

GEOGRAPHY OF THE CZECH BORDERLAND

ANTONIN VAISHAR – JANA ZAPLETALOVÁ

Introduction

Borders between countries of the whole world have a length of about a quarter of a million kilometres. In the recent past, geographers most frequently dealt with the borderland with an aim to delimit the line of state borders with respect to facts given by natural, ethnic, economic or political conditions. This concept of the issue of borders reflected the ideology of national states. In spite of the fact that the idea starts to be anachronistic, ethnic wars were conducted even in Europe (Balkan) in the very recent past. Nevertheless, not even there are the efforts focused on the delimitation of borders any longer.

The issue of state borders was explored as a barrier limiting national markets, the free movement of persons and goods, and a periphery where the explored world ends. Works were investigating, for example, border permeability through individual border-crossings and the distribution of foreigners behind the crossings, possibly the transport conditions of state border permeability (*Marada, 2003; Halás – Řehák, 2008*). It was practically unimaginable at the time of iron curtain to include into a study territories behind the state border, although there are geographic phenomena that know nothing about them. This particularly concerns natural systems and environmental protection.

Advocates of European integration argue that the preference of the interests of nation-states and the establishment of their borders generated the two world wars in the 20th century. The latest change was the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Some questions are still open – see the problem of Kosovo or Moldavia. Basques raise demands for their separate national state as well, and a possible disintegration of Belgium cannot be excluded. Since its very beginnings, the European Union has struggled to replace international disputes and wars with cooperation.

Represented by the European Union, the Europe of these days tries to give a new meaning to state borders. The iron curtain does not exist any longer, and the majority of European countries entered the Schengen space, European currencies become gradually unified within the Euro, and work is in progress on the creation of common European policy. State borders lose their original sense of separating individual national states, and the borderland increasingly becomes a space for international cooperation. The concept and significance of state borders have dramatically changed, which puts forward a number of questions (*Anderson –*

O'Dowd, 1999). Borderland – at least in Europe –comes to be perceived not as a dividing line but rather as a potential line of bridges and contact points to connect regions (*Newman*, 2006). Europe begins to be talked about as a continent without borders and with general globalization tendencies wiping away the importance of state borders.

On the other hand, borders represent a product of need for order and security and they belong to human life (*O'Dowd*, 2001). This however holds true about borders in a general sense, i.e. borders of administrative units, regions and areas. A question is how much the character of borders between individual national states in Europe will approach the character of regional borders whose sense manifests first of all in space organization, the insurance of administration in the territory and definition of space identity. *Gorzalak* and *Jalowiecki* (2002) warn about considerable economic differences between individual states, which in some cases will not make it possible to do away readily with the existing barriers. However, this particularly concerns the external borders of the European Union. Some authors claim (*Murphy*, 1993) that the current change in the character of state borders also changes the approach to Europe's regional geography as such.

The paper aims at an assessment of the present situation in the Czech borderland, its current problems and their resolution. It was prepared within the framework of the grant project of the National Research Programme II of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic no. 2D06001 "Development interests of borderland regions".

Borderland as a geographic problem

Contemporary geographers mostly perceive the European borderland as a certain peripheral territory, remote from central areas. Subjects of research are as a rule attempts to improve the borderland situation, possibly with the use of EU structural funds. Ever more frequent are also analyses of possible international cooperation – first between borderland towns or agglomerations, namely where the state border is not at the same time a physical barrier. The beginnings of cross-border cooperation date back to the end of the 1950s, to Rhineland. This potential cooperation found a reflection in the establishment of so-called euroregions (*Bufon*, 2007), their idea being transferred into the conditions of post-socialist countries within the framework of EU enlargement. Cross-border cooperation is supported from European financial programmes such as INTERREG. Practical issues of cooperation are studied e.g. by *Perkmann* (1999) and other authors.

It appears, however, that the efficiency of these activities lags behind expectations and often ends with proclamations. Problems are insufficient resources, obscure competences, duplication of efforts, one-sided orientation on physical infra-

structure and hard economic outputs rather than on the creation of social capital and trust. *Wallace* (1999) assumes that Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia became a new buffer zone between the west and the east, a source of cheap (namely Polish) labour force, an attractive place for German and Austrian investments and a space for borderland market places often with faked goods, prostitution, drugs and criminality.

The Czech situation is advantageous by the fact that all borders of the Czech Republic with neighbouring countries are internal borders of the European Union and of the Schengen space. In this respect, the Czech Republic does not have to face problems of outer borders that provide for the compactness of Europe (*Williams*, 2007) and can by contrast theoretically use its borders as a space for cooperation (*Jeřábek*, 2002). Are the conditions for such cooperation optimal?

First, we have to question whether the borderland is actually peripheral or marginal (*Havlíček – Chromý*, 2001). What we mean by peripheral character is remoteness measured by distance, accessibility in time or financial costs to overcome a distance from the national centre or from regional and district centres. Marginality we understand to be primarily backwardness as compared with the central regions of respective hierarchical levels.

While peripherality can be measured by geometric and time indicators, the analysis of marginality is more complicated. It may concern for example the lack of investments, which follows out not only from the remoteness and difficult accessibility but also from the poor advertising of regions, shortcomings in the sphere of human capital and in fact also from the subjective point of view because firm managers and their dependants are not interested in living on the periphery.

A relatively considerable complex of indicators concerning marginality may relate to the quality of human capital that can be measured for example by the level of education. The structure of available jobs, based mainly on manufacturing industries and services of the hierarchically lowest character does not allow to keep persons with higher qualifications in borderland regions, which in turn puts limitations on new investments and situation improvement. This is how the emerging abnormality further deepens.

Another question can be formulated as follows: is it possible under the conditions of the Schengen space to compensate for remoteness on a national scale by international cooperation with regional centres of the neighbouring country and to gradually fight marginality this way? What role can euroregions play? Apart from physical preconditions (closeness of regional centres to the neighbouring country), it is also necessary to take into consideration subjective factors, too. The hitherto experience (*Krätke*, 1999) suggests that time for the economic cooperation of business entities directly on the border has not ripened yet. This of course does not mean that cooperation should not be developed in other fields and directions. Suc-

cessfully developing today is cooperation between self-governments (*Breuer et al. 2007*).

In a geographic respect, a very relevant question is that of perceiving the cross-border regions as a whole. *Ladysz (2006)* analyzed the issue of economic restructuring and environment problems of the so-called Black Triangle on the borders of Bohemia, Saxony and Poland. The issue of environment and its protection, which knows nothing about borders, is particularly useful for research of this type. Another example may be the prospect of economic cooperation in the Alpine-Adriatic region that opened after the accession of Slovenia in the European Union, and which *Ziener and Hössl (2007)* studied through controlled interviews with the cooperating partners. Yet another possibility is, for example, regional research in the territorial parts of euroregions (*Gorzym-Wilkowski, 2005* or *Vaishar et al. 2007*).

In Czech geography, theoretical problems of borderland in modern history were studied e.g. by *Dokoupil (2000)*. *Jeřábek et al. (2004)* published a crucial modern work dealing with the Czech borderland. Part of this work is borderland typology.

Excursion into history

The situation will be better understood if we make a short excursion into history. The existing border was more or less stabilized towards the end of the 10th century.¹ A considerably extensive part of the state border is formed by a barrier of mountain ranges, namely in Bohemia. Moravia is a traditional transit area, open to the north and the south but demarcated topographically in the east and in the west.

It is logical that the historical colonisation of Bohemia and Moravia started from lowlands in the watersheds of main watercourses with favourable conditions for agriculture and only later continued to uplands and highlands. In the 13th century, Czech monarchs (beginning with Premyslid Ottakar I) tried to colonise mountain regions of which some were border regions, too. A number of immigrants (peasants and miners) arrived from neighbouring German-speaking countries. These people successfully colonized vast borderland areas, developing there not only agriculture but also mineral extraction and later industries. Co-existence with Czechs was usually free of problems, namely in the 15th and 16th centuries when the Czech Lands were considered the most tolerant in terms of religion and ethnicity. Impetus for bringing Czech and Germans closer together provided also

¹In the course of history, there were also other territories that temporarily belonged to the Czech state (Lusatia, Kladsko, Malopolsko), which are however not considered to be the core of the Czech Republic. The Cheb area (Chebsko) was annexed in 1322 as the last territory. Exception are some small territories annexed to the then Czechoslovakia after World War I, especially with respect to existing railways (Těšín area, Valtice).

the theory of Martin Luther who was to a certain extent a follower of Jan Hus in his effort to reform the Church. A negative turnover that was however motivated first by religious reasons occurred under the reign of the Hapsburg dynasty.

In the period of industrial revolution, which brought emphasis on the idea of national states, contradictions in the then Austria–Hungary changed into national disputes. One of such contradictions was between the governing conservative and Catholic Church oriented Austrian Germans and the economically progressive Czechs who were however rather indifferent in terms of religion. In spite of the fact that the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) was the most democratic country in Central Europe, most tolerant to ethnical groups and religions, it failed to resolve satisfactorily problems accumulated in the past. Moreover, the German-colonised borderland began to show the recession of traditional industries and hence economic decline. This culminated in events leading to the Munich Agreement in 1938, its consequences in the form of starting World War II by Hitler, and to the subsequent evacuation of a greater part of German population from the then Czechoslovakia.

The German population was replaced by new settlers from the inland, repatriates from some European countries (Hungary, Romania, Volhynian Czechs and other), later also from Greece.² Some inhabitants were sent to the borderland under pressure. It was impossible to substitute for the original population's amount and quality in the borderland, nor was there interest either (perhaps with the exception of larger towns). The borderland was to become a buffer zone with a lower population density. The population's social structure was modified so that a repeated coming into existence of the middle class in the borderland was prevented (Nosková, 2008). The great experiment reflected in the whole post-war development of the borderland, which exhibits other demographic and social values as compared with the inland and different regional and local perception. It seems that the relation of people to their regions and domiciles changes in a positive way only with the contemporary generation because any tradition of cross-border relations became extinct due to population exchange and iron curtain as well as due to difficult permeability of borders with the former socialist countries (German Democratic Republic and Poland).

Due to the above described historical development, humanities and social scientists do not identify borderland with the territory adjacent to the state border but rather with the territory from which the German population was evacuated. The territory reaches at some places relatively deep into the inland (e.g. in the Svitavy area). On the other hand, the Slovak border is not considered to be borderland in this respect. This “new” state border is in fact historically stable similarly as the

²It should be added that the population of today's western Poland was evacuated in a similar way, which means that a greater part of the Czech–Polish border experienced population exchange on both sides of the border.

border between the Czech state and Hungary, constituting an inland border only in 1918–1938 and 1945–1993.

Basic characteristics of the Czech borderland

State borders can be characterised as an empirical manifestation of state authority in the territory (Paasi, 1999). The Czech Republic neighbours with Poland (762 km), Austria (466 km), Slovakia (252 km) and Germany (810 km). For historical reasons we divide the German border into Bavarian and Saxon sections. The respective border sections have a relatively significant effect on the character of the border. Borderland can be defined as a territory, objectively and subjectively affected by the state border. The application of this definition would itself call for detailed research. Therefore, we tried to define the borderland in the simplest possible way with the corresponding geographical logic.

We based our study on the conviction that relevant territorial units for the research of social type are regions of the town-hinterland type. For data-related reasons, the smallest territorial unit used for these purposes is the district, for which an important part of available data can be aggregated. A problem is, however, that districts (that were in the past regime conceived as units within the framework of which attempts were made to equalise conditions) are mutually more alike than differences inside the districts – between their centres and peripheries. This is why the attempts at characterizing the borderland by means of district-level data did not show too many differences.

Due to these reasons, we used microregions as a basis for our study, by means of which we intended to characterise the actual borderland. Concrete data were provided by government authorities. Regarding the excessively fragmented structure of self-governing municipalities in the Czech Republic, it was necessary to carry out the territorial integration of state administration. Selected municipal (largely town) authorities were accredited to perform some acts of state administration for surrounding municipalities as a service because there is no relation of superiority and subordination between the accredited authorities and authorities for which these accredited bodies execute some acts of state administration. Nevertheless, watershed areas were created of the town-hinterland type, several in each district, which could be adopted as territorial units for our analysis – altogether 110 units.

Although these territorial units capture the situation better than districts, not even they are ideal. Their size differs in dependence on the strength of the centre and character of its hinterland. The areas are in some cases adjacent to the border, sometimes perpendicular to it, which means that they may include both villages situated right on the border and settlements relatively deep in the inland. The differences between centres and their hinterlands exist as a rule even there, although

at a lower level. The problem will be resolved only at a detailed look upon the chosen microregions.

As suggested above, the Czech borderland differs among other things also by the type of state border with respect to both historical development and currently existing relations. The Bavarian and Austrian borders were part of the iron curtain while the Saxon and Polish borders represented an internal boundary of the so-called socialist block. The Slovak border was an inland boundary (from 1968 a federal border). Today, the Bavarian border is considered an axis of development that brings innovations. The Slovak border is the only one where the post-war exchange of population did not take place. Linguistically different are the Austrian, Bavarian and Saxon borders; linguistically similar are the Slovak and Polish borders. Most state borders represent a physical barrier; the only exceptions are the Moravian-Silesian parts of the Polish and a part of the Austrian borders. All the above given facts reflect in the borderland character. All these borders constitute an inner boundary of the European Union and Schengen Space. However, because the Czech Republic still has not adopted the Euro, all these borders are at the same time the currency borders.

Nevertheless, the borderland character differs not only in the character of the state border but especially by the character of settlement and by the economic base. *Hampel* (2000) mentions the key factors of differentiation being macro-location and economic specialisation. There are primarily two areas in the borderland, which developed from heavy industries based on coal mining: the north-eastern borderland (Ostrava-Karviná coal mining region) and the north-western borderland (the belt below the Krušné Hory Mts. [Erzgebirge]). These areas are relatively urbanised but struggle with problems of economic restructuring, poor environmental image and relatively high unemployment.

Other borderlands can be generally denoted as rural although even there are some towns of medium size in south-eastern Moravia (Hodonín, Břeclav) or in north-eastern Bohemia (Náchod, Trutnov). An important difference is, however, that south-eastern Moravia is a lowland region with formerly booming agriculture and with the corresponding structure of large rural villages and small towns. By contrast, the other borderlands are mainly of mountainous character. In the north, there are areas with the traditional textile, glass, woodworking and engineering industries and a relatively dense pattern of small towns. The Bavarian borderland and the western part of the Austrian borderland can be characterized by small and very small settlements declining already since the end of the 19th century. The evacuation of the German population precipitated and accentuated the process.

It is therefore a legitimate question whether we can discuss general problems of the borderland when the individual borderland sections are so different. In our opinion, the borderland of the Czech Republic also has a number of identical features and therefore we proceed to the following analysis of basic problems.

Identification of basic problems and ways for their solution

Prior to the identification of the main problem, there were hypotheses based both on national and foreign literature and on our own experience. The hypotheses are as follows:

- The borderland – namely its rural part – is jeopardized demographically. People leave for work to town centres and central areas of the country. The remaining population is ageing.
- Due to the reluctance of developers to invest into growth, the borderland suffers from the lack of job opportunities and hence features high unemployment. The structure of diminishing jobs is unfavourable with a high proportion of endangered manufacturing industries.
- With respect to the specific historical development, the population's qualification structure in the borderland is of lower quality, which may be a limiting factor in future development.
- Borderland infrastructure, namely its social part, is poor and provides for neither future economic nor demographic growth.
- Regarding the physical and geographical conditions, a considerable portion of the borderland is an active area of nature conservation and tourism. Nature qualities paradoxically profited from the presence of the iron curtain.
- Remoteness can be only to a limited extent be compensated for by cross-border cooperation. Apart from the historical, psychological, linguistic or currency barriers, most borders are constituted by the natural barriers of mountain ridges or rivers. Euroregions and other associations primarily serve to raise funds from the European Union – not to establish cooperation.

We tried to verify the above hypotheses empirically based on existing data (Vaishar – Dvořák – Nováková – Zapletalová, 2008). Fifty percent of border microregions actually lose population while in about ten percent of them the situation is more or less stagnant. Nevertheless, nearly 40% of microregions increase their number of inhabitants; thus, it would be difficult to generalise the phenomenon. Moreover, the share of inhabitants living in the borderland increased between the censuses in 1991 and 2001 from 24.1% to 24.8%.

Of 1038 borderland municipalities with a population less than 2 thousand persons, 626 recorded a population increase, 386 recorded a population decrease in 2002–2006; in other cases the total balance was zero. Among 229 municipalities with population less than 200 inhabitants, which are hypothetically most endangered by depopulation tendencies, we found a population increase in 109 cases and a population loss in the same number of municipalities. Towns in the borderland recorded a population decrease in nearly all cases. This shows that an effect

stronger than border location is that of suburbanisation and counterurbanisation tendencies.

In spite of the fact that the first half of the first decade of the 21st century was affected by the entrance of strong population cohorts into the process of reproduction in consequence of the post-war baby boom in the 1970s and at the present time, the first of the hypotheses cannot be considered corroborated.

Similar to other European countries, the Czech population is ageing. As to the share of persons at pre-productive (1–14 years) and post-productive (66 and more) age, the situation in 85 % of borderland regions is better than the national average. This can be interpreted so that ageing is, relatively speaking, not a problem of the Czech borderland yet. We can assume that the situation results from the post-war population exchange in a greater part of the borderland as well as from the industrialisation accompanied by mass immigration into industrial microregions in northwestern Bohemia and in the Ostrava agglomeration. Thus, a young age structure came to existence that has a tendency to reproduce.

The Czech borderland is definitely an attractive place sought by large developers. This may however not hold true at all times for a number of small and medium-sized companies from Bavaria or Austria. Natural persons may like to have their personal investment on the Czech side of the border, too – for example in housing or recreational facilities. Unemployment in the Czech borderland is definitely higher than the national average; but it is markedly differentiated. The highest unemployment does not show only in remote microregions but primarily also in the basins of northwestern Bohemia and in the Ostrava agglomeration. Those combine with several least developed microregions with weak centres. On the other hand, unemployment in about 40 % of microregions is lower than the national average and even lower than in many important centres. Thus it seems that the rate of unemployment is still more an issue of economic restructuring than remoteness.

The proportion of persons over 15 years of age with the tertiary education is in all 110 borderland microregions below the national average. This shows that qualification is an actual and limiting factor in developing the Czech borderland. The orientation of employment on traditional manufacturing industries with a minimum of progressive technologies corresponds to this low qualification. Although economic activities move from manufacturing to non-manufacturing branches in the borderland, too, the process is much slower than in the inland.

The situation has a number of important consequences. With the existing qualification structure and general cultural standard of population, it is difficult to labour for the localization of more progressive industrial branches including services of higher order. The factor may be limiting also for the development of cross-border cooperation because people with lower standards of qualification and poor knowledge of history and languages are simply not prepared enough to communicate with their neighbours.

The cultural standards of the borderland reflect in its image and perception on the part of residents and visitors. In general, the borderland is often perceived as a territory inhabited mainly by Germans before World War II, who were later evacuated and replaced mostly by Slavonic nationals. It further implies that the borderland with Slovakia is not as a rule taken for true borderland. Inhabitants of the borderland themselves did not feel at home in this territory in several post-war generations and no relation developed in them to soil, village, or region. It should be pointed out that the relation to soil could not have developed due to early collectivisation of agriculture. The inhabitants in the borderland show even different electoral preferences as compared with the inland population (*Daněk, 2000*).

On the one hand, the localisation of social infrastructure facilities is a function of the size of centres and their watershed areas, and on the other hand, it is also an issue of historical traditions and the attractiveness of microregions. It follows that we find fewer schools, hospitals and cultural facilities of higher order in the borderland than in the inland. About a quarter of microregions lack even any basic educational, health care or social facilities. The concerned microregions usually have centres with less than three thousand inhabitants. Above-average amenities can be found in this sense only in spa resorts.

A great part of borderland areas in the Czech Republic is of piedmont and mountainous character with only a few exceptions. In these areas, a considerable number of national parks, protected landscape areas, nature reserves, biosphere reserves and areas of Natura 2000 are situated. The preservation of valuable landscape segments is one of consequences of the government's economic policy in these territories in 1948–1989. Although the preserved natural values in the territory are good prerequisites for nature conservation, development of tourism and various sports activities, conservation often becomes a limiting factor to the economic growth of these regions.

A certain degree of nature conservation is usually on the other side of the border, too. Due to this reason, nature conservation appears at present one of the most progressive elements of cross-border cooperation (Krkonošský Národní Park and Karkonoski Park Narodowy, Protected Landscape Area of White Carpathians – PLA Bílé Karpaty/Biele Karpaty, PLA Beskydy/PLA Kysuce and PLA Horná Orava/ Park krajobrazowy Żiwiecki, Park krajobrazowy Beskidu Śląskiego, Beskidu Malego and Babiogórski park narodowy (national park), Šumava National Park and the Protected Landscape Area Šumava/Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald, National Park Podyjí/Nationalpark Thayatal, National Park Bohemian Switzerland/Sächsische Landesschiftung Natur und Umwelt). The aim of cooperation in this field is the conservation of natural assets on both sides of the border, the demarcation of individual conservation zones, the regulation of visitor numbers, the coordination of border permeability etc.

One of the official guarantors of cross-border cooperation are euroregional associations. Euroregions conjoin legal entities (towns, municipalities, regional authorities and other legal persons) into associations purposefully focused in their programmes especially on cooperation exceeding the Czech state border with similar legal entities in the border regions of neighbouring countries. Their functioning depends on the common interests of associated municipalities and their inhabitants on the Czech side of the euroregion as well as on the common interests of partners on both sides of the border. *Popescu* (2008) calls the process of establishing euroregions “reterritorialisation of Europe”.

Practically all municipalities in the Czech borderland are members of some of thirteen euroregional associations that were gradually established in the Czech Republic from 1991. Euroregions in the Czech Republic occupy ca. 66% of the country's territory, some of them reaching deep into the inland. This is why we cannot speak of all municipalities – members of euroregions being interested in the cross-border cooperation. In spite of the fact that the euroregional associations have been functioning for over 15 years, cross-border cooperation is still at its very beginnings. According to *Grix* and *Houžvička* (2002), the main barriers to the development of cooperation are three: language, mentality and economic disparity.

The generally declared areas of cooperation in euroregions can be summarized as follows: cooperation in land-use planning, the conservation and enhancement of the environment, the improvement of living standard, the development and enhancement of infrastructure overlapping the borders, the development of collaboration in fire-fighting and after natural disasters, the development of tourism and culture, and the improvement of interpersonal relations. In general, we can say that best developing is cooperation in the prevention and settlement of losses after natural disasters, in the sphere of conservation, joint advertising of the territory in tourism, learning the culture of neighbouring regions. Collaboration is also frequent in the development and enhancement of infrastructure. Projects focused on infrastructure and on the improvement of interpersonal relations are most successful in winning resources from EU funds.

Discussion and conclusion

There are several conclusions following from the above facts. The marginality of borderland can be seen primarily in the lower qualification and hence in a generally lower cultural standard, which correlates with poor social infrastructure. On the other hand, depopulation, ageing and unemployment do not represent in these days a problem of the borderland as a whole, but rather a problem in some borderland sections. The borderland struggles especially with the problems of economic restructuring from mining and heavy industries into the tertiary sector, which also

applies to borderland sections with non-existing distinct centres. Expressed in a simplified way, we can say that problems can be seen on both poles of residential structure: in the largest towns and the most densely populated borderland parts as well as in microregions with the lowest population density and very small centres. It seems that medium-sized settlements enjoy the most optimistic prognosis.

The future development may bring several changes. The demographic potential facilitated by population exchange after World War II will gradually become depleted. Production basis, which is (apart from spas and some other few activities) focused as a rule on traditional manufacturing industries accommodated to the existing qualification standard of labour force, may decline. In that case, attention should be focused on overcoming barriers in the use of a greater part of the territory for tourism.

As to a possible use of cross-border cooperation for development, this comes into consideration only in some borderland sections. Physical barriers are vague particularly in the eastern part of the border with Poland, in the territory of historical Silesia. The issue of the further development in the Ostrava – Katowice space, which offers itself for linking up with the historical identity and establishing multi-ethnic corporations, becomes topical (*Kłosowski – Prokop – Runge, 2004*). However, both prospective partners struggle with the problems of restructuring so far. Other sections of the Silesian border as well as the eastern part of the Czech–Austrian border are well permeable in terms of physical and geographic conditions, too. The reason for not seeing any more important collaboration is probably due to the fact that both parts of the border are distinctly marginal on their national scales.

Certain signs of development can be observed in the Cheb region and in some other sections of the northwestern borderland. As compared with Saxony, the border is an expressive natural barrier (although the Vejprty area is already situated behind the main ridge of the Krušné hory Mts [Ergebirge] and opens into Germany). Essential is the space opening along the Ohře River, i.e. to Bavaria, though. The Czech-Bavarian border represents a certain developmental line (in both the positive and negative sense). The situation is further aided by the fact that exactly within this space, the triangle of the world-famous spas Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně occurs on the Czech side, of which the last mentioned town is situated only several kilometers from both Saxon and Bavarian borders.

The future development of Czech borderland ought to be monitored with respect to the ongoing processes of urbanization (suburbanisation, counterurbanisation), to the change of border character, the movement of labour force from manufacturing to non-manufacturing branches of economy, to the increasing significance of leisure-time activities, amenity migration etc. In this respect, a number of negative prognoses can be elaborated (the deterioration of the economic and demographic situation, deepening of marginality) and make their correction by using

positive prognoses (the development of cross-border cooperation, enhanced use of nature attractions in borderland areas).

References

- Anderson, J. – O’Dowd, L. 1999: Borders, border regions and territoriality: contradictory meanings, changing significance. *Regional Studies*. 7. pp. 593–604.
- Breuer, T. – Hoffarth, M. – Kolejka, J. – Werner, E. 2007: Perspektiven grenzüberschreitenden Dorferwicklung beiderseits der deutsch-tschechischen Grenze. *Geographische Rundschau*. 6. pp. 50–57.
- Bufon, M. 2007: Border regions in a re-integrated Europe. *Moravian Geographical Reports*. 1. pp. 2–12.
- Daněk, P. 2000: Does exist a political culture of the Czech borderland? *Geografie – Sborník České Geografické Společnosti*. 1. pp. 50–62.
- Dokoupil, J. 2000: Theoretical approaches to the problems of borderland with application on the Czech – Bavarian space. *Geografie – Sborník České Geografické Společnosti*. 1. pp. 10–18.
- Gorzela, G. – Jałowicki, B. 2002: European boundaries: Unity or division of the continent? *Regional Studies*. 4. pp. 409–419.
- Goźym-Wilkowski, W. A. 2005: Region transgraniczny na tle podstawowych pojęć geograficznych – próba syntezy. *Przegląd Geograficzny*. 2. pp. 235–252.
- Grix, J. – Houžvička, V. 2002: Cross-border cooperation in theory and practice the case of Czech – German borderland. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Geographica*. 1. pp. 61–77.
- Halás, M. – Řehák, S. 2008: Contribution to the „anatomy“ of the common frontier area of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. *Geografický Časopis*. 3. pp. 279–298.
- Hampl, M. (2000): Border regions in the Czech Republic: contemporary tendencies of development differentiation. *Geografie*. 3. 241–254.
- Havlíček, T. – Chromý, P. 2001: Contribution to the theory of polarized development of a territory, with a special attention paid to peripheral regions. *Geografie*. 1. pp. 1–11.
- Jeřábek, M. 2002: Cross-border cooperation and development in Czech borderland. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Geographica*. 1. pp. 45–60.
- Jeřábek, M. – Dokoupil, J. – Havlíček, T. et al. 2004: *České pohraničí – bariéra nebo prostor zprostředkování?* Praha, Academia.
- Kłosowski, F. – Prokop, R. – Runge, J. 2004: Territorial socio-economic system of borderland in the Silesian region and Moravian-Silesian region and strategies of its development in the period of political and economic transformation. *Moravian Geographical Reports*. 2. pp. 35–45.
- Krätke, S. 1999: Regional integration or fragmentation? The German-Polish border region in a new Europe. *Regional Studies*. 7. pp. 631–641.
- Ladysz, J. 2006: Chosen aspects of sustainable development on the Polish, Czech and German borderland. *GeoJournal*. 1. pp. 1–7.
- Marada, M. 2003: Transport infrastructure of the centres in the Czech borderland. *Geografie – Sborník České Geografické Společnosti*. 2. pp. 130–145.
- Murphy, A.B. 1993: Emerging regional linkages within the European Community: challenging the dominance of the state. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*. 2. pp. 103–118.
- Newman, D. 2006: The lines that continue to separate us: borders in our “borderless” word. *Progress in Human Geography*. 2. pp. 143–161.
- Nosková, H. 2008: Proměny českého pohraničí v letech 1945 – 1950. In: Vajdová, Z. (ed.): *Aktéři rozvoje regionu – Orlicko. Sociologické studie*. Praha: Sociologický ústav AV ČR. pp. 14–28.

- O'Dowd, L. 2001: Analysing Europe's borders. *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin* Summer. pp. 67–79.
- Paasi, A. 1999: Boundaries as social practice and discourse: the Finnish-Russian border. *Regional Studies*. 7. pp. 669–680.
- Perkmann, M. 1999: Building governance institutions across European borders. *Regional Studies*. 7. pp. 657–667.
- Popescu, G. 2008: The conflicting logics of cross-border reterritorialization: Geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe. *Political Geography*. 4. pp. 418–438.
- Vaishar, A. – Cetkovský, S. – Martinát, S. – Nosková, H. – Zapletalová, J. 2007: Cross-Border Region Králiky Miedzylesie. *Moravian Geographical Reports*. 2. pp. 40–54.
- Vaishar, A.– Dvořák, P. – Nováková, E. – Zapletalová, J. 2008: Settlement problems in the Czech borderland. *Geografický 2Casopis*. 3. pp. 241–253.
- Wallace, C. 1999: Crossing borders: mobility of goods, capital and people in the central European region. In: Brah, A. – Hickman, M. J. – Mac an Ghail, M. (eds.): *Global futures: migrations, environment and globalization*. London, Macmillan. pp. 185–209.
- Williams, M. B. 2007: On Europe's Edge: Changing borders in Central and Eastern Europe. *Contemporary Studies in Economic and Financial Analysis*. 89. pp. 137–171.
- Ziener, K. – Hössl, P. 2007: *Grenzüberschreitende Wirtschaftskooperation zwischen Kärnten, Slowenien und Friaul-Julisch Venetien*. Klagenfurt, Drava Verlag.