

Landscape types and regional identity – by example of case study in Northwest Bohemia

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship of the inhabitants of socially and geographically distinct areas (regions) of Czechia and their relation to regional identity. That is understood as identifying oneself with the region where the inhabitants live, however, we also examine the relationship to hierarchically differing territorial levels.

The research was conducted at a regional level, by means of a questionnaire survey, demographic and sociological analyses. Four regions are defined in the study, according to the nature of their environment (devastated, recreational, suburban, and landscape types). The study monitored the population's identification with a region, or regions of higher orders (NUTS, Czechia, EU, etc.).

It was found that the type of landscape has an important role for regional identity, together with some other socio-economic and cultural aspects of the population. The research results have generally confirmed the hypothesis about the impact of selected variables on regional identity. However, the hypothesis about the impact of the natives has not been fully confirmed. The highest values of the identification with the region have been detected in agricultural and suburban landscapes. The devastated landscape turned out to be the worst. When monitoring the hierarchy, it is possible to see the decrease of identity with a growing scale. Therefore, Europe and the EU ended up being the worst. The research is carried out on the example of Northwest Bohemia – Ústí Region, which represents a significantly differentiated space with different types of landscape.

KEYWORDS

region; regional identity; landscape; population; Northwest Bohemia – Ústí Region

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1. Introduction

Formation of regional identity depends on a whole series of factors. These factors relate to the region where the person lives. The type of landscape can play an important role, together with the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of population in the region. Examples include education, economic activity or religiosity. In this article, the authors focus attention on proving or disproving the existing connection. They want to answer questions such as: Do the rural residents identify with the region more than the residents of urban territories? What negative role does the devastated landscape have? Is regional identity affected by the educational attainment of the population? In the article we deal with hierarchic dimension of regional identity. Our point of interest is whether the urbanized population has a greater sense of belonging to the state or to the European Union than the rural population.

Regional identity is understood as perception of the people in a particular territory or a region with its specific characteristics. For example, it concerns the natural environment and culture in a region that is different from the others (Tuan 1996). For shaping and forming of regional identity, the specific relationships are of great importance, and they strictly have to include identity. This is because the individuals or groups of individuals can understand it well. After that, cultural, national, political, etc. identity can be shaped (Castells 1997).

The personal identity shows their relationship to the surroundings. It has a pluralistic character, this means that it relates to a variety of objects and subjects, for example to individuals, groups, values, manners, cultures, but also to a variety of events, and the physical environment (Kyle et al. 2004). With its own identity a person responds to questions like “what

am I”, “where do I belong”, “who do I differ from”, etc. One of the personal identity components is also regional identity, i.e. the relationship between people and the place they live or lived in (Zich 2003; Paasi 1991, 2009). Regional identity particularly answers the question “where do I belong?” it implies identification with the territory, “putting down roots” in a place, and in the strict meaning “what I consider to be home”. This relationship can take various forms, from a strong relationship demonstrated by intervention to improve the appearance of the territory, to a weak relationship, when individuals find a region to be a place, which does not connect them to their own future, and which they want to leave (Kasala 2006).

In terms of regional identity, the region is a territory, which an individual is identified with. It is obvious that such a region will vary in different people’s minds, and it may not be the same as administratively defined units. According to Zich (2003, p. 22), it is mostly “about the historically formed territorial units characterized by the relative boundaries (perception of national borders), its own history, partly by its specific culture, and last but not least the social composition of the population”. Each of these and other characteristics (economic development, transport accessibility, ecology, landscape type, aesthetic appearance, etc.) can be other partial dimensions of regional identity, or at least they can influence it. The region also has its name, which is used in everyday communication, and it usually does not match with the territory of the administrative units (Semian, Chromý 2014). Zich further mentions two aspects of identification with the territory. Firstly, it is the identification with the physical environment, which is also described as the material base. Secondly, it is the identification with the social environment of the territory. The Research of Walker and Ryan (2008) confirms these facts. They are talking about making

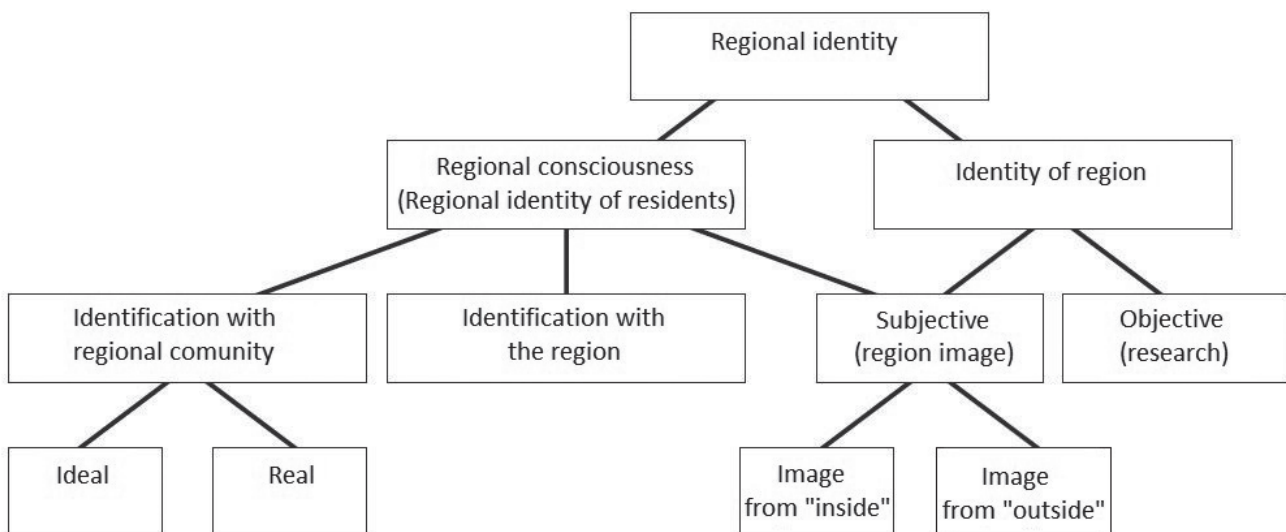


Fig. 1 Regional identity dimension.

Source: By A. Paasi (1986, p. 132)

an attachment to places which could satisfy our needs and life goals. Regional identity also includes the people living in the territory, their ways of life, institutions, organisations, their culture, history, etc. As it is specified further, these two aspects have different levels – from their own residence (microregion) to higher territorial units (macroregions). This idea is not new for geographers, it is referred to as hierarchical levels (or scale), and developmental complexity of systems (Hampl 2000; Lewicka 2011).

Chromý (2003), who applies the theoretical approach of the Finnish regional geographer Anssi Paasi (see Fig. 1), cites Paasi in his work: “We can understand the territorial identity as originality, unity and conformity, and in particular harmony in the behaviour of the population in a territory at a specific moment (time).” Furthermore, he uses the term “identity of the region”, which is the same within the meaning of territorial identity. In general it can be said that this approach to the topic is more objectivistic. There is no longer such an emphasis on the identification of people with the territory. The identification is necessary to be studied with an emphasis on a personal view, but the research focuses on the observable differences from the surrounding regions. That means it is research of what we can be identified with, and how the region has evolved. The key words of Chromý and Paasi’s work include e.g. a symbolic shape of the region (Semian, Chromý, Kučera 2016), and the institutionalisation of the region.

Chromý (2003) developed this theory on the dimension of regional identity, and he also divided identity into a subjective and an objective level. The subjective level includes the opinions of inhabitants and individuals living outside the region, and therefore it is all about regional awareness. The objective level includes structuring on the basis of different scientific disciplines (commuting, physical geography). Each region has its own image, and it is perceived by individuals in their specific way each time, and it is also shaped in different ways. Nevertheless, every region should have its name (Semian 2016), a symbol or a logo of the region (Šifta, Chromý 2017), political power, offices, cultural areas, and other less important specifics (Heřmanová, Chromý et al. 2009).

2. Methodological notes

Current problems with the stability of the population are just one of the consequences of earlier development with a major negative impact on the economic preferences (mining industry, power engineering, and chemistry). Orientation towards heavy industry (as a base for an armoury) at the expense of the commercial sectors has led to an increase in energy requirements. There was a tendency to create a closed sectoral cycle with crosslinks and deliveries (lignite mining, power industry, chemicals, transportation

and capital construction), and significantly autonomous character with a high consumption of resources and devastating effects on the environment (Anděl, Jeřábek, Oršulák 2004). These dynamic changes have resulted in disruption of the continuity of natural development, increase in heterogeneity of the territory, and the disruption of regional identity.

The following types of landscape have been selected: a) agricultural type, where you can theoretically assume a distinct regional identity (or its current strengthening); b) recreational area, intensely influenced by the departure of German-speaking population after World War II (Bičík et al. 2010; Houžvička, Novotný 2007), and by the subsequent lack of settlement (cottages have a significant recreational potential), c) the suburban type on the periphery of a large city, d) devastated (industrial) type, where a significant loss of regional identity took place during the second half of the 20th century (the area of intensive mining of brown coal).

On the basis of a field survey, demographic and social analysis, there were some case studies done for the case study landscape. Those include the evaluation of geographical location, natural potential (geomorphology, hydrological potential, environmental resources), the historical potential (historical memory, regional symbolism, typical landscapes and buildings earlier and now, historical and cultural monuments, etc.), the demographic potential (age index, the percentage of college students, religiosity, the year of maximum number of inhabitants, the population development index 1950/1930, etc.); the socio-economic potential (production tradition, work and business opportunities, unemployment and its development, job mobility, transport accessibility). The case studies also include an interpretation of the questionnaire investigation results. The investigation demonstrated how the region is reflected in the awareness of local residents (for more detail see Anděl, Balej, Raška et al. 2014).

The survey was conducted during the years 2015–2016. For each case study landscape there were 100 completed questionnaires gathered. In addition to the identification questions (age, gender, occupation, university rate, religiosity), the respondents were asked how long they had lived in the region, and which of the territorial units they could most identify with (microregion, Ústí Region, Czechia, European Union, Europe). From a total of 12, some questions involved for example typical elements that symbolize the region, and things that the residents could be proud of (Šifta, Chromý 2014).

3. Case study landscapes

The Ústí Region is situated in Northwest Bohemia. It is characterized by a specific landscape and economic activities related to the natural potential (brown

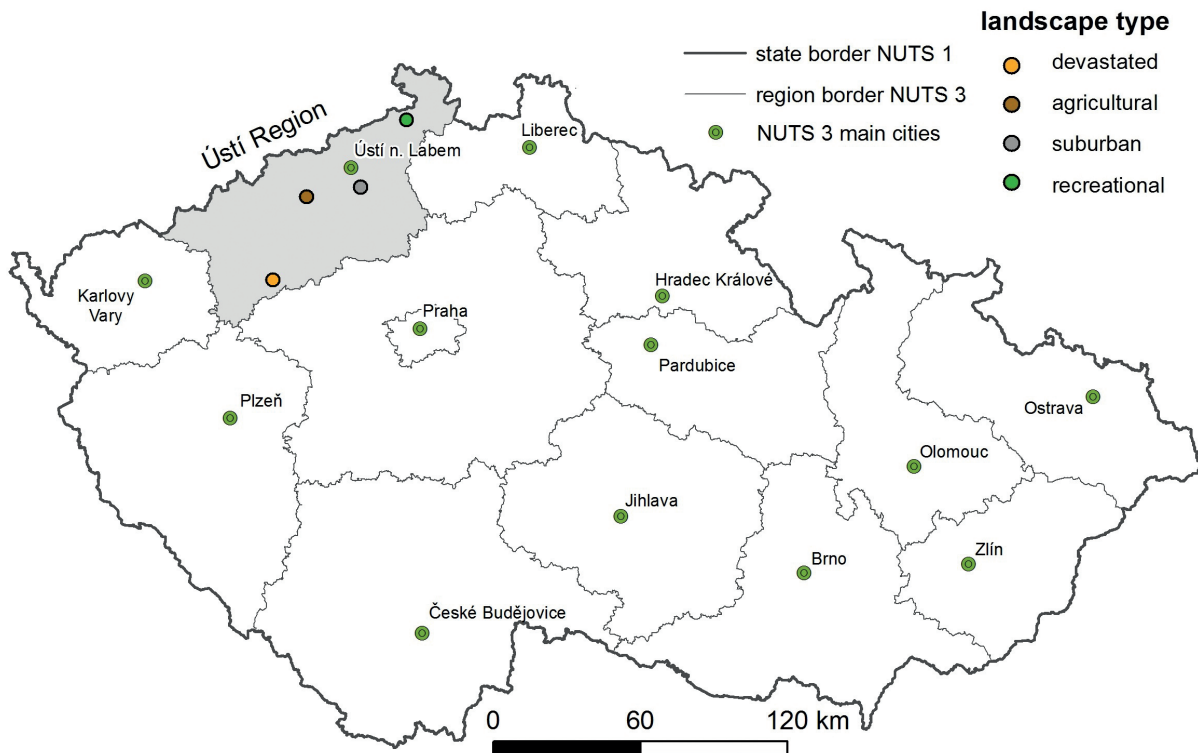


Fig. 2 The researched area in relation to administrative units of Czechia.
 Author: Bobr (2017). Data source: Arc ČR 500. Projection: Albers

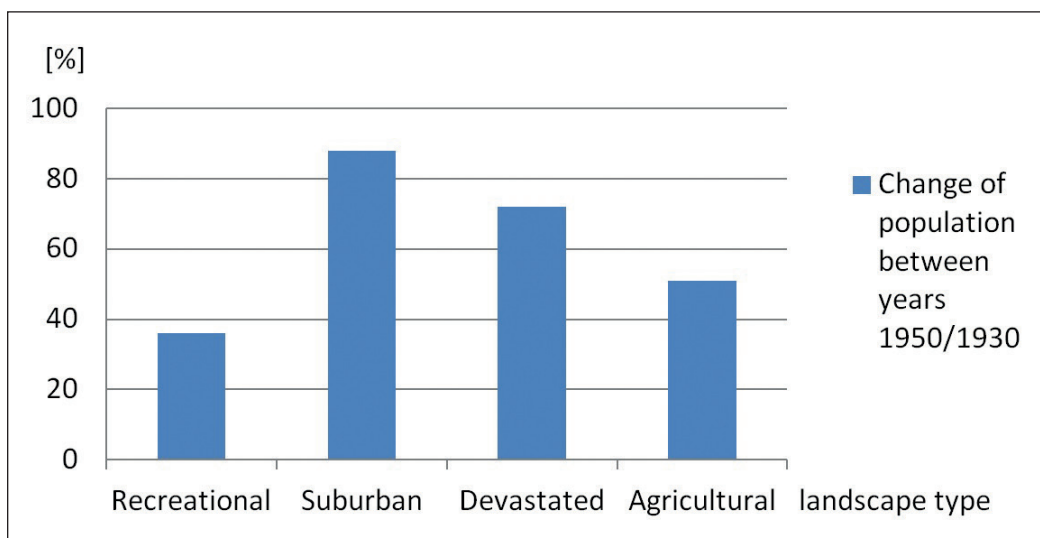


Fig. 3 Landscape types – evolution of population 1950/1930.
 Source: Czech Statistical Office (2006) – Český statistický úřad (2006)

Tab. 1 Landscape types – selected socio-economic characteristics 2011.

Indicator	Landscape type			
	Agricultural	Recreational	Suburban	Devastated
Natives (%)	35	18	25	41
University rate (%)	5	5	9	2
Religiosity (%)	11	8	11	3
Net migration	7	18	3	-2

Source: SLDB (2011)

coal mining, energetic, glass production, etc.). It has differentiated geographic position. Mainly we can see exposed core position of the Labe River. Ore Mountains are considered as peripheral location together with rest of the south-western part of the region (Havlíček, Chromý, Jančák, Marada 2008). A landscape is characterized by different landscape types and extensive protected areas such as national parks or protected landscape areas, which extend over a third of the region area (Kučera, Kučerová-Kuldová, Chromý 2008). From historic point of view, entire territory goes through very turbulent modern development. There was a post-war eviction of the Germans and the following resettlement in the Sudetenland. Resettlement was mostly commenced from the inner parts of Czechia. There was a noticeable disturbance of the environment due to coal mining and the subsequent generation of electricity in thermal power plants during the communist era. Because of this development the region belongs to a parts of Czechia, which had achieved the greatest changes in the landscape between 1948 and 1990.

The nomenclature and the characteristics of all four case study landscapes (see Fig. 2) are based on an expert assessment of the secondary landscape structure – land use (Kolejka 2014; Sklenička 2003; Löw, Míchal 2003). The benchmarking of units has been established to allow comparison with other entities in Czechia or in the world. The key indicators were the number of inhabitants and the predominant function of the territory. To demarcate areas to comparable units, the merged cadastral area was used. In particular, the following regions were included: a) the Saaz region – representative of the agricultural type that has probably held its regional identity during development; b) Jetřichovice region – representative of the recreational type of territory, but with “institutionally attached” landscape within the Protected Landscape Area of Elbe Sandstones, or more precisely Bohemian Switzerland National Park; c) Vaňov region (southern part of Ústí nad Labem, localized along the valley of Labe River – represents the suburban type where the

regional identity development is supposed; d) Bílina region – a representative of the devastated type with a distinct degradation of the landscape, which lost its regional identity during the second half of the 1920s, and where you cannot possibly expect its renaissance. The demarcation is based on merged LAU 2 units and position is shown in Fig. 2. The observed microregions are characterized by their specific features both from the perspective of the landscape with its historical context, and residents with their activities. The conditions of geographical location are different. While the suburban and devastated region occupies the core position (with a good accessibility to the higher centres, and links to the transport network), the other two localities represent a peripheral areas.

Natural potential for the formation of regional identity is ambiguous and significantly differentiated. A common characteristic is a diverse altitude level around 500 m, with the exception of the agricultural region (where the landscape contours are flatter). The land cover is differentiated similarly. While the devastated and the agricultural type have a relatively balanced share of forest areas to arable land, the recreational type is represented by forests 10 times more. The suburban type of landscape has its own specific; the arable land is almost missing (0.2%). The recreational type has the highest natural potential out of all the explored microregions. In particular, it is the territory of Bohemian Switzerland National Park that covers 51% of the territory. The rock cities are distinct geomorphic landmarks here. A specific potential is also represented by Česká Kamenice River and its gorge.

Natural potential is closely related with potential for tourism. This could be also seen from view of the growing share of the tertiary sector in employment of the regions. In the case of the Ústí region (Bína 2010), one can speak of the polarization of the East–West region (highest–lowest). The devastated and agricultural region is in a low-potential area. It is given both by the territory (character) and by the absence of attractiveness (see the methodology according to Bína 2010). The recreational region as

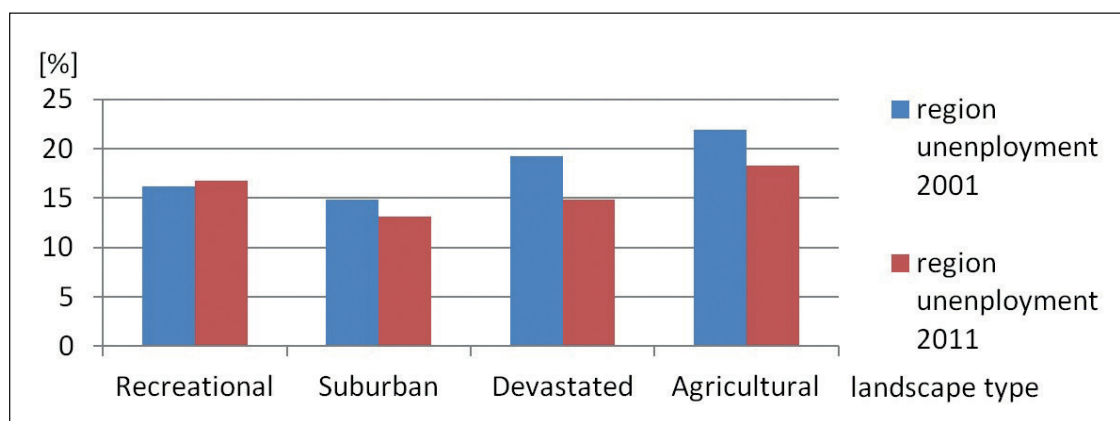


Fig. 4 Landscape types – unemployment 2001 and 2011 (%).

Source: SLDB – Population and Housing Census (2001, 2011)

whole is situated in the average region of Czechia in scope of tourism potential, but it is above average at local levels. It is mainly due to natural attractions. The last suburban region lies in the above-average area, because it combines the presence of cultural attractions along with the natural landscape of the hills situated nearby.

The core areas lost significantly smaller amounts of population – only 12% of the inhabitants lived in the suburban type, and 28% of them in the devastated regions between the years 1930–1950. However, the population was reduced to a third in the peripheral and the recreational region, and to a half in the agricultural region (see Fig. 3). Here, of course, national diversity played a part, at least in the case of the industrial (now heavily devastated) type, where the percentage of Germans was “only” 54%. On the contrary, only one Czech family lived in the suburban type of landscape in 1930.

The low proportion of natives (see Tab. 1), low religiosity and low education work against the formation of the sense of belonging to a region. Low level of natives compounded between the years 2001–2011. Especially in the recreational type it was reduced to a half. The reason is probably high migration related to a very high-quality environment. A particular advantage is the increase of population with a university degree, especially for the suburbanized areas, and the growth of population in peripheral locations thanks to the high migration connected with favourable living conditions. On the contrary, the number of residents is decreasing in the devastated region, where the conditions are very adverse.

The most serious problem, with the exception of the suburbanized region, is high unemployment (see

Fig. 4), exceeding 17% for the agricultural areas. A typical crop for Saaz area is primarily a world-famous variety of hops (Saaz hops). Job mobility of citizens has decreased significantly, which is mainly the result of a strategic plan for the development of the town of Saaz, in which the municipal authorities try to support small businesses. At the same time, the unemployment decreases.

4. Results

The public opinion survey took place during the seminar of students of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, in autumn of 2015 and 2016. It provides quite an integrated collection of information about the opinions of local populations. For each region were collected 100 questionnaires. Due to the size of the regions, gender and educational structure of the respondents, the survey is to be regarded as representative (Tab. 2). The respondents can give relevant indications about the locations because 70% of them have lived here more than 10 years, and they also have an immediate and long-term possibility to perceive individual events in their region (Tab. 3).

The hierarchy of regional identity (see Tab. 4) is aligned with the territory at different hierarchical levels (microregion, NUTS 4, Ústí Region, Czechia, EU, and Europe) in the 4 types of landscape mentioned above. The highest values of regional identity are in the smallest territorial units, i.e. microregions. This is primarily due to the fact that small units are closer to identity than the large ones. It is also demonstrated by the values for the EU, which has a weak regional

Tab. 2 Landscape types – structure of respondents 2013 (%).

Indicator	Landscape type			
	Agricultural	Recreational	Suburban	Devastated
Women (%)	49	52	63	47
Age 25–44 years (%)	22	48	38	29
University rate (%)	5	15	14	6
Natives (%)	36	26	72	46
Working at place of residence (%)	30	38	45	42

Source: Investigation of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem

Tab. 3 Landscape types – length of life in the place of residence 2013 (%).

Indicator	Landscape type			
	Agricultural	Recreational	Suburban	Devastated
Natives (%)	36	26	72	46
Over 10 years citizens	37	41	19	35
Between 2–9 years citizens	22	26	8	12
Between 0–1 years citizens	5	7	1	7

Source: Investigation of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem

Tab. 4 Landscape types – hierarchy of regional identity 2013 (%).

Landscape type	Europe	EU	NUTS 1	NUTS	NUTS 4	MICROREGION
			Czechia	Ústí Region	DISTRICT	
Agricultural	13	1	28	16	14	28
Recreational	13	7	23	18	21	18
Suburban	12	6	21	19	19	23
Devastated	17	8	23	17	13	22

Source: Investigation of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem

identity. In the context of the region, the agricultural landscape has the highest identity, since here there are certain traditions that are held close by the people. It is primarily about the relationship to the land. In contrast, the smallest values of identity are to be found in the devastated landscape, where the residents cannot create regional identity to such an extent. It is also a peripheral area, where there is no such proportion of the indigenous population, the so-called “denizens”. Within the district, the recreational landscape has the highest values, which may be due to the fact that in this type of landscape residents live temporarily, and their identification with the territory is often very strong. These are often the cottagers, who are closely connected with the region (they stay in the building where their ancestors lived). These people can identify with this place, and they feel a part of it (Lewicka 2011; Lokocz et al. 2011). Within the territory of Czechia, the suburban landscape has the highest values of regional identity. This is due to the fact that residents feel the closest to the place of their residence and the surrounding area, which is represented by the urban and suburban zone. On the other hand, the devastated landscape has the smallest values again. Within the EU, as mentioned earlier, regional identity reaches negligible values, but the highest values are in the countryside, where many people from the EU go on holiday. As far as the whole of Europe, the values are very similar, and the differences are very slight.

Identification with the region is significantly differentiated by age of the respondents (see Fig. 5). In the youngest age group, under 24 years, the respondents feel themselves the most to be the inhabitants of Czechia and the Ústí Region, and the least of the European Union. Category 25–44 is fairly balanced, the respondents identify themselves with the European Union the least. Respondents aged 45–64 years feel to belong to the place of residence the most, and the least to the European Union again. A similar situation is in the category of over 65 years, whose members feel to be the citizens of their place of residence; then the case study region, and Czechia. Age structure reflects that older respondents are more accustomed with the area where they live, and they feel to be a part of their residence. The respondents of younger age groups feel more to be a part of larger territorial units, such as Czechia or the Ústí Region.

Figure 6 shows the existence of at least general ideas about connections between the type of landscape and regional identity with the selected variables. The variables included the indicators, which may influence the formation of regional identity (Heřmanová, Chromý et al. 2009; Chromý, Janů 2003). With reference to these studies, we chose the following indicators. As for natural potential, it is assumed that the region with higher potential will have stronger regional identity, similarly to the territory with a higher percentage of natives, university degree holders and the religious. The Influence of natives is confirmed by Walker and Ryan (2008, p. 143) in their paper. They also present a hypothesis that attachment to a place grows with time. For migration, the situation is inconsistent. However, it seems the regions with a positive migration balance could create conditions for stronger regional identity in the territory. The variables were obtained from the data of the population census 2011 (see Tab. 1). The value of the natural potential was established by the five-member expert group on the basis of data from the case studies (see the methodological part).

5. Discussion

Natural potential has an important role in the chosen types of landscape. Where it is significant, there could be seen relatively strong regional identity in the population (Fialová, Chromý, Kučera et al. 2010). Population of devastated lands shows a low degree of identity, according to assumptions.

The largest proportion of natives is situated in agricultural and devastated landscapes, as was assumed. Agricultural landscape is a traditional landscape and especially older generations have lived here for a lifetime, similarly with the devastated region. Another factor that affects a portion of natives is low mobility and education of inhabitants in this region. This could be seen in Tab. 2. Agricultural and devastated regions have less than half of people with university degree compared to the other two studied regions. If the people from these regions wanted to change their living space and move for example to the city, they encountered barriers. These restraints take form of low sale value of their estate or low education. Both of these examples make it harder or impossible for an

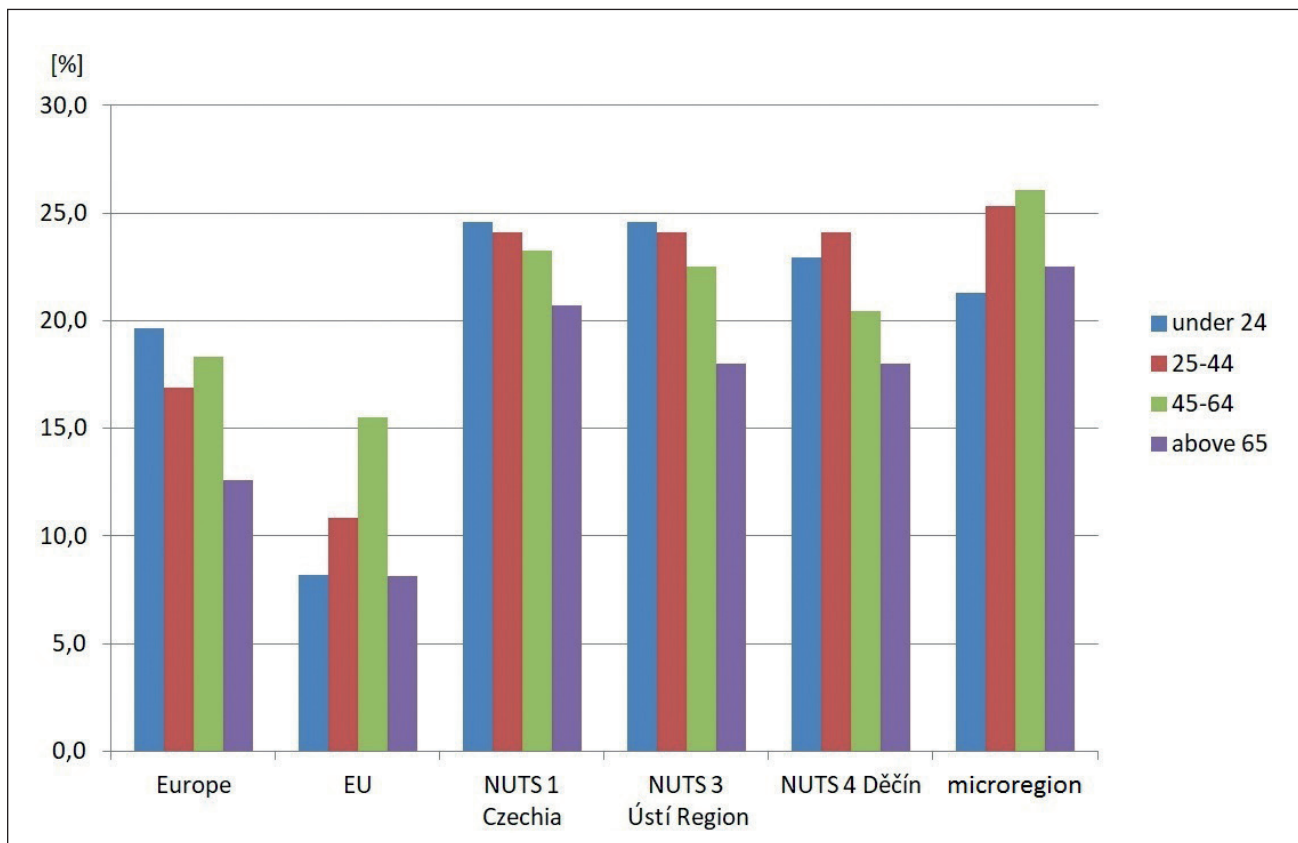


Fig. 5 Landscape types – total number of respondents who expressed a local sentiment according to age groups 2013.

Source: Investigation of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem

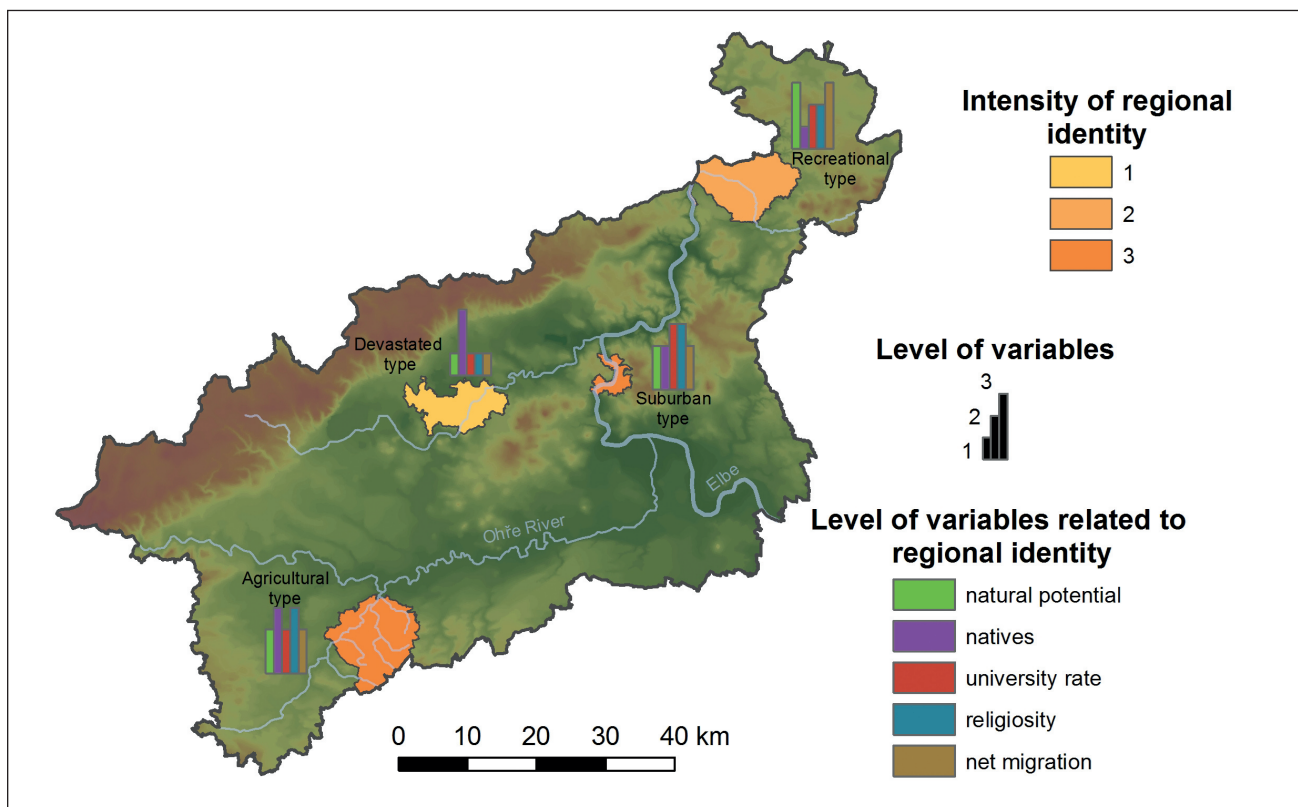


Fig. 6 Landscape types – relation between regional identity and its variables 2013.

Author: Bobr (2017). Data source: Arc ČR 500. Projection: Albers

inhabitant to move to a more perspective area. The smallest values of regional identity are achieved by the recreational landscape, where the people stay predominantly for a temporary period and the local population is only a few of them. We can see the link between the natives' indicator and the regional identity for agricultural landscape, but this does not apply in the case of the devastated landscape. Regional identity has the lowest value here, especially because of the extensive mining areas that have transformed the original landscape and caused the resettlement of the indigenous population in some cases. This disturbed the original social structure – newcomers have no close relationship to the region.

Research showed an important role of the level of education, which is assessed by the proportion of university graduates (Chromý, Semian, Kučera 2014). Population with higher education has a deeper relationship to regional identity. This could be seen in the suburbanised landscape (Fig. 6). In a similar way, religious people have higher relationship to the region. Highest religiosity is in the agricultural and suburban type of landscape where the regional identity is also the highest. Migration balance is manifested mostly in recreational landscapes that attract the inhabitants both with their tourism and natural potential. On the other hand, the lowest migration balance is in devastated region, because there is nothing to pull people to those places. This type of landscape is not very attractive to tourists or new inhabitants and has low natural potential. Suburbanized and agricultural lands have the same mean value, because there are no extremes as in devastated or recreational regions. The nature of the migration balance thus coincides with the natural potential of the territory (closer to Anděl, Balej, Raška et al. 2014).

We found that factors, which work against forming of belonging to the region, are low share of natives, religiosity and education (see Tab. 1). The lowest proportion of natives has been observed at recreational region and deepened between census years 2001–2011. This type reports that natives' population dropped to half. The reason is probably high migration related to a high quality environment. A certain positive development is the increase of the population with university education, especially in the case of the suburbanized type, and the growth of the inhabitants in peripheral areas (see Fig. 7), due to high migration related to favourable living conditions. On the contrary, the populations in the devastated region are declining, because the conditions are very unfavourable.

Figure 4 shows that unemployment is a major issue in the monitored areas. This is due to the previous historical development of the region (Bičík et al. 2010), which has created a structurally affected region (coal mining). Another problem is that our monitored regions (except suburban) are peripheral areas (Musil, Müller 2008). This affects their attractiveness for the inhabitants. It is therefore logical

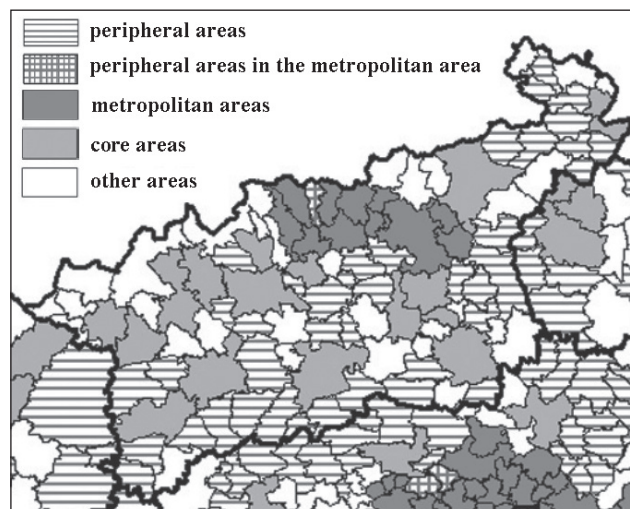


Fig. 7 Peripheral areas in Ústí Region by Musil, Müller 2008.

Source: Bobr (2017) by Musil, Müller (2008)

that the agricultural and devastated regions will be in decline or an area with aging population. The other two regions have better position due to their location and proximity to the larger cities. Most will be evident in the recreational region (see Fig. 6), which is essentially based on migration and natural potential. Without them, it would be an insignificant declining region, because it lacks the base of native population (see Fig. 6).

The fall in unemployment in 2011 (see Fig. 4) can be attributed to continuous transformation, strategic planning, activities of local actors and state / EU subsidy policy. The impacts of the global economic crisis are also reflected in the results as it works against efforts mentioned above.

Figure 5 shows changes in the younger respondents and their bonds with the regions. This shift from a local level to a higher hierarchical unit can be interpreted through greater flexibility of current generation and open state boundaries. The current generation does not have the limited opportunity to travel, work, and the borders are only a formality thanks to foreign policy. This fact contributes to some indecisiveness in the young generation questioning "Where do I belong?". As the people have free opportunity to travel and work around the EU, they have built relationship to larger scale units (see Fig. 5). This relationship develops through age. Older people try to settle down, thus they start to build their bonds to smaller territorial units.

6. Conclusion

The study is concerned with changes in regional identity of inhabitants living in different types of landscapes, and it also tries to connect the observed topics with a wider historical context (change of political regime, joining the European Union). Czechia could

serve as example in studies of people displacement impact due to the events in borderland at the end of World War II. Aftermath of these following events can still be felt to present day. Newcomers have to build relationship to new landscape but the process was broken due the rise of Communist Party regime which began with collectivisation. The onset of capitalism at the end of 80s brings another problem with returning land to individual people. There was the same problem at the end of World War II. When government started returning land to the original owners before collectivisation, many of them were simply too old or dead and their posterity lived in different milieu to take care of returned land. Those events were drawback for people's relationship to those places and reduced their regional identity to almost nothing, if they even bothered to come back. It has been proven that the type of landscape has an important role, as well as some social and economic aspects of people living there. Similar results were obtained for example by Kasala (2006) or Raagmaa (2002).

The highest value of regional identity has been identified in the agricultural and the suburban landscape. This result supports the hypothesis of Brown and Raymond (2007) about the influence of nature in creation of the attachment to a place. They also claim that nature along the studied roads has helped to improve the attachment to a place (Brown, Raymond 2007, p. 108). These case study territories have the highest proportion of religiosity, and the highest, respectively mean proportion values of natives; medium, respectively the highest proportion of undergraduates; and medium intensity of the natural potential and migration balance. The recreational landscape has the mean value of regional identity; it also has a high natural potential and migration balance; medium intensity of undergraduates and religiosity, but a low proportion of natives. This could be caused by repeated visits to that place. Kyle et al. (2004) points out the effect of addiction to a place. He has mentioned, that if we visit a place very often, we could develop stronger attachment to it (positive or negative). The results generally confirm the hypothesis that regional identity depends on the observed variables of landscape potential, education, religiosity, and migratory movements. This hypothesis was not confirmed fully in the context of the share of natives. It shows that a higher proportion of natives may not result in the strengthening of regional identity. The natives don't have to be necessarily perspective for the future of regional development, because they could stay in declining region due to their age or low mobility. In most cases the newcomers are wealthier and younger. They appreciate natural landscape in same way as natives, maybe more because they mostly came from cityscape, where in most cases the natural landscape is not present. There is a higher chance that newcomers will have tendencies to protect and cultivate surrounding landscape (see recreational area).

To start or keep up with area development is important to aim at strong sides of regions. All surveyed locations have advantage of good transport connectivity, which is elemental for current global society. When landscape planning, a negative intervention in nature has to be avoided, because it could lower the attractiveness for free time activity as whole. Recreational areas natural landscape is often the only thing which attracts people to go there.

The analysis of the hierarchy of regional identity provides interesting results. For all types of landscapes, we can say that the relationship to our own region is strong. In the agricultural and suburban landscape, it is the strongest. Then it is the sense of belonging to Czechia. In the recreational landscape, the sense of belonging to the district is stronger than to the region. The devastated landscape has generally the weakest regional identity. In all of the case study territories, the relationship to the EU and Europe, the largest territorial units, is marginal. In the case of the agricultural landscape it is most obvious. This is due to the fact that people are not directly related to these units. They do not have to be concerned with them because they are outside their area of interest, and beyond their everyday needs.

The results further illustrate the fact that the rate of population's feeling of belonging to a region offers the potential for forming a vision for development. This vision should reflect regional specificities, including geographically differentiated relationship to the countryside where people live (Chromý, Semian, Kučera 2014; Walker, Ryan 2008; Lokocz et al. 2011; Gobster et al. 2007). In the longstanding weak or peripheral areas, people also recognize factors other than the economic values of the territory.

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