The area is bordered by the rivers Odra and Opava, along which stretches the flat and sparsely forested Hlučín Uplands. Most of the streams – originally meandering – have been regulated. The Hlučín area is covered in 55% by arable land. Forests cover 20% of the area, and permanent grasslands cover 7%. Another land use is marginal: gardens and orchards occupy 3.3%, built-up

² In fact, the historical Hlučín region also includes some municipalities and even parts of the city of Ostrava. However, the subject of our research is functional micro-regions, while the settlements, which today are direct parts of Ostrava and Opava, have already changed their character.

area 2.7%, water area 2.5%. The so-called other areas constitute the remainder. The land is made up of quite fertile brown soils, except for part of the Kravaře area, where there are gley and peatlands. In terms of climate, the area is open to cold and humid northern air currents. The predominant agricultural crop was sugar beet. There are minerals in the area, especially materials for the construction industry. The coal seam from the Ostrava-Karviná basin also partially encroaches the region.

Significant industrial companies with national or international supplier-customer relations

are MSA, a.s. (Ltd) Dolní Benešov (engineering), Lanex, a.s. Bolatice (production of ropes), Armatury Group Kravaře (production of fittings), Gypstrend Koberice (gypsum mines) and PF Plasty Chuchelná (production of plastics)³. The rest of the factories are small- and medium-sized companies with local significance.

Hlučín (Fig. 1) was established at the crossroads between Opava and Ostrava and Bílovec and Racibórz. The transport axis of the area is

³ Strategy of community-led local development for the territory of the Hlučín LAG for the period 2014–2020.

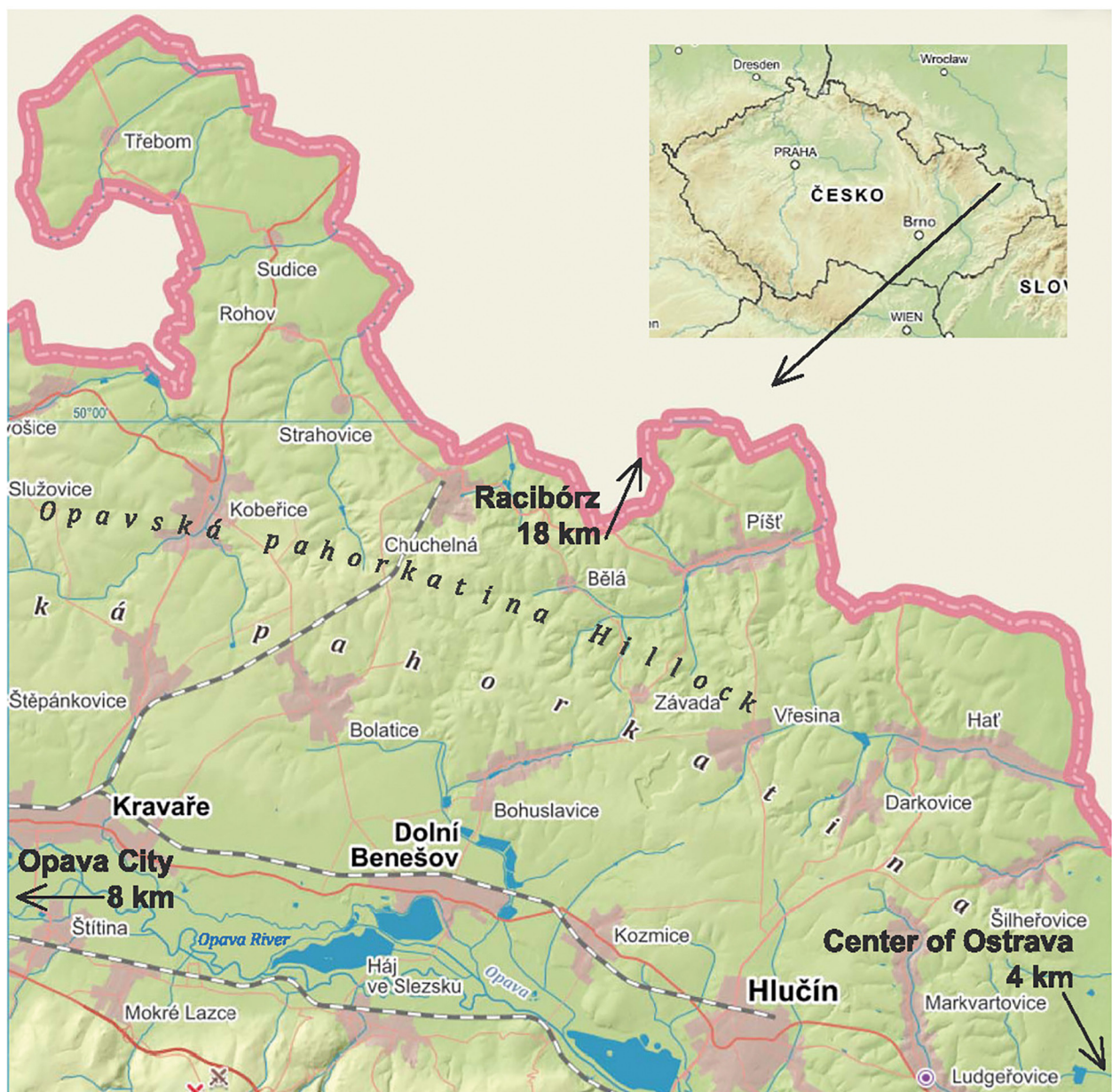


Fig. 1. The area under study.
Source: mapy.cz, drawn by Tichá.



Photo 1. The centre of the Hlučín microregion has an urban character.
Source: photo taken by Antonín Vaishar.

road I/56 Poruba – Hlučín – Dolní Benešov – Kravaře – Opava. Although the main route from Ostrava to the west is southern situated road I/11 and today also D1 motorway, the road through the Hlučín region is popularly used by truck drivers, especially in the winter, because it is flatter. Traffic intensities here reach 7,000–9,000 vehicles per day in individual sections. The transverse roads II/467 in the vicinity of Kravaře and II/469 in the vicinity of Hlučín are relatively busy (about 3,000 vehicles daily). The railway connection is provided by line 317 Opava – Hlučín, which was extended by a tram line in the years 1950–1980. There is a branch from Kravaře to Chuchelná, which was previously part of the international line Opava – Racibórz. Traffic from Chuchelná to the border was not resumed after the war.

There are 24 municipalities in the defined area. Apart from both resort towns, there is only one small village with up to 500 inhabitants. There are seven medium-sized rural municipalities with 500–999 inhabitants, six large rural municipalities with 1,000–1,999 inhabitants and eight very large rural municipalities and small towns with 2,000–4,999 inhabitants. Only 8.2% of the population lives in municipalities with <1,000 inhabitants. In addition, these are mostly compact settlements without separate parts and hamlets. This settlement structure is advantageous in

terms of providing social infrastructure and public transport.

The age structure of the population is relatively favourable, but is still deteriorating. The age index was 1.18 at the end of 2020. The number of seniors exceeded the number of children in the Hlučín subregion in 2005 and in the Kravaře subregion in 2018. The majority of ethnicities declared 71.7% persons, of which 64.6% feel Czech, 4.1% Moravians and 3% Silesians. Registration for Moravian or Silesian ethnicity indicates a sense of regional, rather than ethnic, identity. There are not many members of ethnic minorities: 0.7% Slovaks, 0.4% Germans, 0.2% Poles and some individuals of Vietnamese and Ukrainian ethnicities. The remainder did not declare any ethnicity.

According to the results of the 2011 census, most inhabitants of the Hlučín region worked in services. The originally agricultural region had only 1.7% of the economically active population employed in primary sectors (agriculture, forestry and fishing), 28.5% in manufacturing and 10.5% in construction. About 11.2% of the population was employed in commercial services (trade, repair, maintenance), while a very small 2.4% was employed in tourism services (gastronomy, accommodation). The rest consists of employees in social services (health care, education,

social care), business services (experts, consultants, real estate agents) and government. The majority of economically active persons were employees (78.3%). The self-employed accounted for 11.8% and entrepreneurs for 3.7%. Of the economically inactive persons, 47.8% were non-working pensioners, 16.9% were children, pupils, students and persons in the household, and 3.3% were persons with their own source of livelihood. For others, the source of livelihood was not determined.

Methods

The fundamental problem is how to measure the level of rural development if we emphasise positive changes in the quality of life of local people. Migration turnover is a relatively complex indicator, based on the assumption that people are currently migrating from places with a lower quality of life to places with a better quality of life. Of course, it can be argued that the quality of life (however understood) may not be the only motivation for migration. Economic reasons, for example, can be an important motive when some people are pushed out of places with high living costs to places with lower living costs. However, this is more a motive for urban-rural migration than vice versa. If data on the demographic and educational structures of people who emigrate

and immigrate were available, we would receive valuable structuring information that would allow us to estimate motivations. The number of newly built flats is also very telling. It can be assumed that the interest in building apartments is associated with confidence in the future of the site.

However, this brings us to the individual aspects of the quality of life. In addition to the availability of job opportunities, mention may be made, for example, of living standards, accessibility of services, quality of the environment or the social environment and social ties. The problem is how to measure these aspects. Some experts believe that job opportunities are an important motive. Therefore, the migration indicator can be combined with the unemployment indicator.

Data on the income structure of households for small areas are not available in Czech statistics. There were some attempts to assess the quality of housing and household equipment, but in recent censuses, the monitoring of these categories has been abandoned. In 2011, this category was represented only by technical equipment of flats and household equipment with a personal computer with or without an Internet connection. By comparing these indicators with the national and regional levels, or with other rural regions, it is possible to very roughly estimate the state of living standards of the studied micro-region. A certain problem is that the equipment, which, at



Photo 2. Leisure area in the smallest village Třebom.
Source: photo taken by Antonín Vaishar

one point in time, was a differentiating factor, by the next census was already standard, and its absence was an expression of an alternative lifestyle rather than a standard of living.

A certain option would be to monitor the share of educated people in the population structure, assuming that education is directly proportional to income. But that may not always be true. However, education can be considered important for the quality of life as educated people tend to have broader horizons, are able to perceive cultural stimuli better in the broadest sense and perhaps are more resilient to catastrophic rumours and scenarios. Therefore, the proportion of educated people can be considered part of the quality of life.

The availability of services can be studied as the interaction of the location of services and the functioning of public transport. Services can be studied at different levels such as the availability of basic services (Vaishar, Šťastná 2021), the availability of regional services or access to the hierarchically highest level of services. To illustrate, for example, it is a hierarchy of the types of primary school – secondary school – university or general practitioner – polyclinic – hospital.

The assessment of the environment quality is relatively complex as it is a very complicated category. Experience shows that indicators that are in deficit or negative in a given area are more important for evaluation. Therefore, it is probably not relevant to establish general assessment criteria but to look for whether there are serious environmental degrading factors in the area. It is also worth recalling that the perception of the environment from the point of view of the population is far from identical to the evaluation of experts. For example, biodiversity or carbon economy is not at the forefront of the general public's interest. People are more interested in visible or audible environmental disturbances, such as exhalation or noise.

The issue of social relations is similarly complex. One aspect is the local and regional identity and relationship to the region, respect for traditions. A possible indicator may be, for example, the share of natives in the population structure. Respect for traditions can be indirectly shown by the share of believers, which in Czech conditions does not relate to faith and to the church at all, but rather to the traditional way of life and customs.

Another possible indirect indicator may be the entrepreneurship of local people. It can be assumed that if the locals decide to do business, they do so based on the belief in the suitability of local conditions and probably also based on established positive social networks. However, this may also not reflect reality, as in some areas people have little choice but to work as self-employed persons for larger companies.

An important aspect of the quality of life is the richness of the social life of the local community. It can be about the number and success of local associations, the number and attendance of events, the quality of local information and the press and so on. It is difficult to use quantitative data in this segment.

The question is how to assess the overall life quality level on a regional scale. The usual procedure is to collect several different pieces of quantitative data that have a high, low or no relation to the quality of life to try to determine the weights of individual factors and then to reach some results based on statistical procedures. The problem is to obtain data, some of which may be accurate, others more probabilistic. Determining the data of individual factors is an even greater problem. This can be done based on brainstorming techniques. However, even if the relevant weights can be determined, their validity is limited to a given place, time and social group because other people may have different views, experiences and priorities in a different place and time. Therefore, such a methodology cannot be used in general or for comparative analysis.

Some experts and journals reject contributions that do not contain quantitative analysis as unscientific. However, most statistical techniques focus on verifying conclusions rather than obtaining better results. If it is applied to the same set of data and the problem is in the data (which is a very common case in social systems), it will not reveal the problematic nature of the conclusions. After all, science is not a question of statistical procedures but a problem of asking questions and finding answers. Therefore, verification of results directly in the field and among the local population may be more relevant than the use of statistics. In complex systems, this is even more urgent.

After assessing the situation and identifying the causes, a proposal for possible strategies for

further development should follow. A partial SWOT analysis can be used for this purpose, such as the definition of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the regions and the selection of appropriate strategic proposals.

Results

Migration balance

Migration balances were calculated for the five-year period 2017–2021 to prevent possible one-year fluctuations that could affect the overall result, especially for rural municipalities. The results are shown in Table 1.

It is evident that the Hlučín area is significantly positive for migration, which also applies to the vast majority of municipalities. Both resort cities have more or less balanced migratory movements (with a balance of migratory movements of up to 1% over a five-year period) as well as seven other municipalities. Of the other municipalities,

10 have migration increases of >1%, while four municipalities have migration decreases of >1%. The extreme absolute increase can be seen in the population of Ludgeřovice and Markvartovice, which are located in the suburbanisation zone of Ostrava. A population decrease can be found mostly in large municipalities and some municipalities at the state border. However, the most remote and smallest village Třebom has a relatively high relative increase in the population.

It is obvious that the eastern part of the territory is subject to suburbanisation tendencies of Ostrava. In this case, indeed, people from places in which the life quality is worse (whether real or perceived) in the industrial city of Ostrava move to places where they expect a higher quality of life. At the same time, they remain close to the city attractions. There are also general migration trends, that is, a change in the earlier prevailing directions of rural-to-urban to urban-to-rural migration. This also explains the smaller attractiveness of Hlučín and Kravaře, which are located between both trends. For smaller municipalities,

Table 1. Migration balances in municipalities of the area under study 2017–2021.

Municipality	Population*	Immigrants	Emigrants	Balance	Per mille
Hlučín area					
Bělá	660	73	63	+10	+15.2
Bohuslavice	1,754	133	124	+9	+5.1
Darkovice	1,358	145	133	+12	+8.8
Dobroslavice	767	123	89	+34	+44.3
Dolní Benešov	3,939	383	405	-22	-5.6
Hať	2,518	203	224	-21	-8.3
Hlučín	13,562	1,388	1,448	+60	-4.4
Kozmice	1,890	224	208	+16	+8.5
Ludgeřovice	4,938	666	505	+161	+32.6
Markvartovice	2,193	360	182	+178	+8.1
Píšť	2,078	177	203	-26	-12.5
Šilheřovice	1,582	154	126	+28	+17.7
Vřesina	1,652	187	147	+40	+24.2
Závada	601	68	50	+18	+30.0
Kravaře area					
Bolatice	4,439	417	338	+79	+17.8
Chuchelná	1,246	166	150	+16	+12.8
Kobeřice	3,224	174	246	-72	-23.3
Kravaře	6,601	553	565	-12	-1.8
Rohov	615	72	45	+27	+43.9
Strahovice	883	56	71	-15	-17.0
Sudice	625	92	109	-17	-27.2
Štěpánkovice	3,173	254	248	+6	+1.9
Třebom	217	55	48	+7	+32.3

* December 31, 2021.

Source: Praha: Czech Statistical Office, own elaboration.

individual factors such as readiness of pieces of land and friendliness of local governments may also be considered.

In the five-year period 2016–2020, 824 new dwellings were built in the region, that is, 13.3 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants. However, the location of municipalities with the highest increments of new dwellings does not completely coincide with migration increments. Most flats were added in Hlučín, Ludgeřovice, Markvartovice and Kravaře. However, relatively the highest increase of >20 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants was recorded in Markvartovice, Třebom, Děhylov, Bohutice and Vřesina, while <10 new dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants were built in Rohov, Dolní Benešov, Dobroslavice, Hlučín, Píšť, Koberčice and Strahovice. For comparison, new housing construction on the national average for the same period was 15 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants, in the Moravian-Silesian region 10 dwellings and in the Opava district six dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants. It can therefore be stated that the construction of new flats in our region is close to the national average, is higher than that in the region itself and doubles in the relevant administrative district.

Partial characteristics

Although access to employment is far from the only indicator of the quality of life and a

migratory motive, adequate work plays an important role in the quality of life. The development over the last five and a half years is shown in Figure 2. In general, unemployment in the Czech Republic and individual regions decreased until the pre-COVID period in the autumn of 2019. After that, it increased slightly. A comparison of the course of unemployment in the Czech Republic and the Moravian-Silesian region shows that unemployment in this region has always been higher than the national average. This is due to structural problems. Following the decline of coal mining and heavy industry, the region is transforming into a services sector. However, this is a problem, given the skills of the workforce and its previous high incomes resulting from hard and dangerous work.

As for our studied region, the level of unemployment in the Hlučín part was always lower than the national and regional levels. In 2019 and 2020, it was mostly <2%, which means that the problem of unemployment did not exist here. The Kravaře section was around the national average and unemployment was also lower there than in the Moravian-Silesian region. This part shows the largest seasonal fluctuations, which theoretically correspond more to the rural character of the labour market.

It is obvious that unemployment in the studied area is not a fundamental problem, in contrast to the surrounding areas. The unemployment level

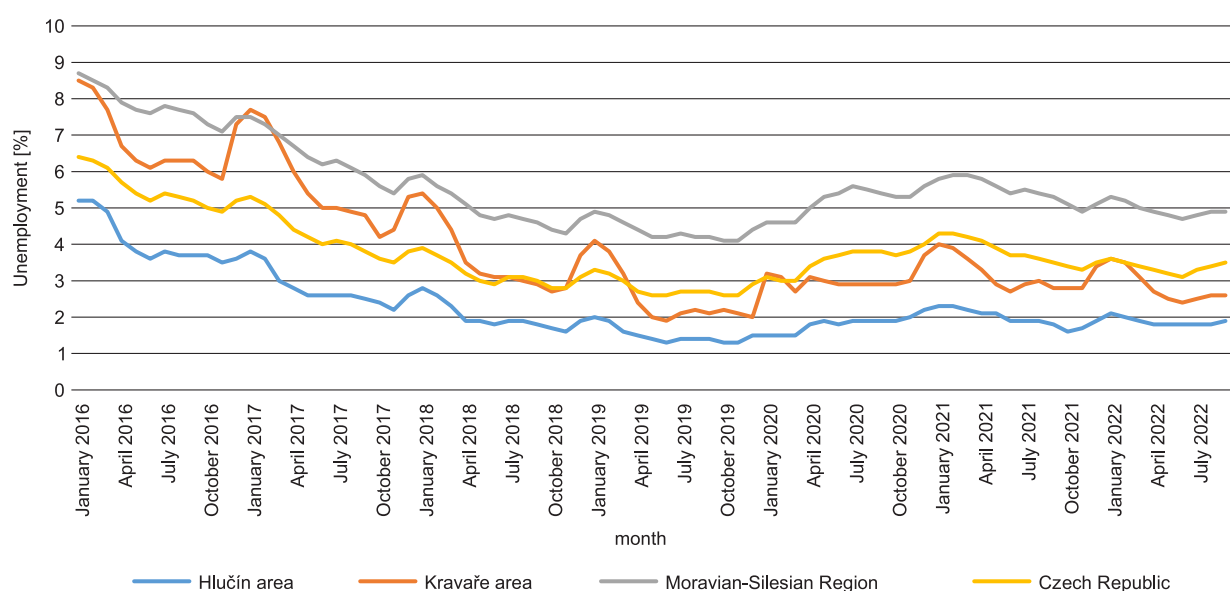


Fig. 2. Unemployment development between January 2016 and July 2021.
Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs data, own elaboration.



Photo 3. The church of St. John the Baptist in Sudice (1904–1906) is a scaled-down copy of the Cologne Cathedral.

Source: photo taken by Antonín Vaishar.

in Ostrava was 5.3% in July 2021, and 3.3% in Opava – in both cases, worse than in the area under study. At the same time, people from Hlučín and Kravaře areas commute to these two cities for work. The question is why this is so. One of the reasons may hypothetically be that in an area with a long-term stable population, there are not many people who do not consider work to be an adequate source of livelihood. This would be indicated by the fact that after seasonal fluctuations, which often occur at the end of a calendar year, the labour market is rapidly stabilising again and again.

In terms of education of the population over the age of 15, the most common category is formed by apprentices (39.9%), followed by people with a high school diploma (26.5%), with a basic education of 21.7% and with a university degree (9.1%). This structure corresponds to the productive character of the micro-region. The educational structure of the local population is thus lower than the national average. Theoretically, the income side of the household budget should also be lower. Here, however, it is necessary to take into account the fact that many people also have citizenship of the Federal Republic of Germany and receive German pensions. Specific data are unknown. In 2011, 59.4% of households were equipped with a personal computer, which was slightly more than in the Opava district (57.1%), the Moravian-Silesian region (56.6%) and the Czech Republic (56.6%). Of the total number of 21,593 flats, 92.9% in our territory are equipped

with central heating and complete sanitary facilities. Compared to the average of the Moravian-Silesian region (90%) and the national average (87.3%), the quality of flats in the Hlučín region is above average. There is an average living area of 32.8 m² in the Hlučín area and 32.5 m² in the Kravaře area per person, which corresponds to the national average. In the Moravian-Silesian region, the average area is lower: 31.4 m².

Owing to the size of municipalities, the availability of the most basic services of general importance (basic school, post office, doctor's office) is at a fairly good level. Of the 22 non-central municipalities, 11 have full facilities, three have two of these services, five have one facility and the remaining three municipalities (Dobroslavice, Závada and Třebom) are completely dependent on commuting for these basic services. It can be assumed that part of the journeys for services are realised by individual means of transport, which is not a problem because of short distances and flat terrain. However, some citizens (school children, seniors and others) do not have the opportunity to use individual means of transport. For them, accessibility by public transport is crucial. Of the 11 municipalities that do not have full amenities, the nearest fully equipped centre can be reached within 10 minutes by public transport. The frequency of connections on radial routes (to Hlučín and Ostrava) is sufficient, but for tangential routes, it is necessary to plan the route. The most remote village is Třebom, from where the equipped Kobeřice can be reached in 20 minutes. This is followed by Vřesina, whose inhabitants need 12 minutes to reach Hlučín by public transport.

The region of Ostrava is one of the territories with the most polluted air in Europe. The main sources of pollution are located in the districts of Ostrava-město, Karviná and Frýdek-Místek. However, the Hlučín area also shows significantly increased values of fine dust particles PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and especially benzopyrene. The main sources of pollution are industry, transport, local heating and long-distance transmission from Poland because the PM₁₀ transboundary transport was higher from Poland to Czechia than vice versa, despite the predominant airflow from Czechia to Poland (Černíkovský et al. 2016). The state of air pollution can harm the health of the population (Jiřík et al. 2016). However, it seems

that this aspect is not felt particularly negatively by the local population – perhaps precisely because the situation in Ostrava is even worse. Another environmental problem is I/56 road, which degrades its immediate surroundings with emissions, noise and the risk of accidents. Except for Třebom, all municipalities are gasified.

According to the 2011 census, 58.7% of the population was born in the municipality of current residence (for comparison, in the Moravian-Silesian region, this share was 51.5%), and 0.6% of foreigners lived here (1.7% in the region). The population of the Hlučín region is therefore more stable in the long run than the regional average; in addition, the share of natives is among the highest in the whole of Czechia. In the region, 40.2% of the population are members of a church (another 6.5% are believers without being part of any church). A total of 88.8% of them are Roman Catholics. On a national scale, 14% of the population subscribes to one of the churches (of which 74% are Roman Catholics), and 18.5% of the population are part of churches in the Moravian-Silesian region. These data indicate an extremely high relationship to local traditions. On the other hand, this is a sign of certain conservative attitudes.

In 2020, there were 7,132 business entities with recorded activity in the territory. The main branch of business is construction, followed by industry. In Hlučín and other large municipalities, commercial services compete with them. An exception is the most remote and smallest village Třebom, where the main branch of business is agriculture. Entrepreneurship in the region is 115 active entities per 1,000 inhabitants. In terms of comparison, entrepreneurship is at the level of the Moravian-Silesian region (113 entities per 1,000 inhabitants), but much below average from the national point of view (147 entities per 1,000 inhabitants).

Possible strategies

The design of possible strategies is preceded by an inventory of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Long-term stable population, proximity to regional centres of Ostrava and Opava, favourable settlement structure containing mostly large villages with easy access to basic services and historical connection to

German-speaking countries can be considered for main strengths of the Hlučín micro-region. Lower qualifications of people, responding more to the manufacturing sector, conservative population and environmental pollution can be stated as some of the main weaknesses.

As opportunities, what is assumed is renewed cooperation with the Polish side and the discovery of the micro-region by domestic tourists. The micro-region could be endangered by territorial tensions resulting from the high population density and by the demise of major local industrial employers in the whole Ostrava – Opava area.

The main wealth of the Hlučín region is its population, which has been stabilised for a long time, with a high level of identity and attachment to its region. On the other hand, it is also conservative and qualifies rather for the manufacturing sector. The location of the micro-region is marginal from national and European points of view; however, from a regional standpoint, easy access to important centres of Ostrava and Opava is advantageous. The settlement structure, supported by large rural settlements, can ensure efficient service of the area through basic services and public transport. The idyllic idea of the countryside is disturbed by the high population density and relatively significant air pollution, although it is lower than in nearby Ostrava. The ecological stability⁴ of the area is low.

Owing to the industrial nature of employment, the bankruptcy of one or more major industrial employers in the micro-region or its immediate vicinity can be considered the most serious threat today. The Hlučín region, like other rural areas, is facing economic restructuring. In this respect, this could be an opportunity for the micro-region to be discovered by domestic (or Polish) tourists.

Theoretically, there is a defensive strategy possible to use opportunities to eliminate threats – that is, to use support and interest in tourism to eliminate the risk of losing jobs in production. However, this strategy could run into conservative populations and environmental issues. It seems that the offensive strategy should be more promising. It could be focused more on strengthening the quality of human capital, which could

⁴ The ratio of ecologically stable land (mainly forests, meadows, pastures, water bodies) to ecologically unstable land (arable land, built-up area, other areas).

complement the high social capital of the area. To do this, it would be possible to use the easy accessibility of the universities in Ostrava and Opava, with the assumption that educated people firmly rooted in the area would not presumably have to leave the region after graduating. These people would then ensure a reduction in the region's sensitivity to industries and overall development using cultural heritage.

Discussion

At the same time, the proposed strategy could contribute to the development of the region in a qualitative sense. The question is, of course, to what extent the implementation of this strategy is realistic and to what extent it would be really successful – or whether another strategy could not be more beneficial.

The 2021+ regional development strategy does not consider the Hlučín area to be problematic. However, it is situated in the structurally impacted Moravian-Silesian region. Although the Ostrava metropolitan area lost its population in the period after 1989 and faced high unemployment associated with the decline of traditional industries, it has the ambition to move towards the socio-economic and innovative characteristics of metropolitan regions. This denotes the transfer of job opportunities to scientific, research, higher education institutions and cultural institutions in general. The structure of the Hlučín workforce is not adapted to this. From this point of view, the development of human capital is essential.

According to the Regional Development Strategy 2021+, the RESTART programme supports structurally affected regions. The strategic goals are to achieve a good quality of life and a healthy environment, economic recovery with jobs of good quality and new use of old industrial areas and territories after mining. The problem is that the Hlučín area is quite significantly different from the surrounding regions of the Moravian-Silesian region. It has a stable population that is not acutely threatened by unemployment, poverty or social exclusion. However, it has other characteristics in common with the surrounding micro-regions: lower qualification structure of the population, dependence on large employers and polluted environment. Therefore, it is necessary

to approach this area specifically. Pointing this out was one of the main purposes of this work.

At the same time, the position within the Ostrava agglomeration will create suburbanisation pressures, including pressure to continue to take land for non-agricultural activities. This will probably also limit the possibilities of using the region for more significant development of tourism, which will be probably restrained to suburban recreation of the inhabitants of Ostrava, who, however, mainly visit mountain ranges of the Moravian-Silesian Beskids and High-Ash Mountains. Therefore, a simple recipe for the structural development of rural areas, namely, the development of tourism, may not be useful in this case.

There are general recommendations for rural development. The EU's common agricultural policy is still based on the idea that the development of the countryside will be most supported by the development of agriculture. But this idea goes against the trend in economic and social development. Agriculture is no longer significant for either wealth creation or rural employment. Its importance lies more in maintaining the landscape. Another general piece of advice is the transfer of workers to the tourism industry. There is probably no region in Central Europe that could not be attractive to tourists. Kajdanek et al. (2022) propose the development of tourism as the main driver of development in nearby Kłodzko on the Polish side. However, even this development would not stop the depopulation. The development of tourism in itself cannot be the carrier of the development of the microregion, unless it is mass tourism, which, in turn, negatively affects the landscape. We argue that the development of rural micro-regions should be viewed in terms of the quality of life of local residents, visitors and entrepreneurs – not only in terms of performance. The main asset of any rural region is its people. It is necessary to look for the sources of their motivations, in which competitive advantages may lie. Each rural micro-region is specific due to its geographical location, historical development and natural wealth. The fundamental question is how to use these specifics to increase the quality of life. That is what we wanted to show in this article.

As in any social system, the main limiting factor for research is the variability of this system. In addition to gradual and predictable changes

(such as the post-material transformation at present), social systems undergo drastic changes in the form of economic crises or even war events, which are not too distant and can destabilise the entire system. Any further research could be aimed at monitoring the development of the social, economic and environmental situation in the Hlučín area.

Conclusions

The result of the study is a proposal for a general strategy vision for developing the Hlučín region in a qualitative sense as stated at the beginning. Of course, this strategy would need to be further developed in terms of individual steps, responsible actors, financial covering, a sequence of individual actions, monitoring tools and the like. However, this is beyond the scope of this article.

The methodology applies known procedures. We see the benefit of an emphasis on the qualitative side of development. The application of SWOT analysis procedures is relatively simple with knowledge of the overall situation and does not require complex statistical calculations. It can be applied to any territory.

The current stay of the Hlučín area is the result of different influences, and its future development will be interesting to watch (Jung, Neminář 2017). Of course, in today's turbulent times, characterised by the mixture of several crises (the COVID pandemic, climate change, the consequences of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the migration crisis), other factors may appear that will more or less disrupt our ideas about rural development. These problems will have to be incorporated into our thinking.

Several European projects deal with the issue of rural regions. The PROFECY project (Noguera et al. 2017) identified three pathways for future cohesion policy regarding Europe's inner periphery regions that correspond to our position in the case of the Hlučín area:

1. to define the ways for a greater territorialisation of both cohesion and rural development policies at subregional level;
2. to prepare a place-based approach as the main conceptual basis for developing territorial policies;

3. to simplify territorial policies and their implementation for local communities.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Michaela Tichá for drawing the map of the studied region. The article has been prepared under the HORIZON EUROPE Framework Programme (101084234).

Authors' contribution

The article was prepared as part of an unspecified research of the Institute of Applied and Landscape Ecology of the Faculty of AgriSciences of the Mendel University in Brno. MS: corresponding author, concept and local research; AV: text processing.

References

- Al-Qawasmi J., 2020. Measuring quality of life in urban areas: Toward an integrated approach. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences & Natural Resources* 25(2): 556158. DOI [10.19080/IJESNR.2020.25.556158](https://doi.org/10.19080/IJESNR.2020.25.556158).
- Andersson A., Höjgård S., Rabinowicz E., 2017. Evaluation of results and adaptation of EU rural development programmes. *Land Use Policy* 67: 298–314. DOI [10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.05.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.05.002).
- Binar A., 2014. *Hospodářský a sociální vývoj Hlučínska v letech 1945–1989* (Economic and social development of the Hlučín region between 1945 and 1989). Slezská univerzita, Opava: 328.
- Bogdanov N., Meredith D., Efstratoglu S., 2008. A typology of rural areas in Serbia. *Economic Annals* 53: 7–29. DOI [10.2298/EKA081770078](https://doi.org/10.2298/EKA081770078).
- Brennan M.A., Flint C.G., Luloff A.E., 2009. Bringing together local culture and rural development: Findings from Ireland, Pennsylvania and Alaska. *Sociologia Ruralis* 49: 97–112. DOI [10.1111/j.1467-9523.2008.00471.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2008.00471.x).
- Casadio Tarabusi E., Guarini G., 2013. An unbalance adjustment method for development indicators. *Social Indicators Research* 112: 19–45. DOI [10.1007/s11205-012-0070-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-012-0070-4).
- Černíkovský L., Krejčí B., Bležek Z., Volná V., 2016. Transboundary air-pollution transport in the Czech-Polish border region between the cities of Ostrava and Katowice. *Central European Journal of Public Health* 24(Suppl.): S45–S50. DOI [10.21101/cejph.a4532](https://doi.org/10.21101/cejph.a4532).
- Dąbrowski M., 2014. Towards place-based regional and local development strategies in Central and Eastern Europe? EU cohesion policy and strategic planning capacity at the sub-national level. *Local Economy* 29(4–5): 378–393. DOI [10.1177/0269094214535715](https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094214535715).
- Dax T., Fischer M., 2018. An alternative policy approach to rural development in regions facing population decline. *European Planning Studies* 26(2): 297–315. DOI [10.1080/09654313.2017.1361596](https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2017.1361596).
- Florida R., 2002. *The rise of the creative class*. Basic Books, New York.

- Furankiewicz M., Janc K., Macken-Walsh Á., 2021. Implementation of the EU LEADER programme at member-state level: Written and unwritten rules of local project selection in rural Poland. *Journal of Rural Studies* 86: 357–365. DOI 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.05.020.
- Gerber J.F., 2020. Degrowth and critical agrarian studies. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 47(2): 235–264. DOI 10.1080/03066150.2019.1695601.
- Guinjoan E., Badia A., Tulla A.F., 2016. The new paradigm of rural development. Theoretical considerations and reconceptualization using the “rural web”. *Bolletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles* 71: 495–500.
- Heffner K., Latocha A., 2020. Desolated villages as examples of spatial, economic and social marginalization in the Polish-Czech borderland and their current transformations. In: Nel E., Pelc S. (eds), *Responses to geographical marginality and marginalization*. Perspectives on Geographical Marginality 5. Springer, Cham. 123–142. DOI 10.1007/978-3-030-51342-9_8.
- Ioppolo G., Cucurachi S., Salomone R., Saija G., Shi L., 2016. Sustainable local development and environmental governance: A strategic planning experience. *Sustainability* 8: 180. DOI 10.3390/su8020180.
- Jiřík V., Machaczka O., Miturová H., Tomášek I., Šlachťová H., Janoutová J., Velická H., Janout V., 2016. Air pollution and potential health risk in Ostrava region – a review. *Central European Journal of Public Health* 24(Suppl.): S4–S17. DOI 10.21101/cejph.a4533.
- Jung J., Neminář J., 2017. *Who are the people in the Hlučín region*. Hlučín: Regional Museum.
- Kajdaneck K., Latocha A., Sikorski D., Tomczak P., Szmytkie R., Miodońska P., 2022. Recent transformation of marginal rural areas in the Sudetes mountains in Poland – drivers and effects of changes in perception of their inhabitants. *Rural Sociology* 87: 1155–1190. DOI 10.1111/ruso.12454.
- Konečný O., 2019. The leader approach across the European Union: One method of rural development, many forms of implementation. *European Countryside* 11(1): 1–16. DOI 10.2478/euco-2019-0001.
- Kubátová H., 2016. Collective memory and collective identity of Hlučín region inhabitants in the 20th century. *Historická sociologie* 8(1): 11–32. DOI 10.14712/23363525.2016.1.
- Lind N., 2019. A development of the human development index. *Social Indicators Research* 146(3): 409–423. DOI 10.1007/s11205-019-02133-9.
- MacKinnon D., 2008. Evolution, path dependence and economic geography. *Geography Compass* 2: 1449–1463. DOI 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00148.x.
- Maler K., 2015. Kulturkampf na obszarze ołomunieckiego komisarjatu arcybiskupskiego z siedzibą w Kietrze (1871–1878) (Kulturkampf in the territory of Olomouc archbishop commissariat in Głubczyce county with its registered office in Kietrz (1871–1878)). *Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny* 23(2): 255–268. DOI 10.34839/wpt.2015.23.2.255-268.
- Mečiar M., 2017. Migration, displacement and adaptation. Historical perspective and the present. In: Sükrü A., Cinemre C. (eds), *Current debates in sociology and anthropology*. IJOPEC Publication, London: 67–84.
- Menconi M.E., Artemi S., Borghi P., Grohmann D., 2018. Role of local action groups in improving the sense of belonging of local communities with their territories. *Sustainability* 10: 4681. DOI 10.3390/su10124681.
- Michalska-Żyła A., Marks-Krzyszowska M., 2018. Quality of life and quality of living in rural communes in Poland. *European Countryside* 10(2): 280–299. DOI 10.2478/euco-2018-0017.
- Mitrică B., Șerban P., Mocanu I., Grigorescu I., Damian N., Dumitrașcu M., 2020. Social development and regional disparities in the rural areas of Romania: Focus on the social disadvantaged areas. *Social Indicators Research* 152: 67–89. DOI 10.1007/s11205-020-02415-7.
- Noguera J., Ortega-Reig M., del Alcázar H., Copus, A., Berlina A., Moodle J., Mantino F., Forcina B., Weck S., Beißwenger S., Hans N., Tagai S., Koós B., Kovács K., Uz-zoli A., Dax T., Machold I., Schürmann C., Tobiasz-Lis P., Dmochowska-Dudek K., Wójcik M., 2017. *Processes, features and cycles of inner peripheries in Europe* [final report]. ESPON, Luxembourg.
- Novotný L., Hruška V., Egyedy T., Mazur M., 2015. Defining rural areas in Visegrád countries. *Studia obszarów wiejskich* 39: 21–34. DOI 10.7162/SOW.39.2.
- Pahl R.E., 1966. The rural-urban continuum. *Sociologia Ruralis* 6(3): 299–329. DOI 10.1111/j.1467-9523.1966.tb00537.x.
- Perlin R., 2010. Theoretical approaches and methods to delimitate rural and urban areas. *European Countryside* 2(4): 182–200. DOI 10.2478/v10091-010-0013-5.
- Pollermann K., Fynn L.L., Schwarze S., 2021. What are favouring conditions for the implementation of innovative projects in community-led local development (CLLD) approaches? In: *Structural change in rural and urban economies* (not paged). Leibniz Informationszentrum Wirtschaft, Kiel.
- Rinaldi F.M., 2016. From local development policies to strategic planning – assessing continuity in institutional coalitions. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 56: 76–87. DOI 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2016.03.008.
- Rivera M., Knickel K., María Díaz-Puente J., Afonso A., 2019. The role of social capital in agricultural and rural development: Lessons learnt from case studies in seven countries. *Sociologia Ruralis* 59: 66–91. DOI 10.1111/soru.12218.
- Rodríguez M., Sanchez L.M., Cejudo E., Camacho J.A., 2019. Variety in local development strategies and employment: LEADER programme in Andalusia. *Agricultural Economics – Czech* 65: 43–50. DOI 10.17221/106-2018-AGRICECON.
- Servillo L., 2019. Tailored polities in the shadow of the state’s hierarchy. The CLLD implementation and a future research agenda. *European Planning Studies* 27(4): 678–698. DOI 10.1080/09654313.2019.1569595.
- Szmytkie R., Tomczak P., 2017. Revival of rural settlements in Kłodzko land. *Geographia Polonica* 90(3): 319–333. DOI 10.7163/GPol.0097.
- Vaishar A., Šťastná M., 2021. Accessibility of services in rural areas: Southern Moravia case study. *Sustainability* 13: 9103. DOI 10.3390/su13169103.
- Vaishar A., Vidovićová L., Figueiredo E., 2018. Quality of rural life. Editorial. *European Countryside* 10(2): 180–190. DOI 10.2478/euco-2018-0011.
- Wiskermann E., 1938. *Czechs and Germans. A study of the struggle in the historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia*. Oxford University Press, London.
- Woods M., 2010. *Rural* (1st ed.). Routledge, London: 352. DOI 10.4324/9780203844304.
- Wosiek M., 2020. Rural-urban divide in human capital in Poland after 1988. *Oeconomia Copernicana* 11(1): 183–201. DOI 10.24136/oc.2020.008.
- Zasada I., Weltin M., Reutter M., Verburg P.H., Pierr A., 2018. EU’s rural development policy at the regional level – Are expenditures for natural capital linked with territorial needs? *Land Use Policy* 77: 344–353. DOI 10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.05.053.