

TOWN

Small and medium sized towns in their functional territorial context

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Text

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1. National context

The aim of case studies is to provide in-depth insights on the understanding of SMSTs in particular national and regional contexts. Therefore, the case study work pays attention to the specificities of the national and macro-regional settlement system and related governance structures. The focus is primarily at national level because of the national specificities of the administrative definitions and delimitations of cities and towns, local government systems and hence the number, size and spatial extent of municipalities/towns, as well as the structure of the national settlement, urban and regional policies and planning. This work is related to RA1 “literature overview” and is based on a review of literature and official documents.

This part focuses on:

A) National/regional definition of SMSTs - the official definition of cities and towns and SMSTs in particular national context and the meaning of SMSTs in policy and professional discourses (national government policies, professional, academic).

B) SMSTs in national/regional settlement system: literature overview - short overview of national academic and professional works/publications specifically focused on SMSTs and more generally on settlement, urban and regional systems of which SMSTs are part. It summarizes the basic characteristics of national/regional settlement system and its development trends with specific attention given to the position and role of SMSTs.

C) Territorial organization of local government system - short overview of territorial organization of local government system in particular states with the focus on the position of SMSTs in the national system. This part helps to identify and understand the differences between morphology (RA2), functional areas and administrative areas of local governments.

1.1. National definition of SMSTs

The Czech language does not distinguish between town and city and for both is using the term “město”. The basic distinction is between město (city/town) and vesnice (village). There is a specific category of městys, a settlement between town and village with certain roles of market/service place for surrounding rural villages. In the Czech Republic town/city (město) is a municipality which historically obtained the status of town. At present the president Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic after the consent of the Government of the Czech Republic can provide a status of town to a municipality with a population of at least 3000 inhabitants. The country consists of 6,252 municipalities (1.1.2013). Currently (2013) there are 602 towns/cities in the Czech Republic from which 270 have population 5000 and more. Some towns are extremely small. The two smallest municipalities with the administrative statut of town are Přebuz with 87 and Loučná pod Klínovcem with 93 inhabitants. See a full list of towns and statutory towns http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seznam_m%C4%8Desk%C3%BDch_m%C4%9Bst_podle_velikosti. From these towns/cities 26 have special status: the capital city of Prague and 25 so called statutory towns.

Figure 1: Municipalities with the administrative statute of town and statutory towns/cities

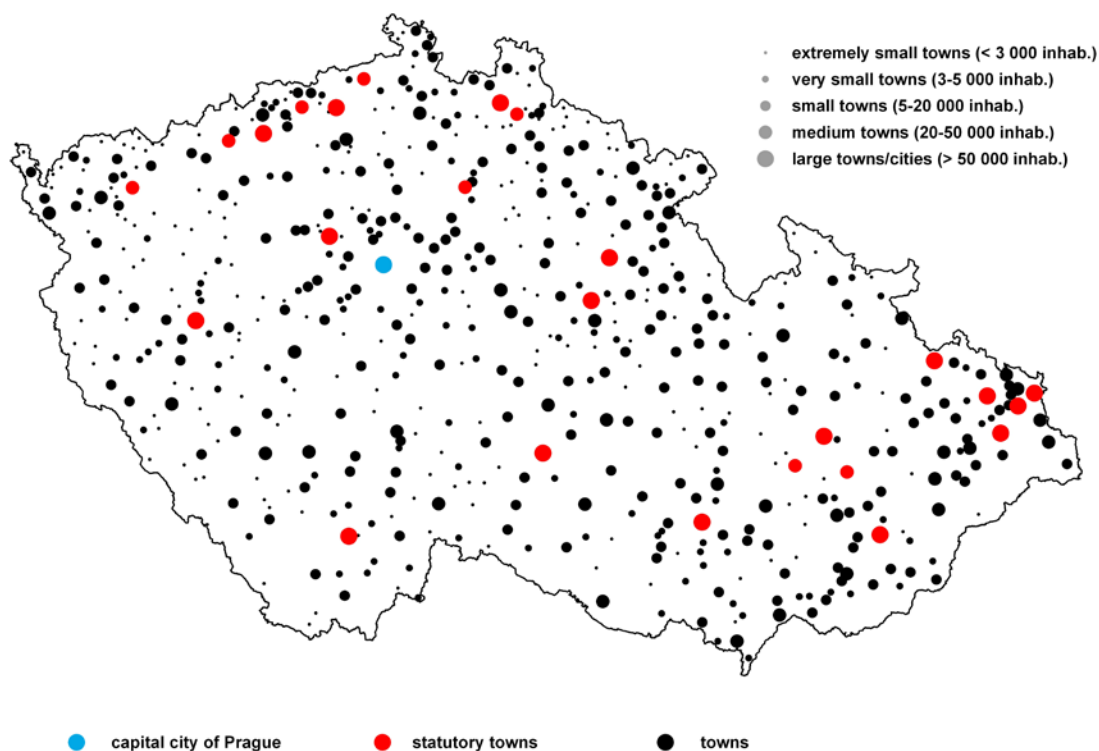


Table 1: Size structure of municipalities in the Czech Republic

Population size of municipality	No. of municipalities (2001)	No. of municipalities (2011)	Population 1.3.2001	Population 26.3.2011	Share on country population (%) 2001	Share on country population (%) 2011
-499	3 702	3 528	868 511	843889	8.5	8,1
500 - 999	1 280	1 336	893 592	940155	8.7	9,0
1 000 - 1 999	652	720	903 757	1002111	8.8	9,6
2 000 - 4 999	363	402	1 118 510	1228328	10.9	11,8
5 000 - 9 999	130	135	898 301	933233	8.8	8,9
10 000 - 19 999	68	68	965 102	956093	9.4	9,2
20 000 - 29 999	27	27	678 538	650632	6.6	6,2
30 000 - 49 999	14	17	541 501	678336	5.3	6,5
50 000 - 69 999	9	6	514 819	354976	5.0	3,4
70 000 - 89 999	3	2	237 841	152012	2.3	1,5

90 000 - 109 999	6	6	582 307	575554	5.7	5,5
110 000+	4	4	2 027 281	2121241	19.8	20,3
Czech Republic	6 258	6251	10 230 060	10 436 560	100.0	100.0

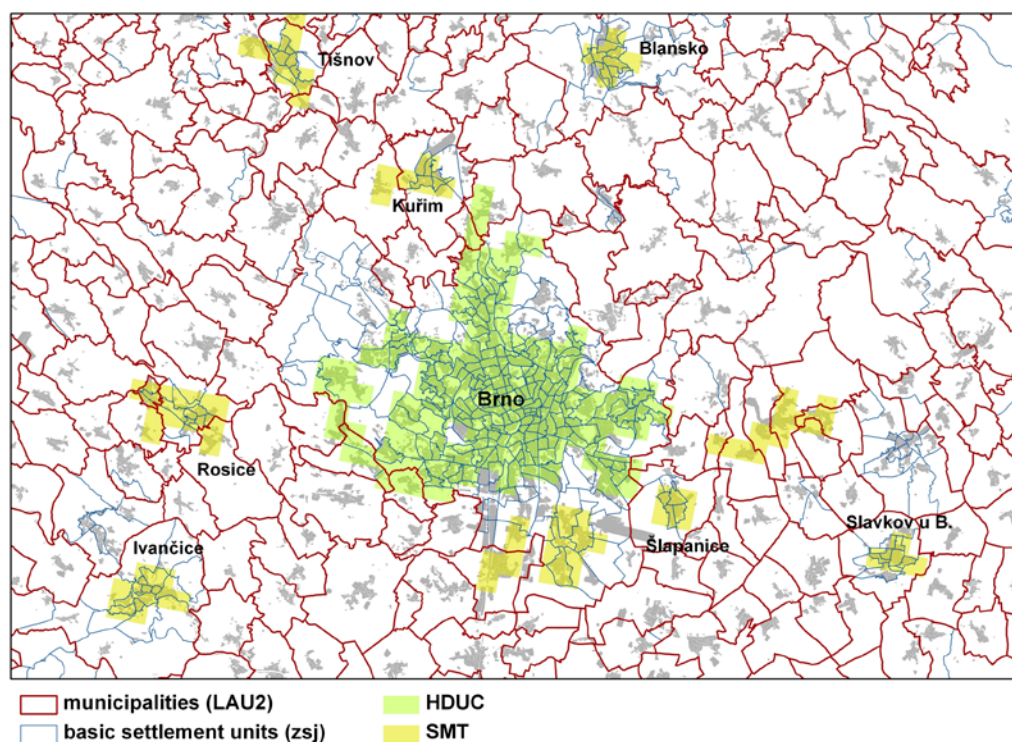
Source: Czech Statistical Office, Census 2001, 2011

In the Czech Republic, in 2011 10,436,560 people lived in an area of 78,864 km². 61.4 percent of the inhabitants lived in 270 towns and cities with a population 5,000 and more and 69.9 percent of the population lived in 602 municipalities with administrative statute of town/city (město). The majority of municipalities are small in population terms (about 60 % of municipalities has less than 500 inhabitants and further 20 % population between 500 and 1,000).

In Czechia, municipalities are usually composed of one or more settlements. In the case of villages, it can be one settlement plus single buildings in rural and woodland around the village. Cities are usually composed of central city and smaller morphologically independent settlements (historically rural villages and in some cases small towns) that were with the growth of city incorporated into the city administrative area (this usually happened before 1990). In case of towns, they beside the core town usually also include some small village settlements that, despite morphologically separate, is administratively part of the municipality. The Czech statistics uses from 1970 small territorial units so called “basic settlement units - ZSJ” for the purpose of detail spatial breakdown of census data. There are 22427 ZSJ (Census 2001) in the whole country of which part are small statistical districts in cities with rest representing small towns and rural settlements.

Using these ZSJ units we can be more precise in delimiting cores of towns and cities so they better correspond to morphologically compact cores, i.e. to the central parts of municipality. However, as in the Czechia only some census data are available for ZSJ and most of other information, such as for instance commuting data, is available only for municipalities, in ESPON TOWN we work with municipalities. Municipalities (LAU2) represent for the scale of analysis we do in ESPON TOWN “the best geography” fitting SMSTs.

Figure 2: Municipalities (LAU2) and basic settlement units (ZSJ) in the hinterland of Brno



1.2. SMSTs in national/regional settlement system: literature overview

There are two streams of academic work that deal with small and medium sized towns (SMSTs) in Czechia. First, is represented by specific studies of small towns; most of them have been published since 2000 and stimulated by general concern about SMSTs in Europe. The analyses focused on medium sized towns are missing. This can be given by the perception of small towns as struggling for their survival, while medium sized towns are usually seen as having reasonable development potential. Second stream represents analyses of urban/settlement systems with a particular focus on urban hierarchies and hierarchical levels of urban centers including small, medium and large towns/cities.

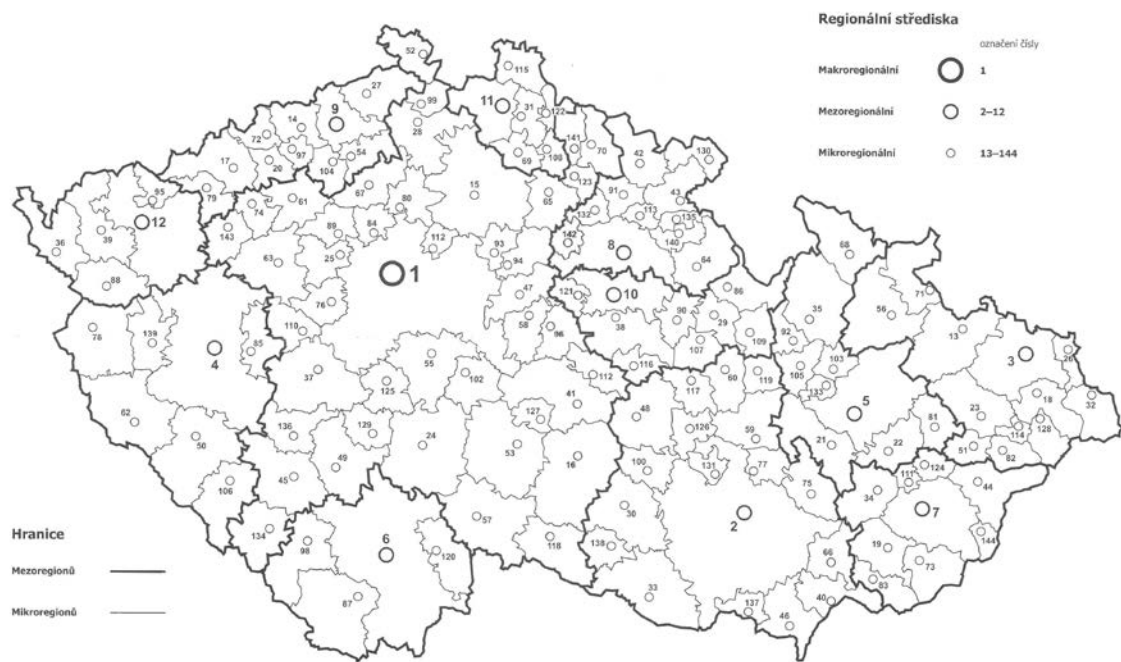
In these studies, small towns are usually defined by population size of municipality. The population size used for definitions of small towns usually range from 5-15 thousands (Vaishar 2001, p. 29; Cigale et al. 2006, p. 17; Ambrožová 2010, s. 17). However, recently, under the influence of central European discussion the upper size limit of the small towns has been lifted to 20 thousands (Frantál, Vaishar 2008, p. 175; Ježek 2011, p. 1–2). On the other hand side, the bottom line has been recently shifted below 5 thousands (Pákozdiová 2011, p. 218) and acknowledged around population minimum of 3 thousands (Ježek 2011, p. 1–2; Matušková, Dokoupil, Novotná 2011, p. 237), which corresponds to the Municipal Law. Vaishar (2011, p. 24) considers the administrative functional role of towns/cities with arguing that former district centres shall be seen as medium sized towns and prefers to include all smaller municipalities with the administrative statute of town among small towns (Vaishar 2011, p. 24). The typical population size of medium-sized towns is considered between 20-50 thousands inhabitants (Kašparová, Půček 2009, p. 29; Hampl, Kühnl, Gardavský 1987, p. 49).

The analyses of national settlement system emphasize the position of urban centres in national urban hierarchy (Hampl, Kühnl, Gardavský 1987; Hampl 1996; Hampl 2005; Ryšavý

1989; Musil 2001; Körner 2010, p. 20). Beside the size characteristics of towns and cities, these works especially emphasize their role of urban centers and functional relation between centers and their hinterlands emphasizing the formation of urban regions. These works involve the selection of urban centres and the delineation of regions on micro and meso levels within the country understood as a macro region. Consequently, the country territory is seen as composed of hierarchically nested regions. The micro-regions are conceptualized as local labour market regions and their spatial delimitation is based on commuting-to-work data from population censuses. Micro-regions are then amalgamated to second rank micro-regions and further to two levels of meso-regions (their spatial delimitation also reflected other socio-spatial processes, such as migration). Each level of micro to meso regions has corresponding level of urban centers with microregional centers corresponding to small and medium sized towns and meso-regional centres corresponding to large towns/cities. This regionalization exists for 1970 (Hampl, Ježek and Kühnl 1978), 1980 (Hampl, Gardavský and Kühnl 1987), 1991 (Hampl and Müller 1996) and 2001 (Hampl 2005). However, these works used a bottom size threshold that eliminated several local job centers, so Hampl identified 144 micro-regions in 2001. More inclusive analysis by Sýkora and Mulíček (2009) identified 260, respectively 290 microregions and micro-regional centers for 2001 and 1991.

Figure 3: Socio-geographical regionalization of the Czech Republic: macro, meso and microregions and urban centres

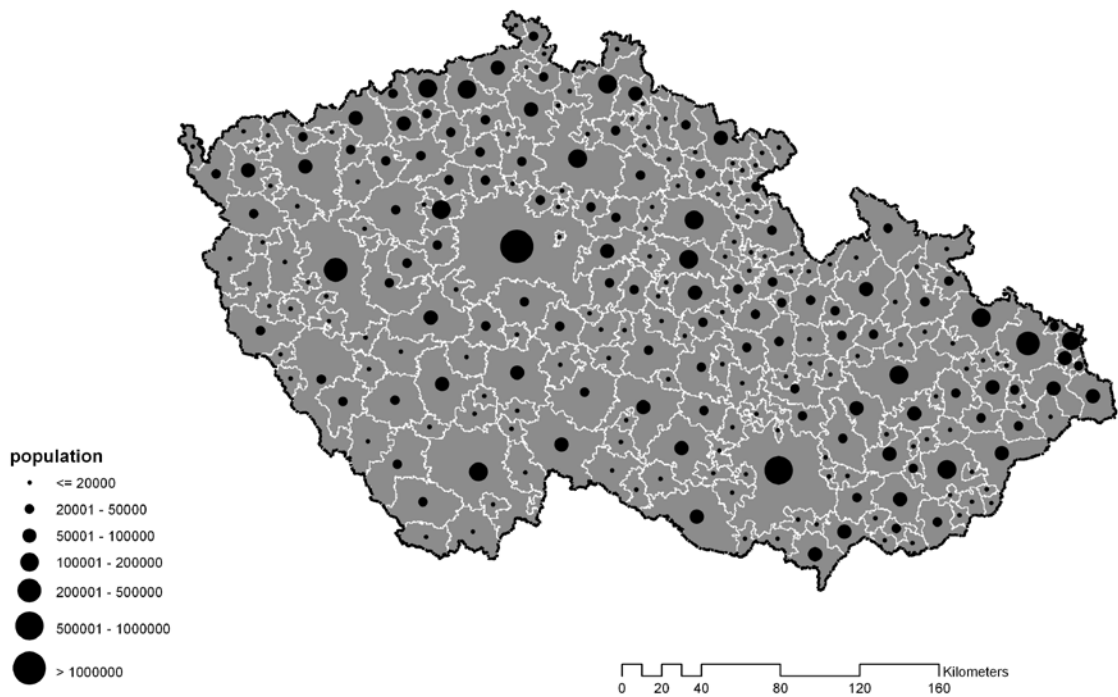
Mapová příloha: Sociogeografická regionalizace České republiky (2001)



Poznámka: Čísla označující střediska odpovídají jejich pořadí podle komplexního regionálního významu a jsou uvedena v tabulkové příloze 3.

Source: Hampel (2005)

Figure 4: Complex micro-regions the Czech Republic (2001)



Source: Sýkora and Mulíček (2009)

There is one important long term trend. Smallest urban centres with small and weakly integrated complex micro-regions lose their autonomy and independence and dissolve in regions with stronger centres (HAMPL, Gardavský and Kühnl 1987; HAMPL 2005). For instance, in 1991 there were 290 micro-regions compared to 260 in 2001 (Sýkora, Mulíček, 2009). The micro-regional centres and micro-regions which lost their autonomy between 1991 and 2001 were often located in proximity to major urban centres and other booming centres, and there were also examples of micro-regions in peripheral areas in which the centres were not successful in maintaining a sufficient economic base and labour supply. The decreasing number of complex micro-regions is the result of long term trends of concentration of jobs in a smaller number of larger job centres. These results suggest that despite there are many municipalities with the administrative statute of town in Czechia, many of them in fact do not play the role of urban centers within the country urban and regional system. Therefore it is questionable whether they should be considered towns. Certainly, a specific analytical focus shall be given to urban centres that recently lost their status of urban centres. These are the towns where the struggle for their role in regional development shall be considered and optionally supported by means of public policies.

1.3. Territorial organization of local and regional government system

The Czech Republic is a unitary state with three tiers of elected governments at national, regional and municipal levels. There are 14 regions and 6,252 municipalities (1.1.2013), all with elected representative assemblies. The capital city of Prague and 25 statutory cities have specific status and can be further subdivided into boroughs, with elected local governments.

Territorial administration reflects the historically formed settlement pattern. The settlement structure of the country is very fragmented with cities surrounded by large number of small settlements with administratively independent municipal governments. Consequently, the Czech territorial administration is characterised by huge fragmentation at the local level. The new system of local government that is in operation since 1990 is based on.

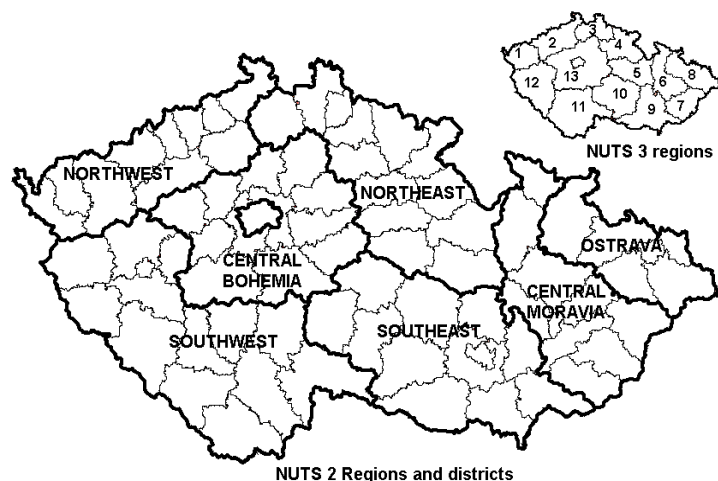
The current structure of local and regional government is an outcome of the reform of public administration in 1990s which, among others aimed at (1) the separation of the local and regional self-government from the state administration functions and (2) the decentralization from state to local and regional self-governments and to lower tiers of state administration. The Municipal Act of 1990 allowed for disintegration of municipalities amalgamated during the Communism. Consequently, the number of municipalities increased from 4,100 in 1990 to about 6,258 in 2001. This process led to an emergence of a large number of very small municipalities with financially and professionally weak self-government. The introduction of regional self-governments since 2001 brought the termination of the operation of district tier of state administration in 2003 (77 districts with only decentralised functions of the state and no elected representations). Since 2003, the state administration on supra-municipal level is anchored by 205 municipalities with extended responsibilities (ORP) for smaller municipalities in their administrative districts.

The territory of the Czech Republic is for statistical, analytical and application of EU policies reasons divided into following NUTS/LAU units:

NUTS 1: the Czech Republic

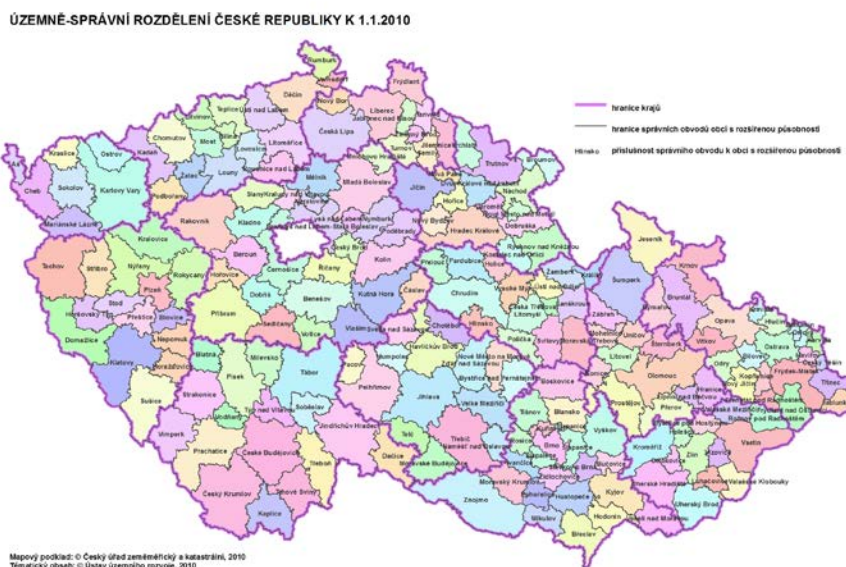
NUTS 2: cohesion regions (amalgamated self-governing regions)
 NUTS 3: regions
 LAU 1: districts (former units of state administration)
 LAU 2: municipalities

Figure 5: Regions (NUTS 3) and their amalgamation to NUTS 2



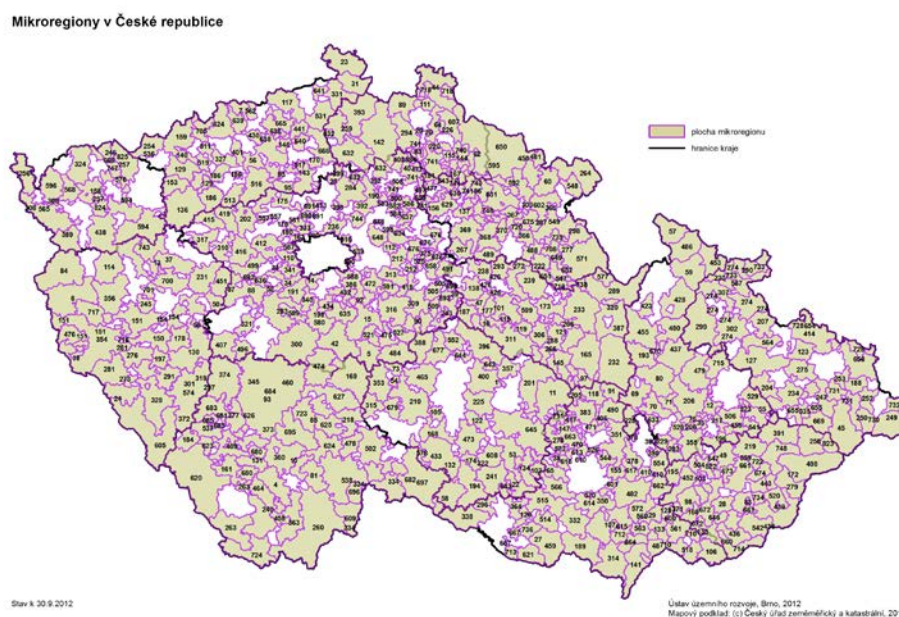
Note: Administrative regions (kraje) – NUTS 3 level: 1: Karlovy Vary, 2: Ústí nad Labem, 3: Liberec, 4: Hradec Králové, 5: Pardubice, 6: Olomouc, 7: Zlín, 8: Moravian-Silesian, 9: South Moravian, 10: Vysočina, 11: South Bohemian, 12: Plzeň, 13: Central Bohemian, and 14: Prague which is in the centre of Central Bohemia.

Figure 6: Administrative districts of municipalities with extended responsibilities (2010)



Most municipalities (5473; 87.6%) in the country are members of voluntary micro-regions (about 570 in 2008) and various municipal associations which establish companies to organise certain tasks, such as collection and liquidation of municipal waste or water, sewage and other technical networks construction and management.

Figure 7: Microregions: voluntary municipal associations (2011)

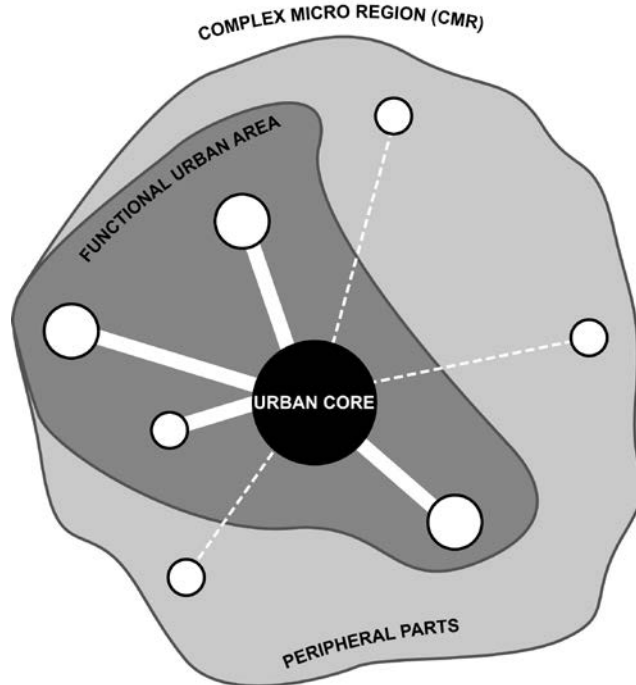


The Czech municipality is an independent self-governing legal and economic body, which takes decisions and bears responsibilities on its own behalf. A municipality has its own means and financial resources and manages them independently according to the conditions laid down by law. Municipalities have the right to acquire, dispose of, and manage municipal property, adopt a municipal budget, establish legal entities, adopt a municipal development program, approve a local physical plan, and issue municipal decrees that are valid on its own territory. Municipalities shall ensure municipal development in accordance with interests of their inhabitants. To achieve that they can allocate finance to achieve their goals, use municipal real estate and other property to promote local development and cooperate with other municipalities, state administration and private sector. They are obliged to maintain local streets and roads, care for elementary school facilities and social and health services, maintain water supply, savage disposal and waste management, etc. The capital city of Prague and statutory towns can approve a local generally obligatory decree referred to as the Statut, which divides the municipal territory into districts or quarters, establishes a second tier of local government (boroughs), and specifies the decentralization of responsibilities from the municipality (the central city government) to its boroughs. For instance Prague is divided to 57 boroughs.

The fragmented local government structure does not correspond with socio-economic geography within which the daily life of population is organized. In the country, we will find 260 complex micro-regions corresponding to local labour areas organized around the commuting between home and workplaces. These complex micro-regions consists of urban core and its suburban hinterland, both forming functional urban areas integrated together by high intensity of commuting to work and more remote and less integrated rural peripheries. Although the cores of Czech cities and towns amalgamated (before 1990) some surrounding villages, functional urban areas usually consist of core town municipality and many village municipalities recently affected by new suburban developments. While in some instances core towns and municipalities in its hinterland form voluntary micro-regional co-operations, there are also cases when the core town/city stands in the position of

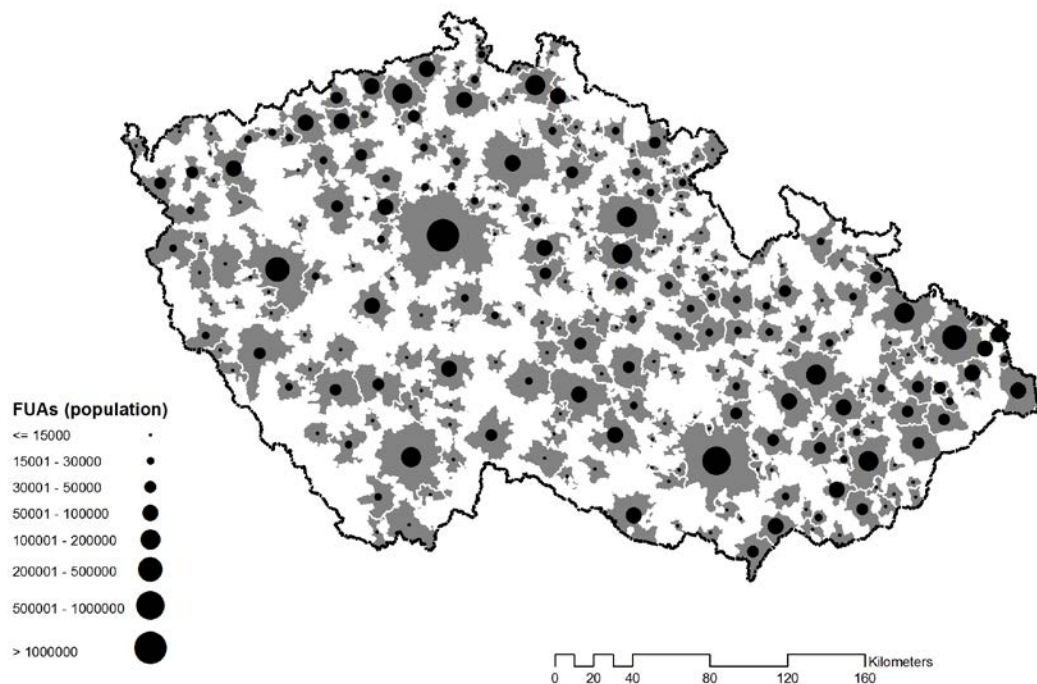
competition with administratively independent yet functionally related village municipalities in its hinterland.

Figure 8: Scheme of Functional Urban Area (FUA) and Complex Micro Region (CMR)



Source: Sýkora and Mulíček (2009)

Figure 9: Functional Urban Areas in the Czech Republic (2001)



Source: Sýkora and Mulíček (2009)

1.4. Implications for ESPON TOWN

There are two important issues from local context relevant for the ESPON TOWN analysis. First of them is the question “Which settlement is town/city?” and where is the “division line” between SMSTs and large towns/cities. The second issue concerns the territorial delimitation of towns, specifically SMSTs.

All the 602 municipalities with the legal statute of town can not be seen as towns playing the role of town. First 332 does not fulfill the minimum size criteria of 5000 inhabitants initially considered by ESPON TOWN. In the Czech context, there are however places with population below 5000 playing the role of town as local centre for usually rural hinterland. Hence rather than decreasing the minimum population size to 3000 we think that we shall among towns include these settlements/municipalities that play the role of local centers. This approach is confirmed by the analyses of Czech settlement and regional system that have been made since 1970. However, we shall apply the functional analysis using same conceptual principles and methods for all regions that are subject to case studies in ESPON TOWN.

Related issue is finding the “division line” between SMSTs and large towns/cities. From the administrative statute point of view, the so called 26 statutory towns plus the capital city of Prague, could be considered to be large towns. However, some of them do not really fulfill the role of meso-regional centers which is rather related to the level of 14 regional capitals. Again, the functional analysis can help to distinguish between SMSTs and large towns/cities.

Concerning the territorial delimitation, we primarily think about SMSTs as compact settlements. The issue is which geography best corresponds to it. In many countries this is LAU2. In Czechia, LAU2 are municipalities which are usually composed of one or more settlements. In the case of villages, it is one settlement plus there can be single buildings in rural and woodland around. In the case of cities, they are composed of central city plus usually very small morphologically independent settlements (historically rural villages) that are however functionally and administratively part of the city. In the case of towns, they will beside core town usually also include some small village settlement that is administratively part of the municipality. In Czechia we have small territorial units for statistical purposes – called “basic settlement units - ZSJ” so we could be more precise in delimiting core towns as only the central part of municipality/LAU2. However, we do not have commuting and other data for these ZSJ; only census data are available for such spatial detail. Therefore we work with municipalities/LAU2 that represent for the scale of analysis we do “the best geography” fitting SMSTs.

In ESPON TOWN we need to relate SMSTs as morphological areas (RA2 provides general method on European scale) to local administrative (statistical) territories as the data for analyses of settlement systems are available for administrative/political units. Furthermore, in policy analysis we need to work with territorial units under the jurisdiction of local governments. Furthermore, we apply the functional analysis to identify which of the town like settlements identified by morphological analysis and/or those that have the administrative/political statute of town are really playing the role of centers. We think that it is SMSTs having the role of centres that are crucial in terms of the (balanced) territorial development.

2. Territorial identification of SMSTs

This part of the case study links the pan-European geomatic analysis conducted in RA2 with the finer observation of territories at the meso level of analysis at the scale of NUTS1. It has the double objective of testing the validity of the work conducted in RA2 regarding the identification of SMSTs, and accordingly feeding back this information to RA2 for correction and revision; and enriching that analysis with the attribution of data and supplementary information, moving the analysis forward from the morphological sphere to functional aspects reflecting the administrative status of SMSTs.

It consists of two basic parts:

A) Validation of the identification of SMSTs based on morphological/geomatic approach – following the output of morphological approach on a pan-European scale in RA2, the case study work validates the correct morphology, i.e. the spatial delimitation of SMSTs and HDUC polygons; validates the typology membership and identification of SMST “high density cores”; appends “names” and/or other national/regional codes to them either the name of the dominant LAU or whatever lieu-dit in common use; and validates the data linkages with the administrative NUTS3 / LAU levels, correcting the estimated percentages of population living in SMSTs and HDUC for each relevant NUTS3/LAU2 territory in the meso study area.

B) Identification of SMSTs, their urban regions and SMSTs territorial arrangements by means of functional analysis - In this sub section the the case study team will apply the functional analysis for the identification of large cities and SMSTs; the identification of large cities and SMSTs urban regions (local labour area, daily urban system); the distinction between lower and upper tiers of urban hierarchy, i.e. between SMSTs and large cities; and the analysis of the intensity and directionality of flows among identified SMSTs and their urban regions and identification of SMSTs territorial arrangements (autonomous, networked, agglomerated).

2.1. Morphological/geomatic identification and administrative identification of SMSTs

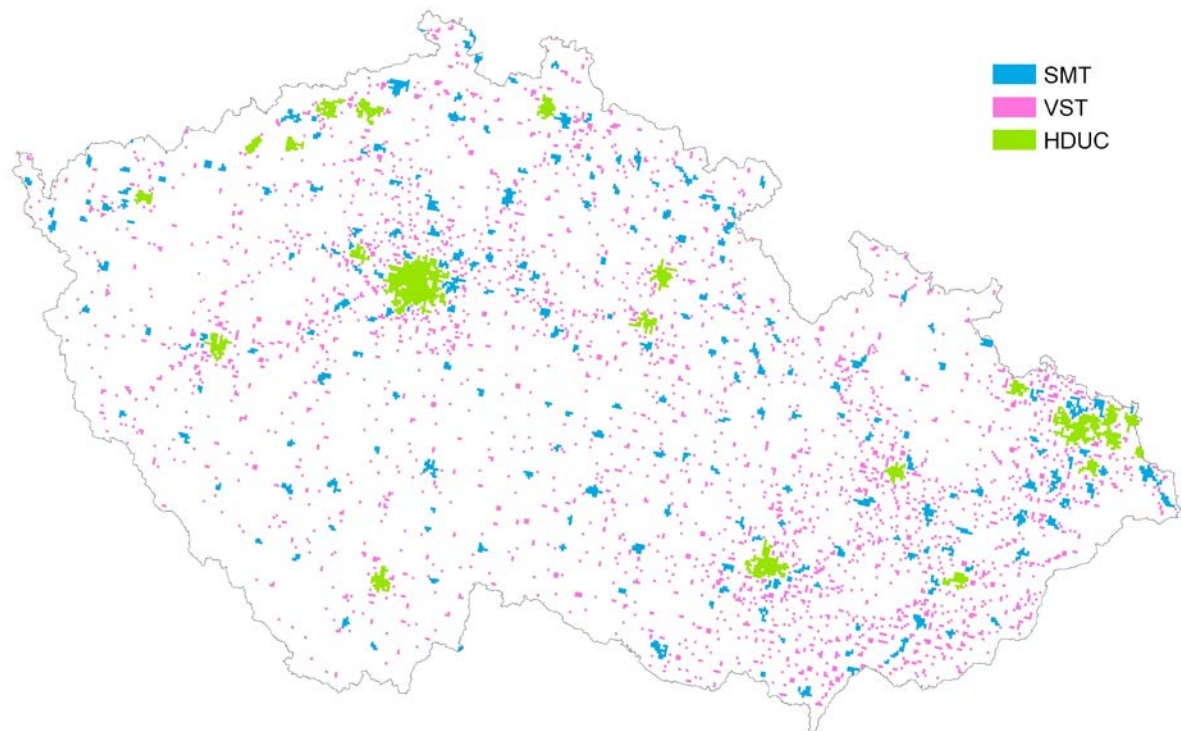
Employing the geomatic tools within morphological analysis of urban system (for more details see RA2 documents) 2500 polygons have been delimit in total in the territory of the Czech Republic. Category of SMSTs comprises 231 polygons (HDUC category = 20 polygons, VST category = 2 249 polygons).

Table 2: Morphological polygons delimited in the Czech Republic

category	number of polygons	population (2006)	area (km ²)
SMSTs	231	3 391 801	2 281
VSTs	2 249	2 524 971	3 470
HDUCs	20	3 286 406	1 342
Total	2 500	9 203 178	7 093

Note: Data on population comes from GEOSTAT population grid and may differ from national population statistics

Figure 10: Morphological polygons in the Czech Republic



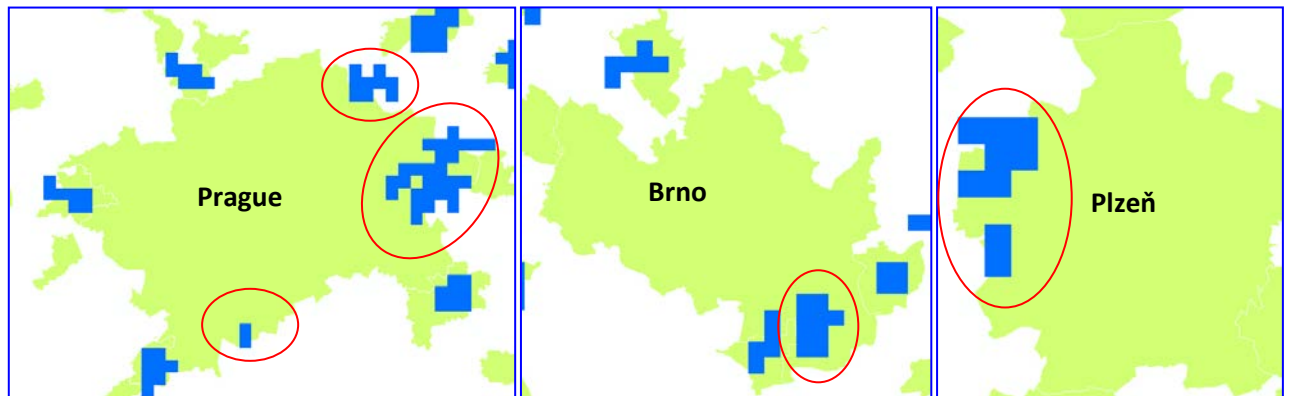
Source: ESPON TOWN,

The morphological/geomatic approach is quite effective when identifying the towns between 5000 and 50000 inhabitants. In the case of the Czech Republic there is roughly 80% success rate. This 80% success rate seems to be fairly acceptable for the purposes of international comparison. However, for the needs of more accurate studies the careful confrontation with national reality and data available at local level is necessary.

The morphological delimitation did not capture 44 Czech towns belonging to the category 5000 – 50000 (according to population data of Census 2011). Some were detected as large towns (HDUC), some as parts of large towns, despite their administrative autonomy, and some smaller once were not identified at all (RA2 team has been informed about these cases).

On the other hand, in the case of six large Czech cities their peripheral neighborhoods were identified as autonomous SMTs or as the parts of SMTs in their hinterland (cases of Praha, Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Olomouc and Zlín).

Figure 11: Peripheral parts of HDUCs of Praha, Brno and Plzeň identified as autonomous SMSTs



2.2. Functional analysis of settlement systems: identification of SMSTs and related urban regions

The aims of functional analysis were:

- the identification of large cities and SMSTs by functional analysis, i.e. using the concept of urban centres;
- the identification of large cities and SMSTs urban regions (local labour area, daily urban system), using core-hinterland analysis;
- the distinction between lower and upper tiers of urban hierarchy, i.e. between SMSTs and large cities using functional analysis of relations between urban centres;
- the analysis of the intensity and directionality of flows among identified SMSTs and their urban regions and identification of SMSTs territorial arrangements (autonomous, networked, agglomerated).

From the functional-spatial perspective we understand SMSTs as nodes/centres in national and regional settlement, urban and regional systems. Cities and towns are centres which possess centrality functions that serve wider territories. Cities and towns thus qualitatively differ from settlements which do not possess centrality functions, which are not centres. Centres are highly differentiated according to the strength and significance of their centrality functions and hence their territorial / regional influence. Here we need to distinguish between large metropolises, medium and small towns according to the particular degree of centrality which ranks a city/town within urban hierarchy.

The particular steps of this part of functional analysis were as follow:

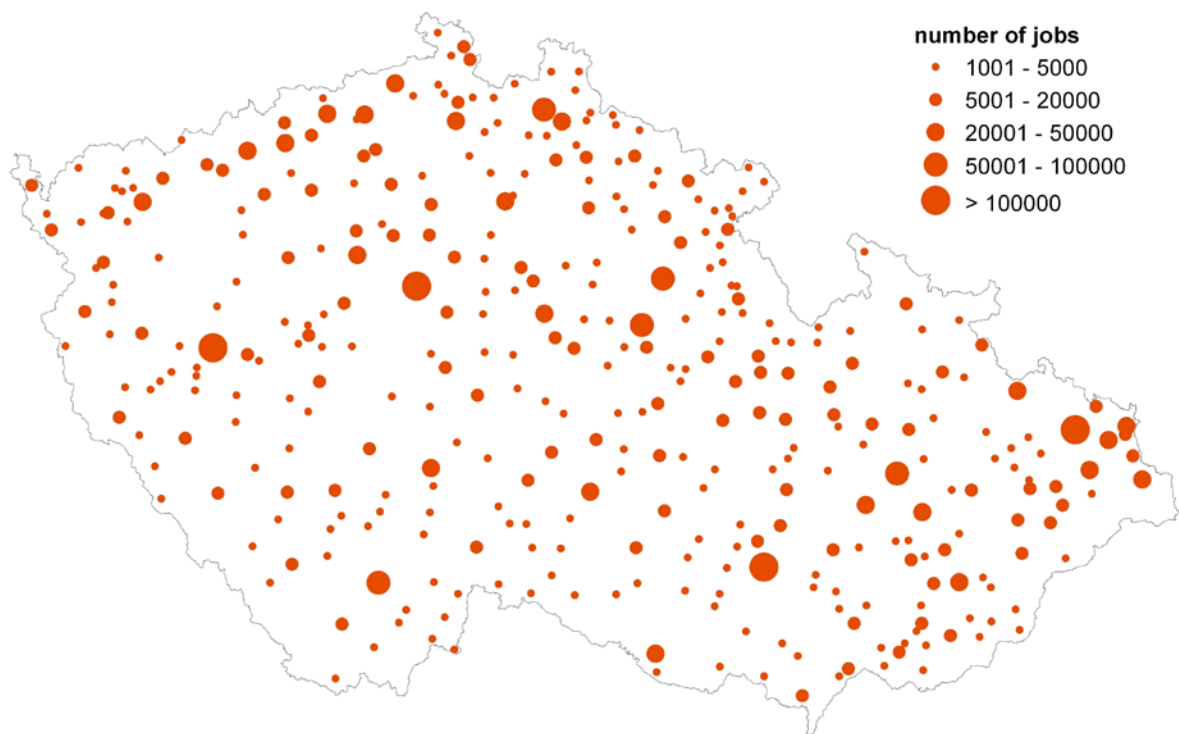
1. Identification of those settlements that play the role of job centres.
2. Delimitation of their micro-regions.

In the Czech case we worked with municipalities, i.e. local administrative units (LAU2), respectively with the matrix of all commuting flows between municipalities in analyzed area (the whole Czech Republic). All source data came from national census 2001.

The job centres were selected from the set of 6258 Czech municipalities (and other types of LAU2) using two criteria (1) size: threshold value of minimum job size (minimal number of jobs); (2) functionality: job center is the main commuting destination from at least one another municipality.

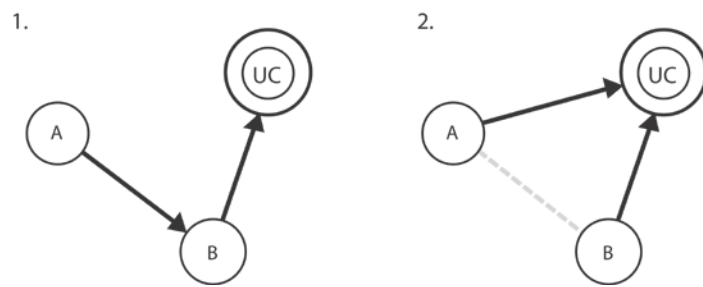
Based on our insight into Czech urban system context the value of 1000 jobs was set up as a threshold size. As a result, 493 of 6258 Czech municipalities fulfilled the criterion on minimum 1000 jobs; at the same time 645 municipalities were classified as destinations for maximal commuting flow from another municipality. The intersection of these two datasets resulted in a set of 367 job centres with 1000 and more jobs that were, at the same time, the major commuting destination for at least one other municipality (see Fig. 12).

Figure 12: The overview of job centres in the Czech Republic in 2001 (n=367)



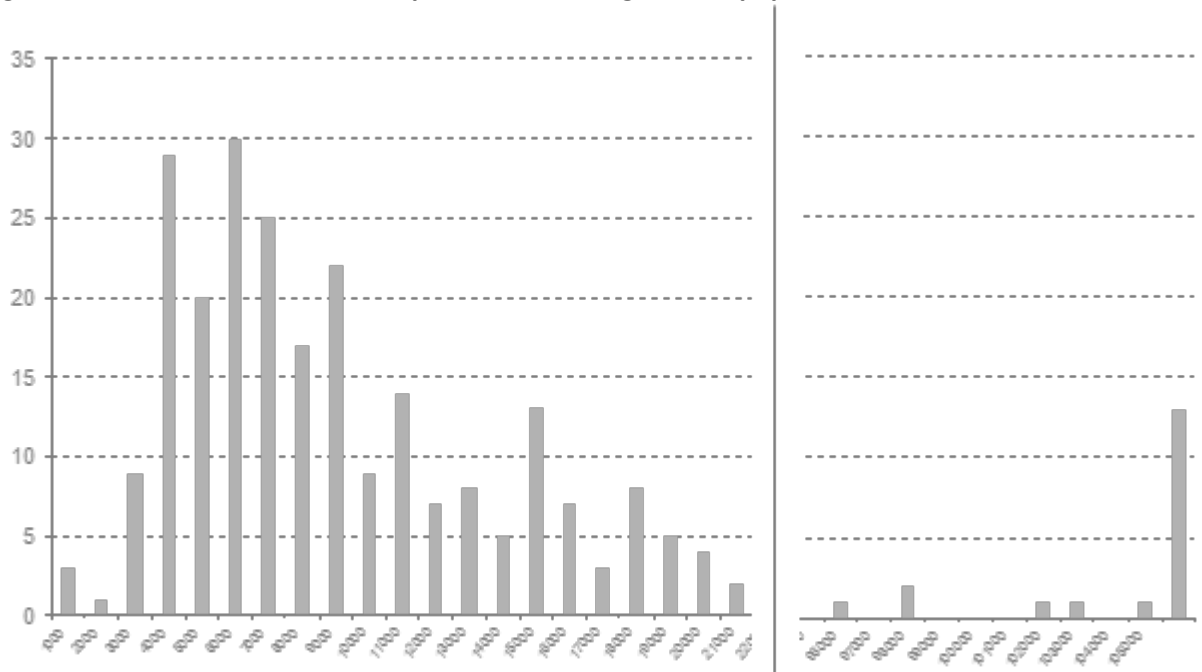
Not every job centre was strong enough to form its own microregion. Therefore, the analysis continued with the delimitation of microregions and their respective urban centres. The microregions were delimited integrating the settlements to the centers according to direction of maximal (major) flows from each municipality. Each was assigned just only to one centre/functional region. If the largest flow from LAU2 was not directed to one of the identified urban centres, the LAU2 was linked to a job centre indirectly (see Fig. 13).

Figure 13: Integration of the municipalities to job centres



After finishing the integration process there were 352 proto-microregions (PMRs) delimited, varying in size and often not territorially coherent (*note: the number of PMRs is different from the number of urban centres, the reason is that commuting hinterlands of some urban centres consisted of municipalities which were at the same time urban centres for other municipalities*). Proto-microregions were treated as preliminary representation of microregional pattern. However final microregions were expected to fulfill the criteria of minimal population size and territorial integrity. Hence the defined minimal population threshold of 6000 inhabitants was applied as a result of frequency analysis (see Fig. 14). The threshold was intentionally kept on the lower levels to generate a larger set of labor microregions reflecting the labor systems at the local/microregional scale. PMRs under 6000 inhabitants was dissolved among other PMRs. When attaching the dissolved PMR municipalities to the larger PMRs/MRs (or when consolidating the borders of PMRs), several aspects were taken into account, such as commuting directionality of their original job centre or other significant commuting flows of municipalities.

Figure 14: Distribution of PMRs frequencies according to their population sizes



Applying defined minimal population together with carrying out the territorial consolidation the set of PMRs was reduced to the 260 final microregions.

The figure 15 shows the map of final microregions in the Czech Republic in 2001; each of microregions is organized around its urban centre which can be called microregional centre

(MRC). Microregional centres represent the urban nodes with certain levels of job centrality; their centrality is reflected in the size of respective microregions

Table 3: Morphological polygons delimited in the Czech Republic

number of microregions	260
average population / job size of MR	39 346 / 18476
average number of integrated municipalities	24

Figure 14: Distribution of final 260 MRs frequencies according to their population sizes

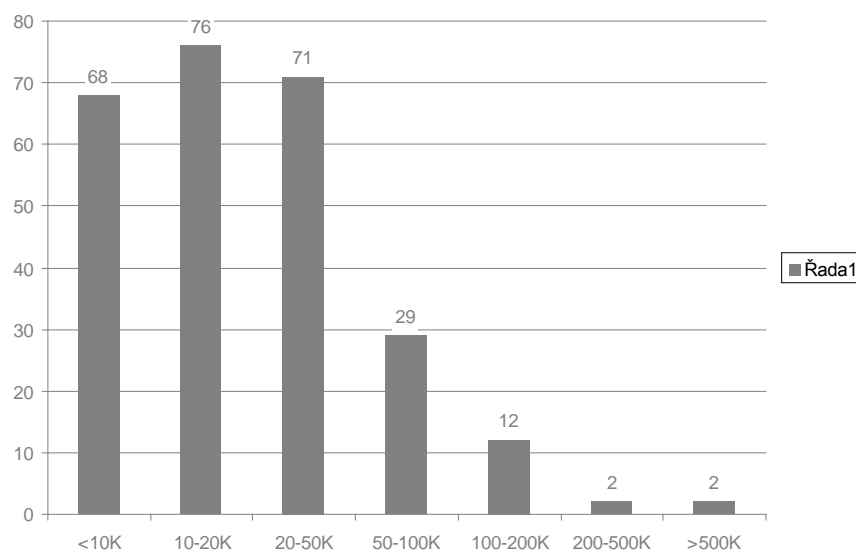
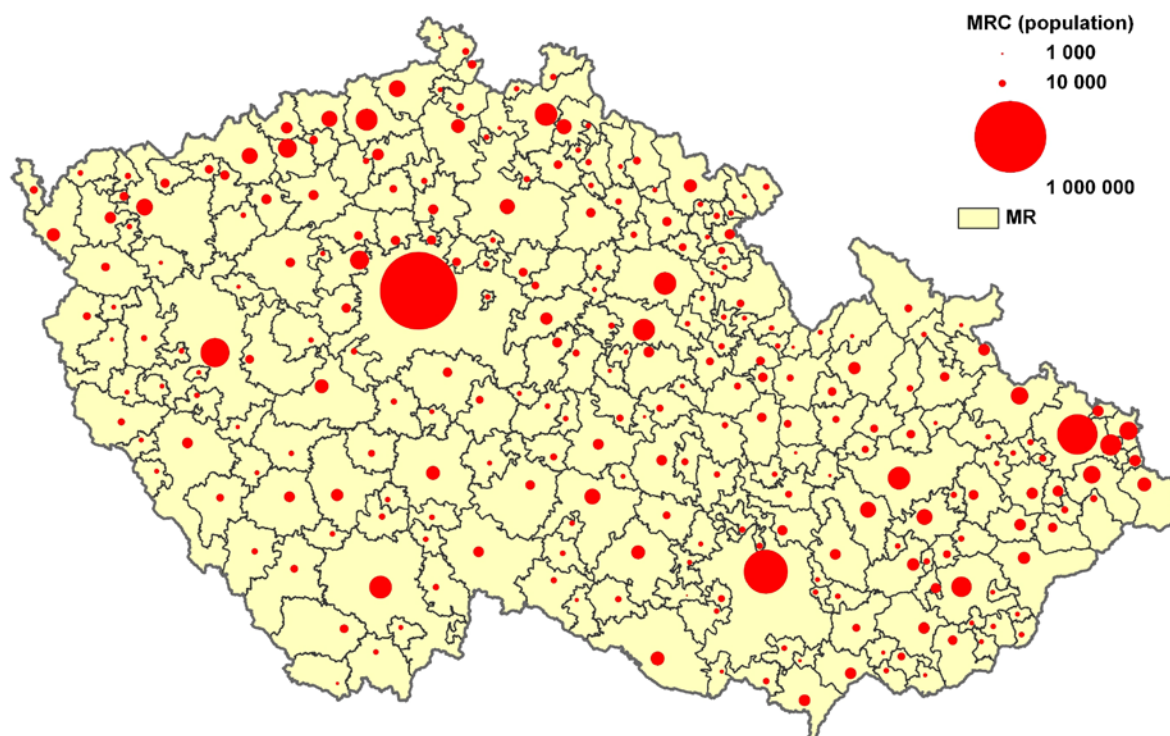


Figure 15: Microregions and their centres in the Czech Republic in 2001 (n=260)



2.3. Identification of SMSTs territorial arrangements - autonomous, networked, agglomerated in large city regions

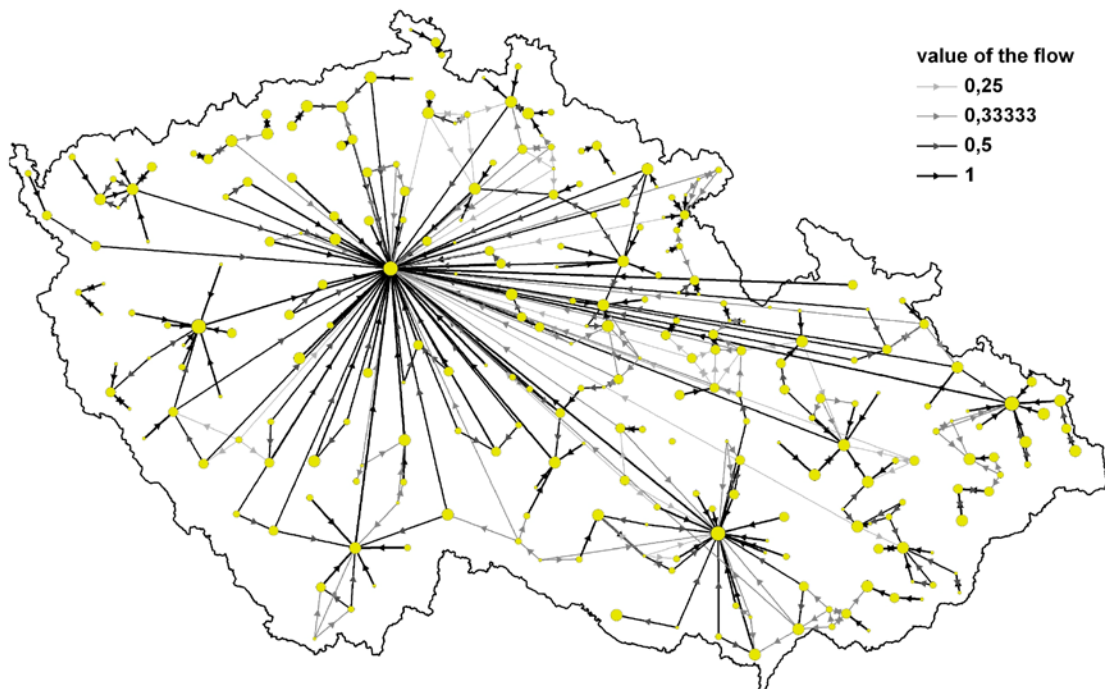
The aims of the second phase of functional analysis was:

- to distinguish between lower and upper tiers of urban hierarchy, i.e. between SMSTs and large cities;
- identify SMSTs territorial arrangements (autonomous, networked, agglomerated).

In the further analysis, we worked only with significant flows – functional connections between urban centres. By significant we understand that the flow is important for the source urban centre, for the destination urban centre and also for the urban system as whole. The identification of significant flows was based on Van Nueffel (2007) methodology. Five highest outgoing flows from each microregional centre were identified and expressed in relative way as a share on the total sum of 5 identified highest flows. Real distribution of flows was correlated with five ideal types of distribution to determine the number of significant flows. The number of significant flows corresponds to the ideal type with which the real distribution has the highest correlation ((for more details see RA4 Functional analysis guideline).

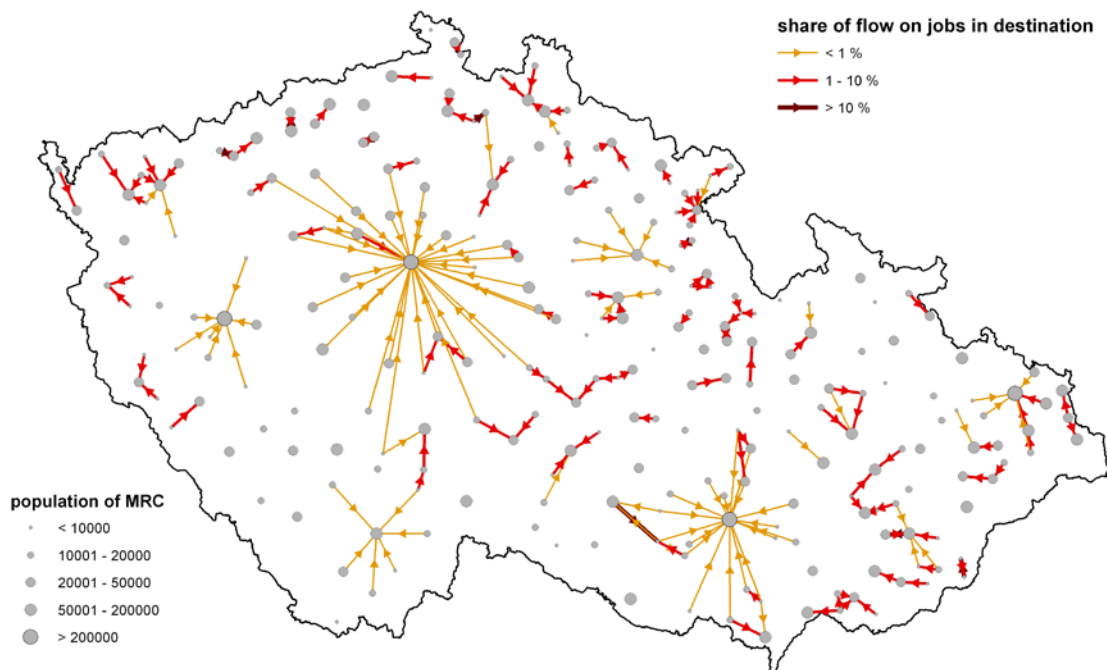
Analysis of significant flows in the Czech settlement system indicates that almost 64 % of municipalities generate just one significant outgoing job commuting flow, 23 % of municipalities generate two significant flows.

Figure 16: Significant flows between MRCs (2001)



The flows were further sorted according to their importance in relation to economically active population of source urban centre and in relation to number of jobs in the destination urban centre. Firstly, after testing the criteria, flows that accounted for less than 5% of economically active population (leaving from urban centre to work in another urban centre) were eliminated. Secondly, we decided that flows below 1% share on no. of jobs in destination centre are less important for the destination centre (while important for source centre), while flows with 1 and more % share on the no. of jobs in destination centre are already playing more significant and sometimes very significant role for the job market also in the destination centre. As a result of applying this thresholds there are urban centres (this also includes large towns, which we will differentiate from SMSTs in following step) (A) without any significant flows – autonomous, (B) with significant flows only for themselves (share on EA population of source centre) - agglomerated, and (C) with significant flows also for destination centre (share on its no. of jobs) - networked. On the map, we can clearly identify these 3 types: red flows connect networked systems of urban centres, yellow flows connect agglomerated urban systems and remaining urban centres without any significant connection are autonomous.

Figure 17: Significant flows between MRCs – step 2 (2001)



In the next step the SMSTs and large cities (LC) were distinguished employing once again the matrix of significant flows. Urban centres that are destinations from other urban centres can be considered of being urban centres of higher functional significance. There are urban centres with more than one outgoing significant flows – so their value was split-up to more urban centres. Therefore rather than simply counting all flows, we added to each centre either value 1 for each centre from which this is the only destination or a proportional share on value 1 (0,5, 0,33, 0,25, 0,2) in the cases with 2 or more outgoing flows. Having a table listing all micro regional urban centers, their population size and the value of functional position in urban system (given by significant flows relating them to other urban centres) the

attention was paid to towns and cities around the population size of 50 thousands. In the Czech case, we found that the value for cities with over 50000 is larger than 2, i.e. they are destination from 2 or more micro regional urban centres (recalculated in shares). To be considered large city, it should have population over 50000 and at the same time have the value of position in urban system over 2. In our context, there were 3 towns below 50000 with the value over 2. The population size of two of them is far below 50000, so they were not considered as large cities. The third has population size 44000, however, with about the same no. of jobs, it is very powerful job centre, strong as cities with population of 70-80 thousands. Therefore, it is considered as large city. On the other hand side, there are 7 towns/cities with population over 50000, however, with lower or low value of position in urban system – ranging from 0 to 1. Most of them are in vicinity of even larger cities, either agglomerated or having small regional influence due to strong competitor(s). They are not considered as large cities. Out of 260 micro regional urban centres, we identified 13 large cities (see Table 4 and Fig. 18).

Figure 18: Identified large cities in the Czech urban system (2001)

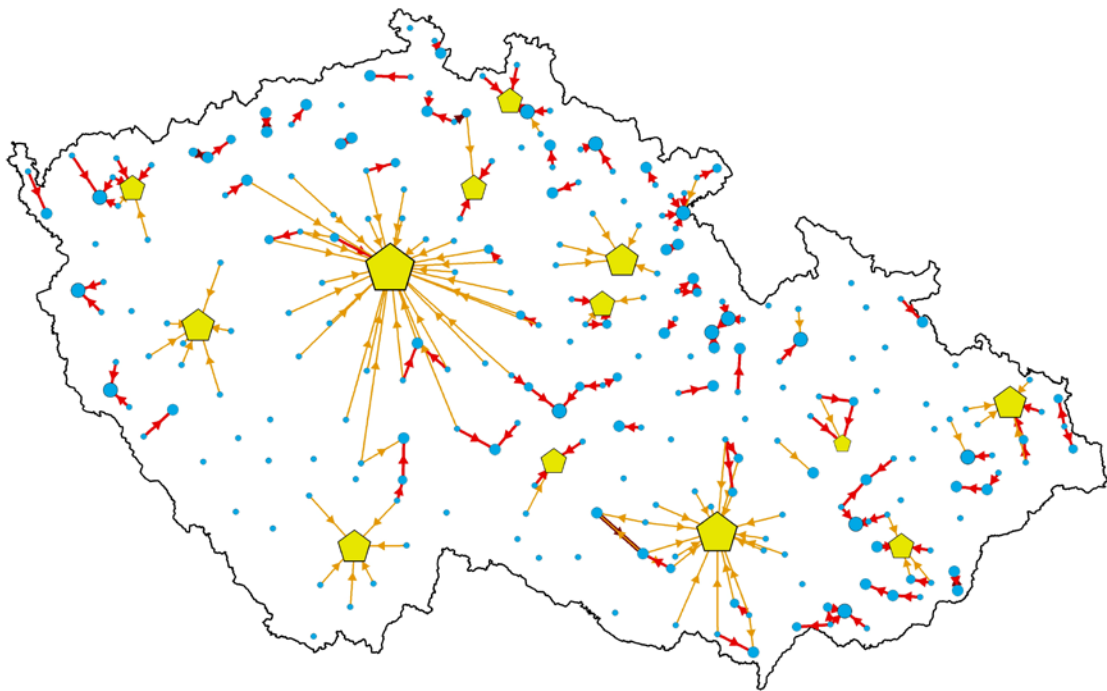


Table 4: Czech urban centres with functional size 3 and more (2001)

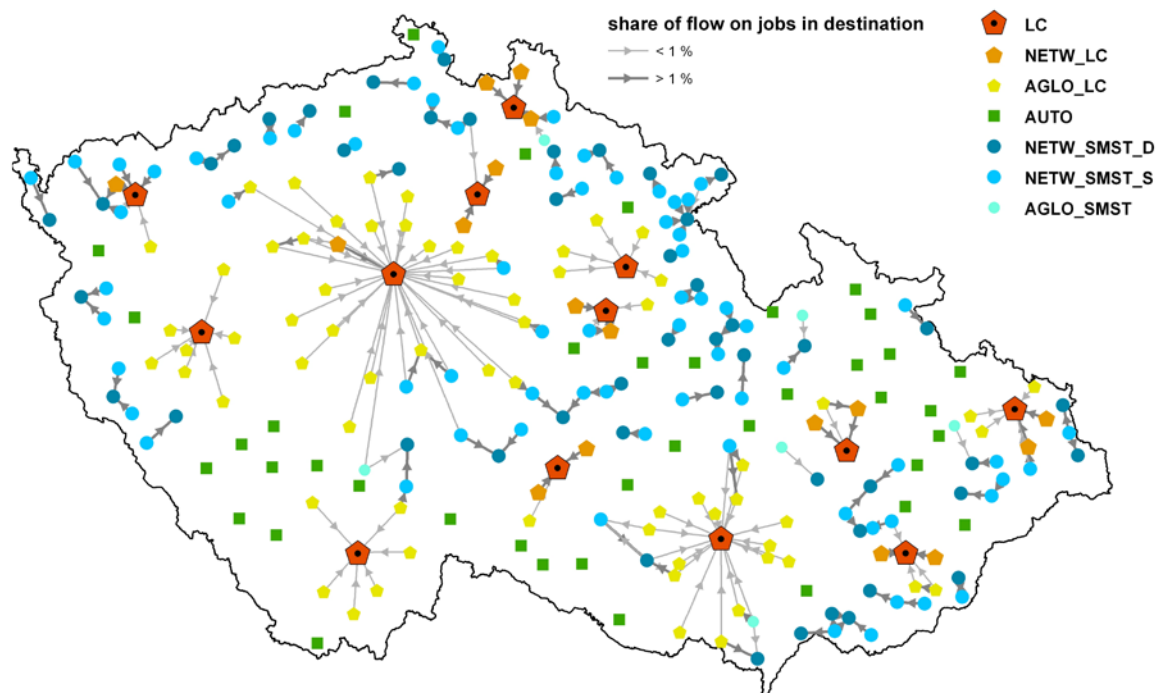
municipality	EA 2001	jobs 2001	population 2011	functional size	LC (yes/no)
Praha	608716	746427	1169106	31	yes
Brno	178005	230665	376172	18	yes
Plzeň	80857	100037	165259	7	yes
Ostrava	134164	167179	316744	6	yes
České Budějovice	48798	66475	97339	6	yes
Hradec Králové	48162	61976	97155	5	yes

Náchod	10157	13264	21400	5	no
Zlín	39495	49755	80854	5	yes
Karlovy Vary	26041	30088	53358	5	yes
Pardubice	44686	52822	90668	4	yes
Jihlava	25543	34720	50702	3	yes
Liberec	50659	55428	99102	3	yes
Mladá Boleslav	24074	41094	44255	3	yes
Olomouc	48595	66594	102607	3	yes
Veselí n. M.	5515	6011	12261	3	no

The final step was to distinguish SMSTs that are autonomous, agglomerated and networked. This typology was followed:

type	description	code
A	Autonomous urban centers have no out or incoming significant flow	AUTO
Ba	Towns with significant outgoing flows only for themselves (significant share on EA population of source centre) and linked to large cities (LC) – they are agglomerated to large city	AGLO-LC
Bb	Towns with significant outgoing flows only for themselves (significant share on EA population of source centre) and linked to another SMST – they are agglomerated to SMSTs	AGLO-SMST
Ca	Towns with significant outgoing flows also for destination centre (with significant share on its no. of jobs) - and linked to large city (LC) – they are networked with large city	NETW-LC
Cb	Towns with significant outgoing flows also for destination centre (with significant share on its no. of jobs) - and linked to this destination SMST – they are networked with SMST as source	NETW-SMST-S
Cc	Towns with significant incoming flow(s) from other SMST (both yellow and red) – they are networked with SMST as destination	NETW-SMST-D

Figure 19: Types of urban centres according to territorial arrangements - autonomous, networked, agglomerated (2001)



There are significant urban systems organized around LC in which SMSTs are usually agglomerated with some networked (in cases of similar size and significance). There are, however, also important urban systems of SMSTs and in their cases most towns are networked (only 6 are agglomerated).

Not surprisingly, the population size of LC is of different rank than average population size of the types of SMSTs. The largest average population size have SMSTs networked with large cities, and SMSTs networked with other SMSTs as the destination centres. Larger are also SMSTs agglomerated with LC, even larger than SMSTs networked with other SMSTs in the role of sources. Expectedly smallest are SMSTs agglomerated to other SMSTs – their average size is even below 5000. The average population size of autonomous centres is 14 thousands (see Tab. 5).

Table 5: Characteristics of types of urban centres

type	Pop 2001	EA 2001	Jobs 2001	Pop 2011	EA 2011	no.	Pop11_avg
LC	2 743 321	1 357 795	1 703 260	2 822 127	1 414 113	13	217 087
NETW_LC	399 952	183 324	170 497	379 665	184 381	17	22 333
AGLO_LC	699 398	336 432	387 841	696 801	343 801	66	10 558
NETW_SMST_D	1 114 242	517 439	645 356	1 050 232	501 822	49	21 433
NETW_SMST_S	715 260	333 021	345 656	688 989	329 164	69	9 985
AGLO_SMST	28 259	12 933	12 929	26 363	12 456	6	4 394

AUTO	589 692	276 699	328 926	561 550	270 552	40	14 039
SUM	6 290 124	3 017 643	3 594 465	6 225 727	3 056 289	260	23 945

There is one specific issue in the Czech case. Among autonomous urban centres, there are two with population size over 50 thousands – Usti nad Labem (98) and Opava (58). Usti nad Labem is a regional administrative centre of Northern Bohemia. In the regional settlement context of larger SMSTs and located close to frontier it does not attract any significant flow from other micro-regional centres, so it acts as autonomous and according to above criteria we have not considered to be large city (LC). The other is Opava in Moravian Silesian Region (northeast). Again in the context of strong competition from Ostrava and being at the frontier with Poland it does not attract any significant flow from other microregional centre. The other urban centres with population over 50 thousands are all networked with LC or other SMSTs. The third largest autonomous town has population 34 thousands. So, based on this knowledge, we tend to reconsider the definition of large centres considering a specific type of large urban centre, that is autonomous – which also means that it is large, is not agglomerated to larger urban centre but also has small regional effect on other smaller urban centres.

2.4. Comparison of morphological and functional analysis

The direct comparison of outputs of functional and geomatic/morphological approach is difficult as the methods work with different spatial units and principles of SMSTs conceptualisation. However, we can attempt a very brief comparative overview.

Table 6 shows intersection of 5 datasets comprising municipalities/urban centres defined in terms of different concepts:

- A. municipalities indicated as SMSTs by RA2 morphological analysis (236),
- B. job centres (367),
- C. microregional centres (260),
- D. municipalities with legal status of town (602),
- E. administrative centres - municipalities with extended competences (205).

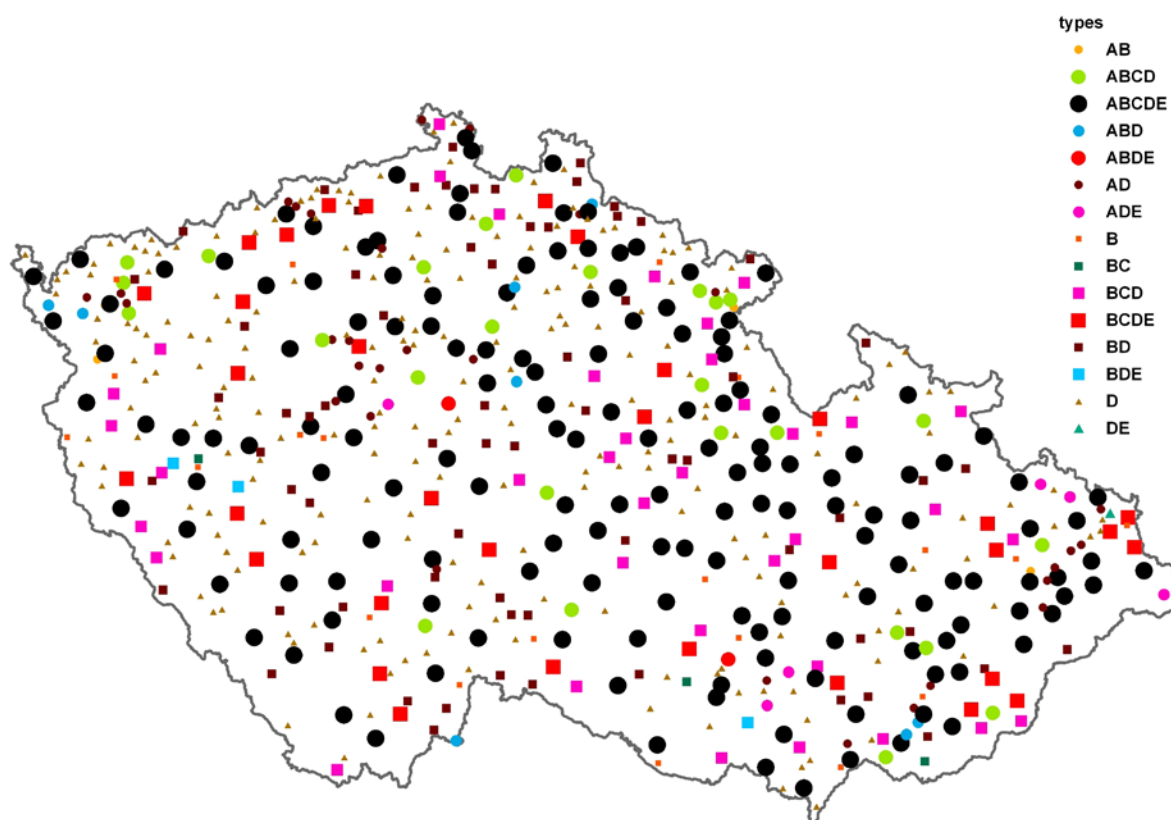
The total number of concerned municipalities (union of datasets) is 630.

Table 6: Datasets intersections – municipality types (2001, 2013)

type / represented datasets	number of municipalities
A+B+C+D+E	160
A+B+C+D	26
A+B+D+E	2
A+B+D	8
A+B	4
A+D+E	6
A+D	30
B+C+D+E	33
B+C+D	38

B+D+E	3
B+D	69
B	21
B+C	3
D+E	1
D	226

Figure 20: Datasets intersections – municipality types (2001, 2013)



3. Socio-economic and demographic profiles and performance of SMSTs

To account for the territorial performance of SMSTs, this section focuses on three case study towns and analyses their demographic, social and economic characteristics and their change and investigates their position and performance in relation to other SMSTs. The case studies of 3 SMSTs were selected to represent different territorial arrangements of SMSTs - autonomous, agglomerated and networked. These three case study towns has been subject of more closer empirical investigation, focused on the position and performance of selected towns in comparison with the other SMSTs and specifically those in the same category (autonomous, agglomerated and networked). The information gained from the desk research was further enhanced and supplemented by information gained through interviews which main goals were related to qualitative interpretation and understanding of the local performance specifically in relation to the policy analysis. In the Czech republic, 3 case study towns were selected. Bradýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav (population 17537) as the example of agglomerated SMST in Prague metropolitan region; Písek (29705) as an example of autonomous SMST located in the area inbetween the influence of three relatively distant large cities; and Ústí nad Orlicí (14414) as an example of SMST networked with other SMSTs (Česká Třebová, Letohrad).

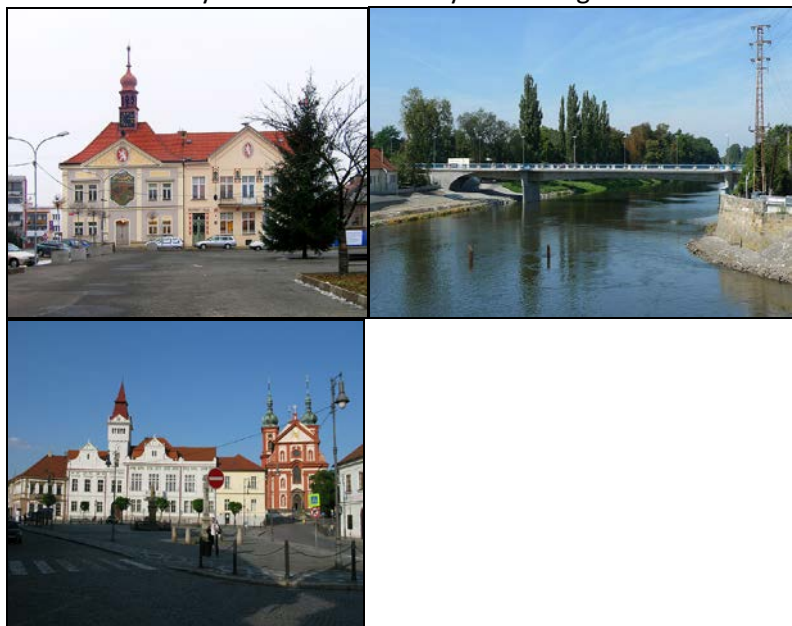
name	inhabitants	functional role	geographical typology	socio-economic characteristics	policy interests
Brandýs nad Labem	17537	agglomerated (Prague area)	metropolitan area of capital city, traditionally agricultural countryside	growing in terms of population and jobs, due to proximity of booming capital city	struggling with the independence/dependence on Prague
Ústí nad Orlicí	14414	networked with other SMSTs (Česká Třebová, Letohrad)	peripheral region consisting of larger number of industrialized SMSTs that are mutually networked	local employment and administrative centre, textile and machinery industries, service functions - SMST on the main railway corridor	defining goals and strategies of wider co-operation with SMSTs closely networked in terms of job commuting
Písek	29705	autonomous	thriving region in the intermediate position between large city regions, based on the prosperity of SMSTs	market town, cultural, educational and employment centre, growing light industry in new industrial zones, imigration including foreign labour force	complex development based on mutual combination of education and knowledge, industrial production and tourism

3.1. Brandýs nad Labem-Stará Boleslav

Introduction

Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav (BL-SB) is the example of agglomerated SMST in Prague metropolitan region. The municipality consists of two historical towns located on the opposite sides of Elbe river banks. Each of these towns has own rich history and despite common local government framework, maintain different identities of more industrial Brandýs nad Labem and spiritual Stará Boleslav. Since the merger of the two original towns in 1960, the new municipality keeps both original historical names.

Town hall Brandýs nad Labem – newly built bridge – town hall Stará Boleslav

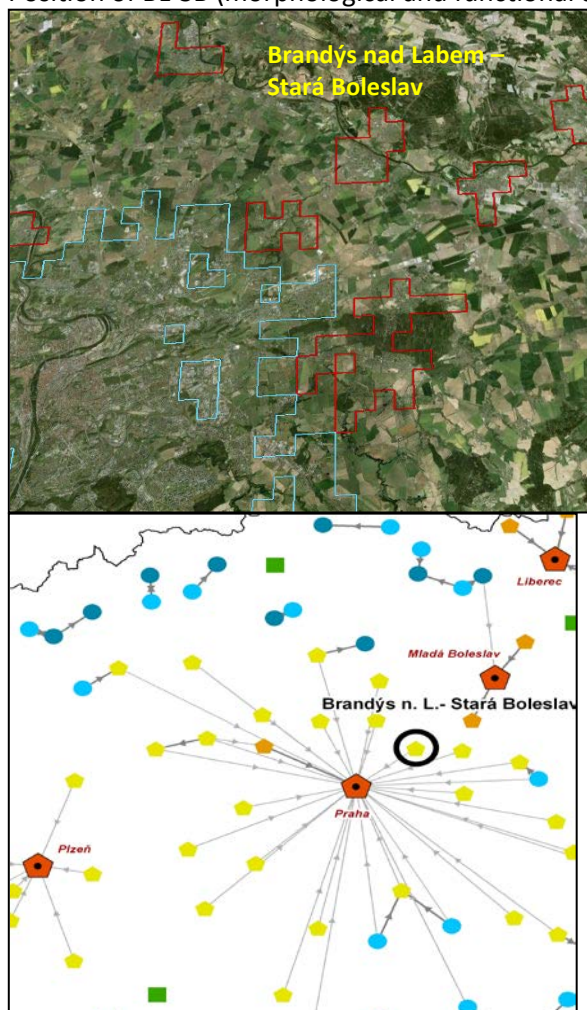


The town is located in agricultural lowlands, which, together with the proximity of the capital city, has had long-term influence on town development. Elbe River was an important transportation corridor. The first written notes about town are related to Slavs coming to Bohemian Basin in the 9th Century. The modern development has begun in the mid-19th century with the establishment of manufactures. Well known is Melichar's factory producing farm machinery, which was founded in 1883 and had branches in many European countries. During socialist times, these factories were nationalised. After the 1990, enterprises were privatized and beside industries, services developed in the town, which became local administrative and business center.

Location and position in the settlement system

Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav (BL-SB) is located in Prague metropolitan region. Administratively, it is part of Středočeský region (NUTS 3) and also of cohesion region Střední Čechy (NUTS 2). Beside the self-government of the municipality, BL-SB also acts as the administrative centre of district Brandýs nad Labem, serving numerous small rural settlements. The essential factor for the local development is proximity to Prague further strengthened by the location on highway. BL has been also strengthening its position in the hierarchy of settlements through population and job growth and acquiring the district administrative function.

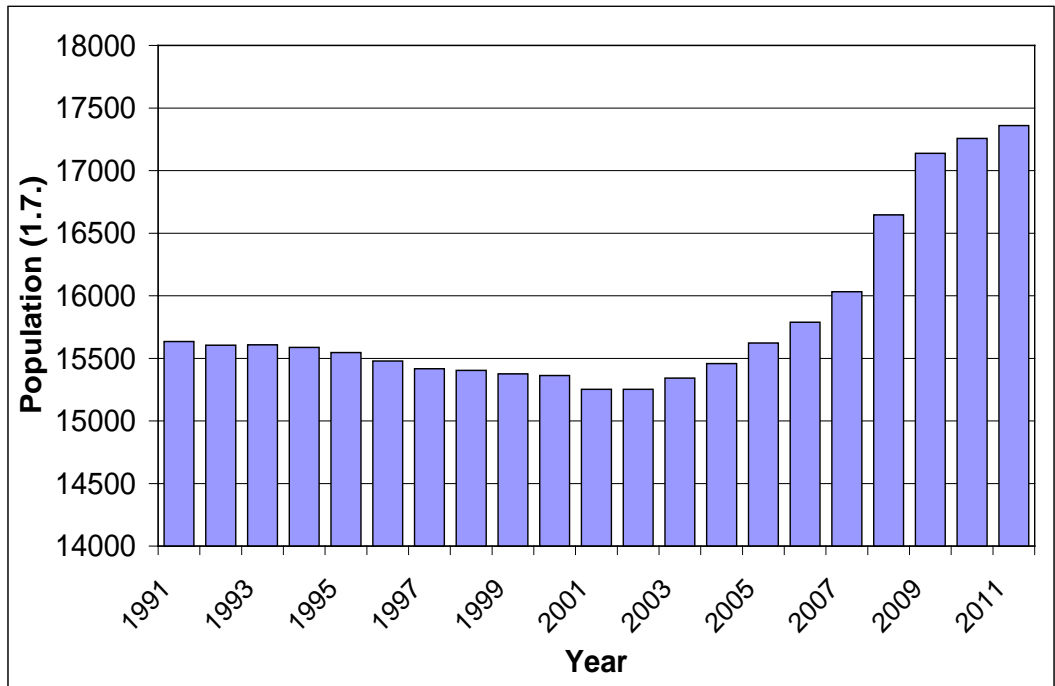
Position of BL-SB (morphological and functional analysis)



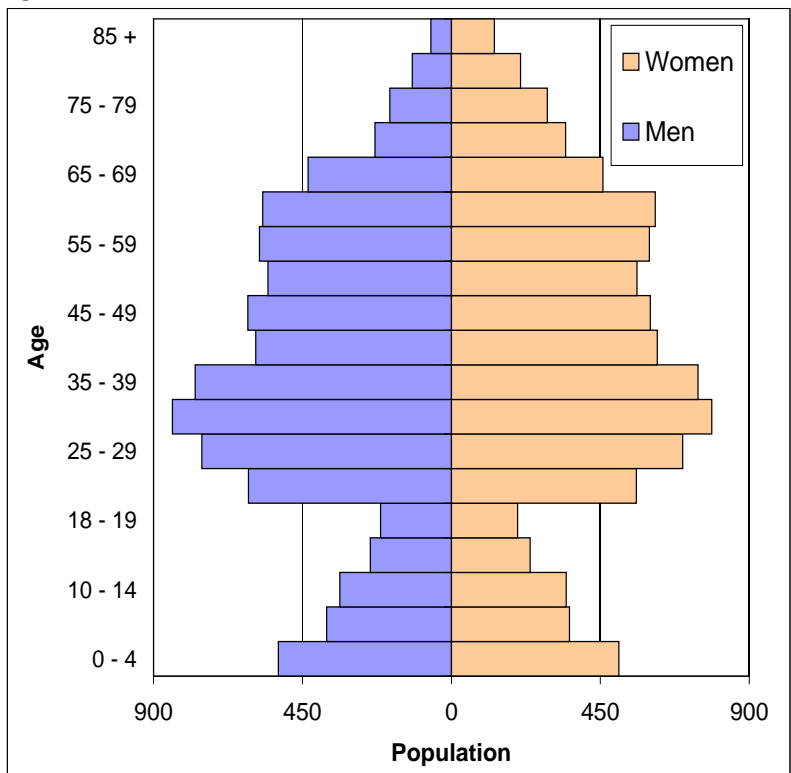
Demographic profile

At the end of 2011, the population of BL-SB was 17,358 inhabitants (Středočeský kraj – Central Bohemian Region (NUTS 3) had totally 1,273,094 inhabitants). The city is 72nd most populous municipality in the Czech Republic and 9th largest settlement in Středočeský kraj. The average age of population is 40.3 years. 70.6% of population is in productive age, while pre-productive population (children under 15 years of age) in the total population account for 14.6 %, and post-productive population (persons over 65 years) is 14.8 %. In the period from 1991 to 2011, mortality was slightly lower than the average of NUTS 3 and the birth rate slightly above the value for NUTS 3. However, the town gained most of the new population by migration. As the country in general, BL-SB experienced the process of demographic ageing. The index of ageing had value 101.1 % in 2011, while in 2001 the index was 90.1 % and 59.3 % in 1991.

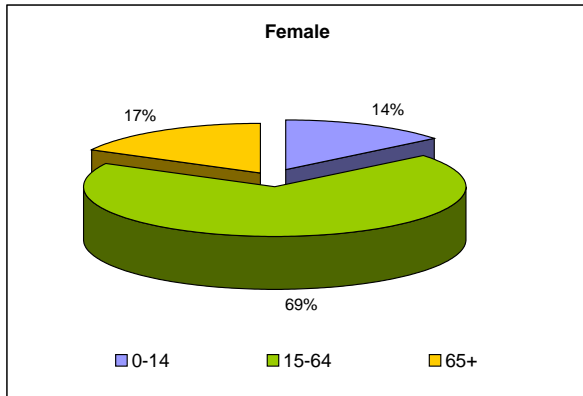
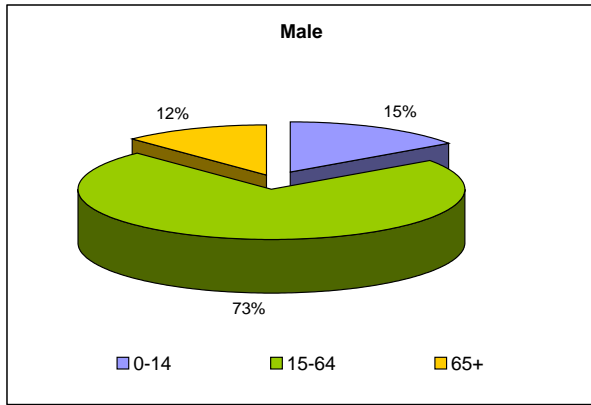
Population development 1991-2011



Age structure 2011



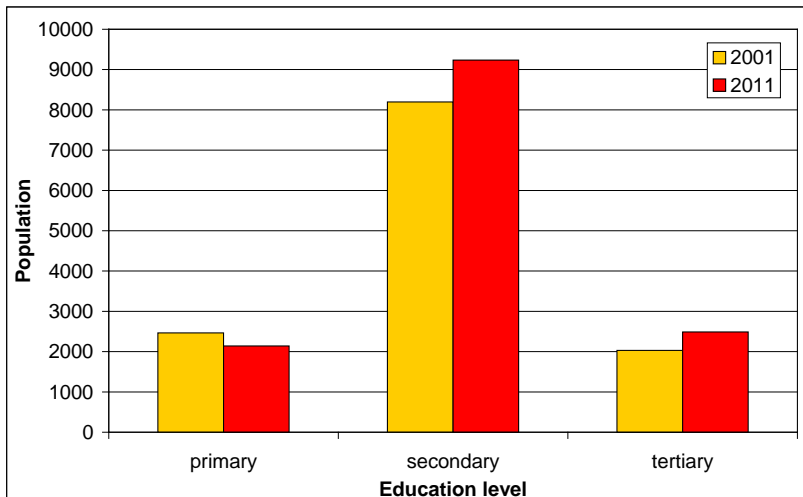
Age categories by gender 2011



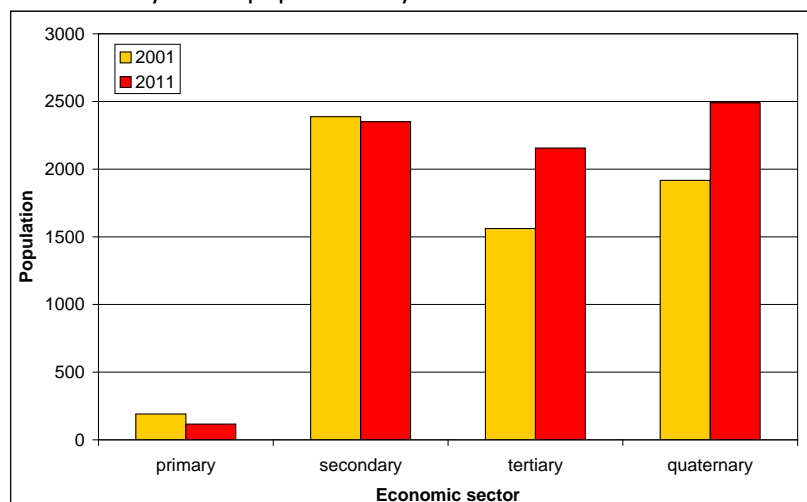
In terms of population and job growth, there has been slight decline during the 1990s with steady growth since 2000. The maximum growth was achieved in 2008, i.e. before the start of economic crisis, which affected the dynamics of suburbanization process in Prague's hinterland. In terms of ethnic and nationality composition, the largest groups are Slovaks, Ukrainians and Vietnamese.

The level of the population education is increasing. Between 2001 and 2011 there was a decline in the share of population with basic education and increase in secondary education. Population employed in primary sector decreased while most of the growth concentrated in tertiary and quaternary activities.

Education level of population (15+) 2001-2011



Economically active population by the economic sector 2001-2011

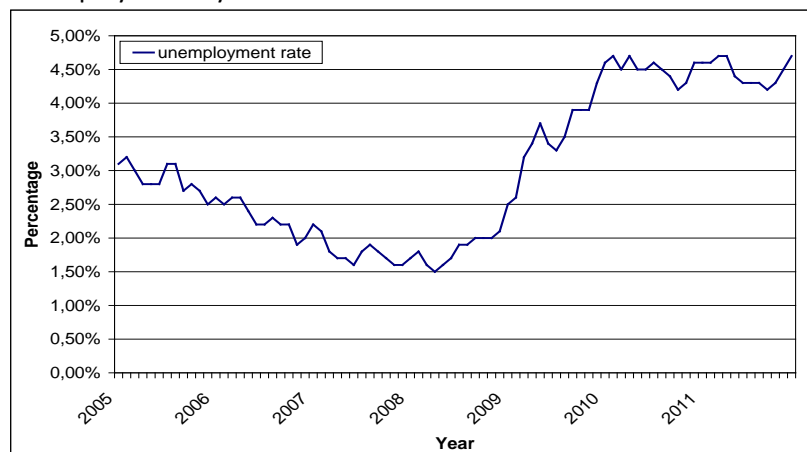


Economic profile

Beside having the status of a district administrative center, the town has sound and growing economic base and well developed public infrastructure. While large share of local population is commuting for jobs to the capital city of Prague, local industrial zone is the destination of commuters from nearby region. Other job opportunities are related to gravel mining at the nearby lake. There is also growing role of recreation activities along the river and lakes and tourism related to town(s) history, especially related to the Emperor Rudolf II., which at the turn of 16th and 17th century promoted the local castle as his second residential place beside Prague castle.

The rate of unemployment is relatively low. However it has slightly increased during the economic crisis from 3 % in 2005 to 4.5 % in 2011. The economic crisis has impacted especially the growing discrepancy between the number of job seekers and vacancies. Fortunately, the proximity of capital city with its strong labor market has a strong influence on one of lowest unemployment rates among SMSTs.

Unemployment by month 2005-2011



Job market 2005-2011 by month



3.2. Písek

Introduction

Písek is the example of an autonomous town. The town history dates back to medieval times. It was established in 13th century as a settlement for gold sand seekers on the left bank of the Otava River. In 1254, Otakar II established here a royal city. Since that time, the town of Písek holds the largest urban estates in Bohemia, especially in terms of forests. The town is well known for its historical core that includes a castle and the oldest bridge in the country built in 13th century. At present, despite a sound industrial base and further development of industrial zone, Písek presents itself as the place of tourism, culture, education and high quality of life. It has more high schools than many other larger towns. Since 2003, there is a private college (Film Academy of Miroslav Ondříček in Písek) offering tertiary education.

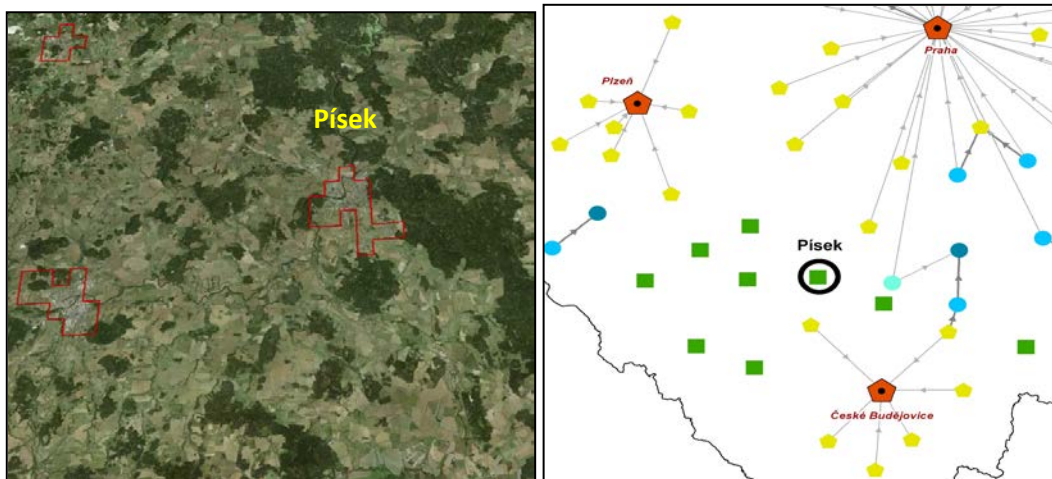
View from the old bridge on renovated waterfront – Great town square – Film Academy



Location and position in settlement system

Písek is the third largest city in South Bohemian region, after regional capital České Budějovice and town Tábor. It is positioned in between the capital city and two regional capitals in a kind of rural peripheral area. However, Písek is an important administrative, job, service, transport, cultural and tourist center. The town acts as local settlement center that provides administrative services within its district, overlooking small rural municipalities. While the town can not draw advantages from a proximity to major urban centers it retains strong autonomy and position within its own region being able to retain residents and jobs.

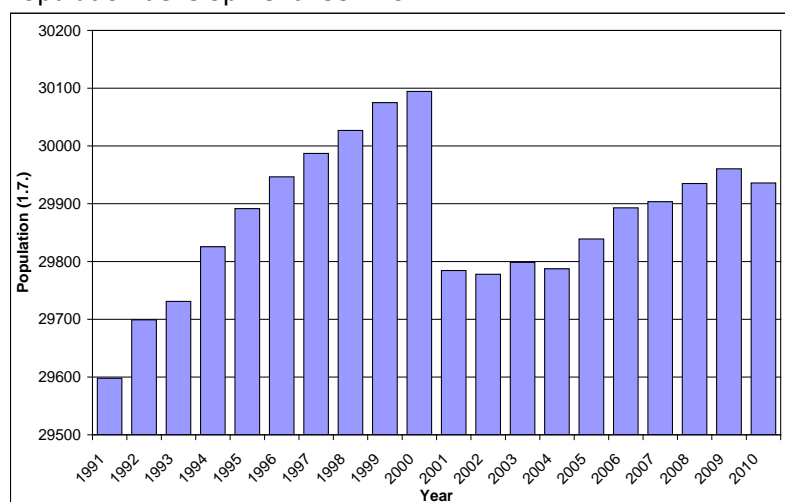
Position of Písek (morphological and functional analysis)



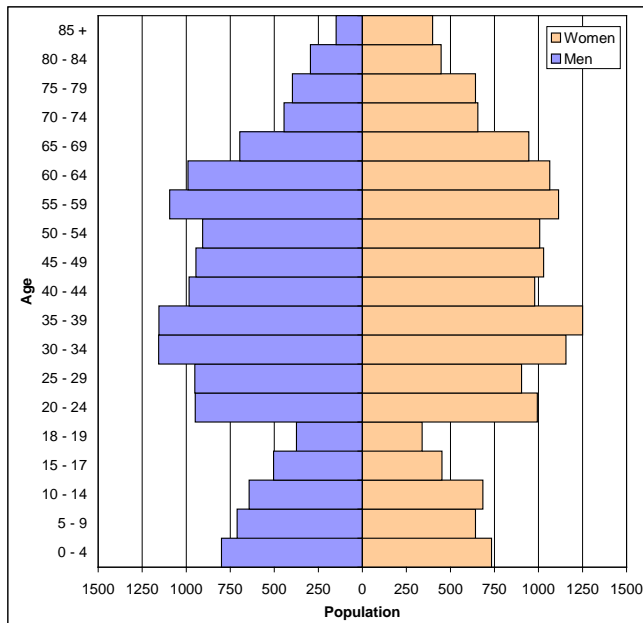
Demographic profile

In 2011 Písek had 29,711 inhabitants. Over the last 20 years, the population has been relatively stable. While annual data indicated steady growth, the Census data shown less inhabitants than expected (this can be caused by people who moved abroad and are not obliged to deregister). The average age is 41.7 years (if compared with the region, it is about 0.5 years higher). Index of ageing is 118.3; however the mean of region is 109.8, so the inhabitants of Písek are on average older than is the average in the South Bohemian region. Pre-productive group of population constitutes 14.6 % of the total town population (in South Bohemia 14.7 %), but post-productive group constitutes 17.3 % in Písek, in South Bohemia 16.2 %. 68.1 % (69.1 %) of population is in productive age. The age structure is characterized with a small proportion of pre-productive population while post-productive population is increasing. With women having higher life expectancy, they are overrepresented in higher age categories.

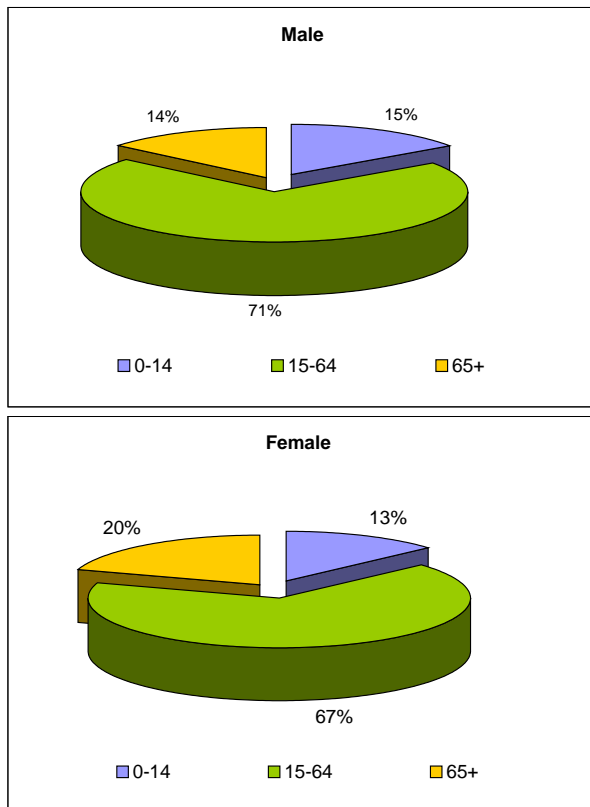
Population development 1991-2011



Age structure 2011



Age categories by gender 2011

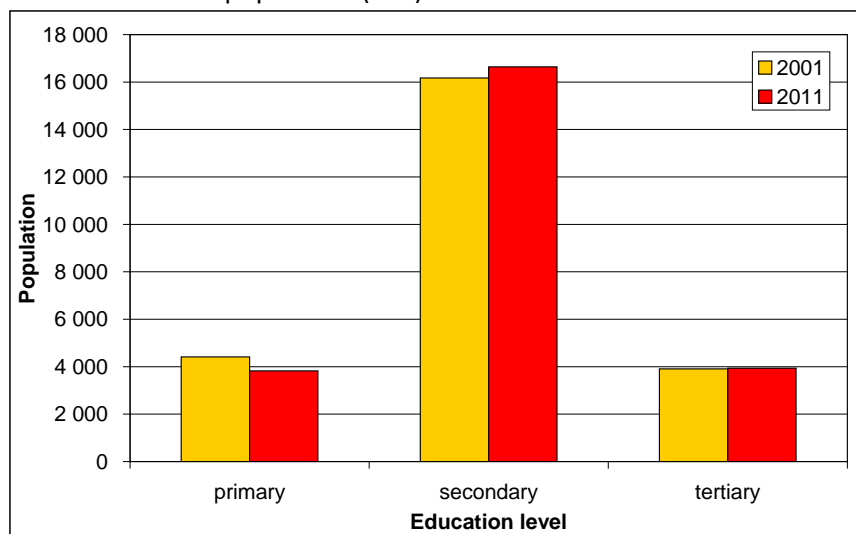


Social status

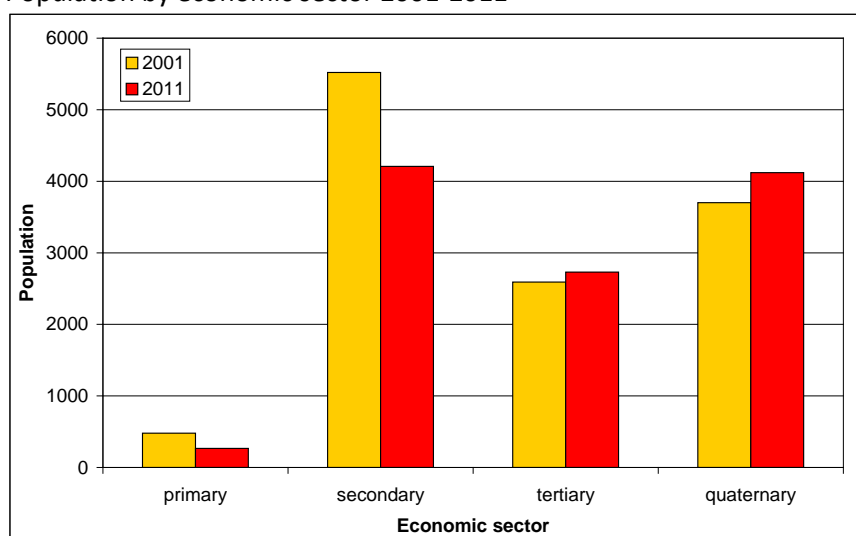
The educational structure is relatively stable with expected small increase in the share of secondary level education at the expense of primary level education. The proportion of university graduates has not changed since 2001, which is different from the country general trend. This indicates that the town is not capable to keep university educated younger population which is moving to larger cities. Over past decade (2001-2011) there has been strong decrease of economically active resident population in primary and secondary

sectors. However, this does not mean such a decrease in jobs in industry, which are taken by commuters. On the other hand side, there has been a slight increase in tertiary and quaternary employment.

Education level of population (15+) 2001-2011



Population by economic sector 2001-2011

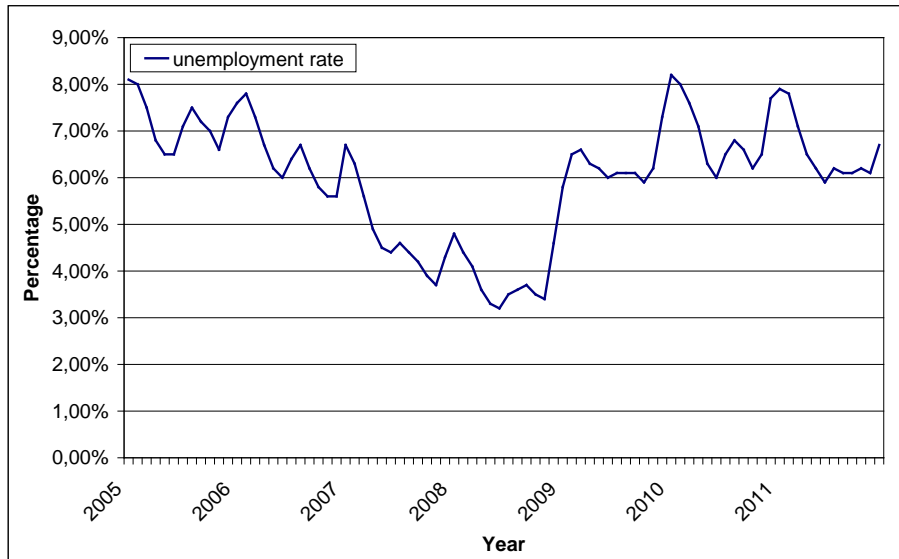


Economic profile

Písek is currently experiencing a large industrial boom. From the late 1990s, a new large industrial zone has been constructed on town's north side becoming the largest of its sort in the South Bohemian Region. The local industrial production is mainly focused around engineering and electronics industries. The town is seat of an older well-known textile company Jitex, which was one of the largest textile companies in the socialist Czechoslovakia. However, since 1990, Jitex gradually closed branch companies due to the general decline of the textile industry. The town is also focusing on tourism development,

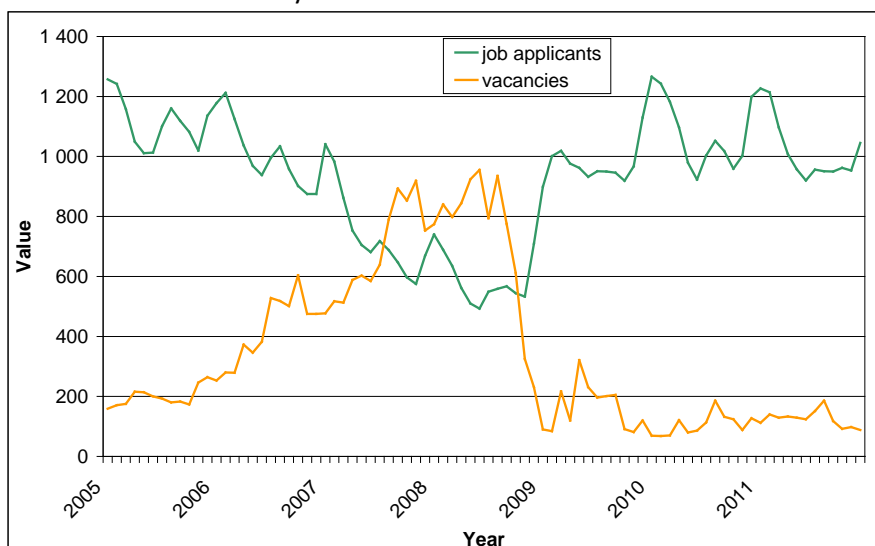
reflecting tradition of a spa center in 19th and first half of 20th Centuries. Písek was an army town. However, since the army left, former barracks are now going to be developed to a technology center utilizing support from the European Regional Development Fund and the state budget. The aim of this project is to offer infrastructure for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and innovative educational activities (Technology Park includes a business incubator).

Unemployment by month 2005-2011



The rate of unemployment has been declining up to 2009 with the number of vacancies exceeding for a short time period the number of job seekers. However, the economic crisis affected city economy after 2009 leading to a sharp decline in job vacancies and growth of the unemployment to 7%.

Job market 2005-2011 by month



3.3. Ústí nad Orlicí

Introduction

Ústí nad Orlicí is an example of networked town. Its origins date to the second half of the 13th century, during the reign of Otakar II when it began to grow on bases of old Slavic settlement. In the past, the majority of people lived on agriculture and domestic weaving. The textile industry and mechanical engineering was established in the mid-19th century in relation to the construction of railway from Olomouc to Prague. The growth of textile strongly affected the life of the town so it was called “East Manchester”. Under socialism, the city was a district capital with its administrative role further supported by industrial base in engineering. During the last two decades the significance of this town was rather declining related to deindustrialization and loss of administrative role in the region.

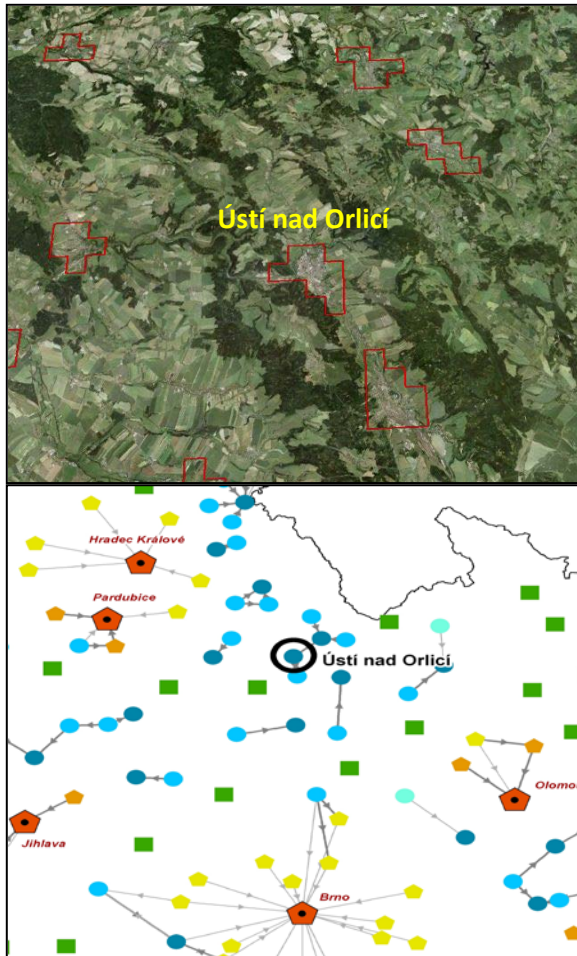
Railway station – town view with mountain panorama – machinery plant Rieter



Localization and position in settlement system

In relation to the regional centers, Ústí nad Orlicí is located at a periphery, over 60 km of road distance from the regional capital Pardubice and another regional capital Hradec Králové, 100 km from other regional capitals and about 150 km from the capital city of Prague. Furthermore, it is not located on any major traffic route, so accessibility is one of key issues of local development. Together with other towns (namely as Česká Třebová and Letohrad) it forms a network of interconnected towns. Furthermore, in near proximity there are other similar networks of small towns. The networking gives the city advantages such as wider choice of inhabitants on the labor market.

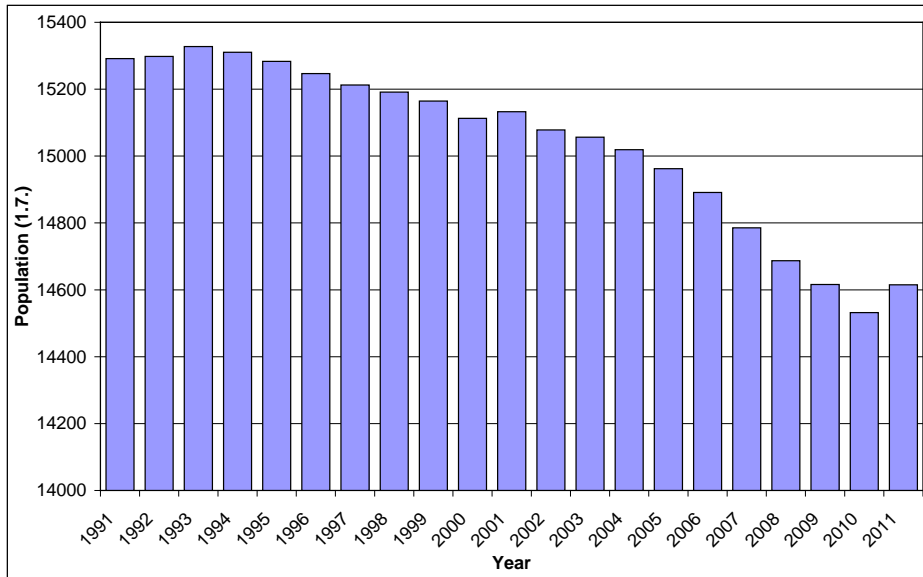
Position of Ústí nad Orlicí (morphological and functional analysis)



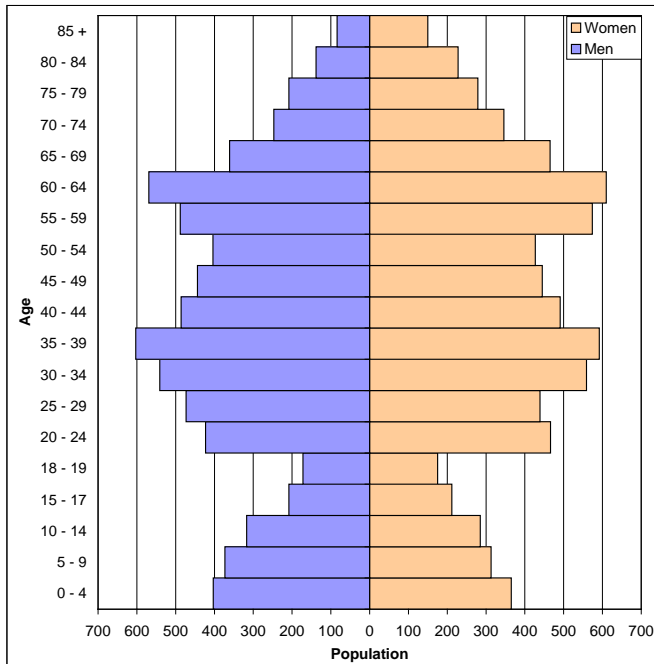
Demographic profile

During the last two decades, the population declined slightly from 15,300 to 14,600 inhabitants in 2011, especially due to migration loss. The age distribution shows the low share of population below the age of 20. Average age increased to 41.9 years. Index of aging in 2011 was 121.4. Ústí nad Orlicí has the least favorable age structure in comparison with the two other cases of Brandýs nad labem – Stará Boleslav and Písek.

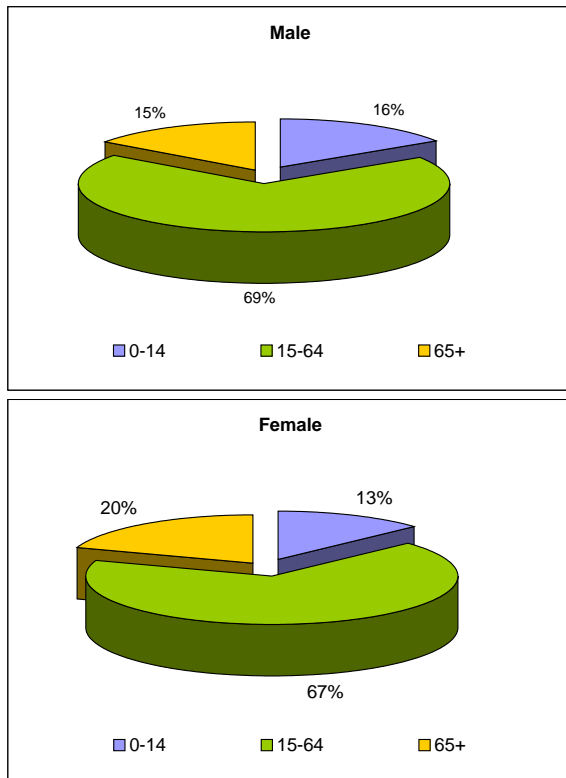
Population development 1991-2011



Age structure 2011



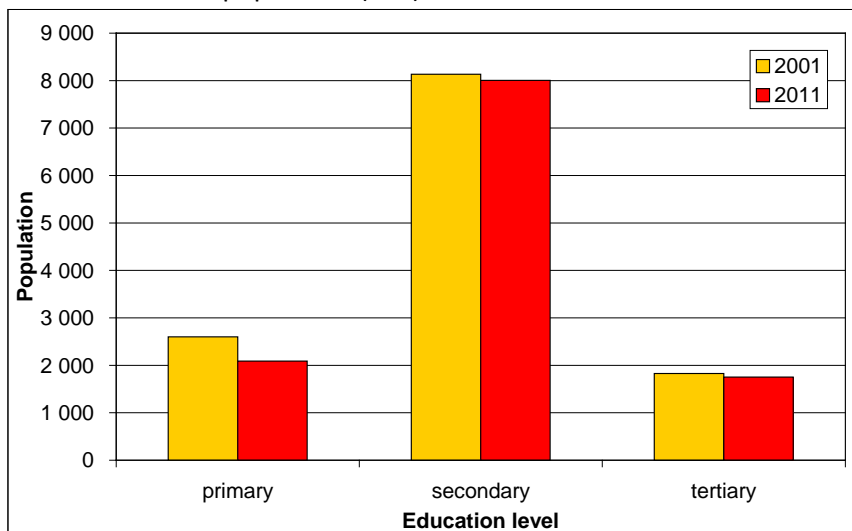
Age categories by gender 2011



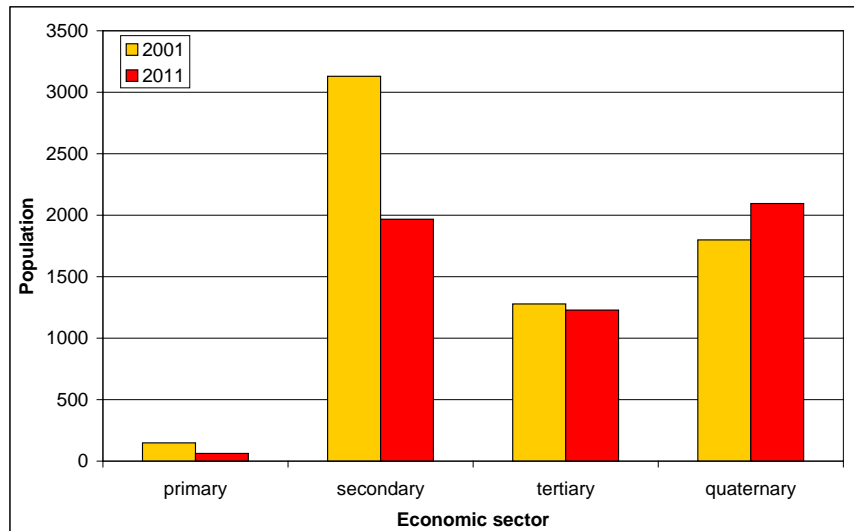
Social status

Education level of inhabitants did not change significantly in the past decade, which is in striking contrast with the generally increasing share of better educated population at the national level and also other two case towns. There has been a significant decline of employment in the secondary sector, with one third decrease in the period of 2001 and 2011. Smaller increase has been registered in advance services.

Education level of population (15+) 2001-2011



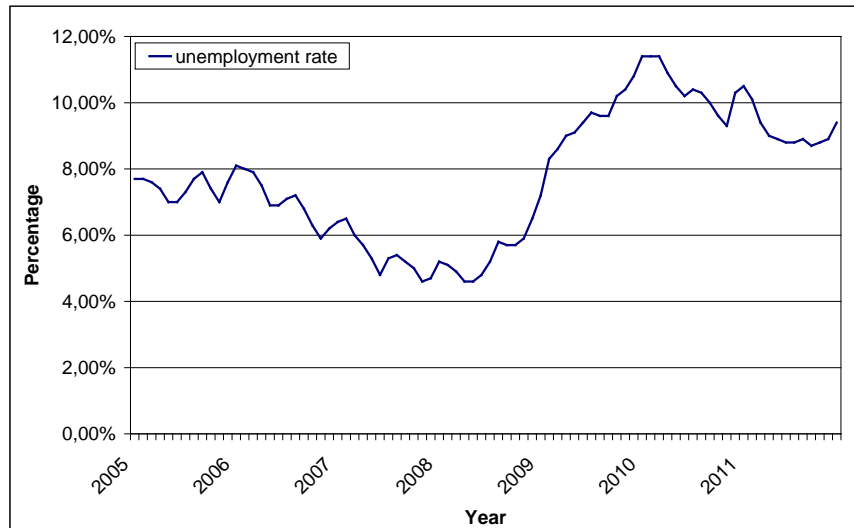
Population by economic sector 2001-2011



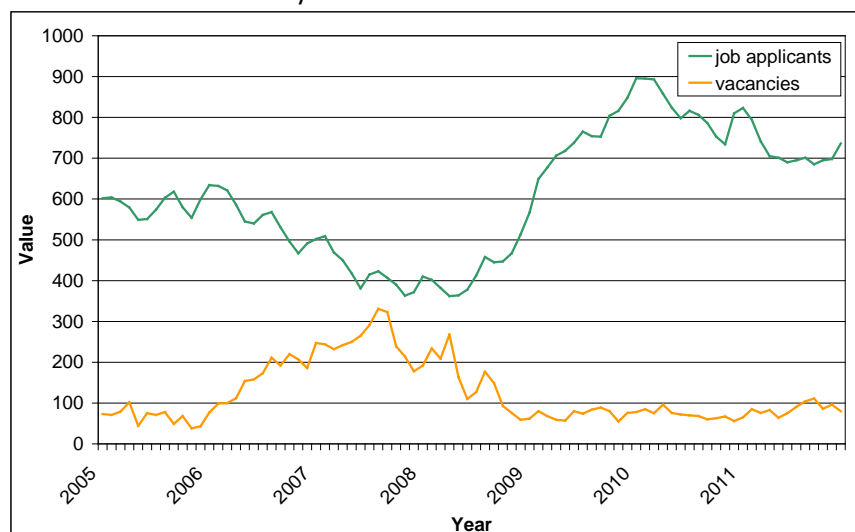
Economic profile

Former small industrial town at present faces industrial decline, restructuring and unemployment levels around 10%, which is higher than national average. The town has not been able to attract new major investors due to its peripheral position. Economic and job decline is mirrored in population stagnation and decline.

Unemployment by month 2005-2011



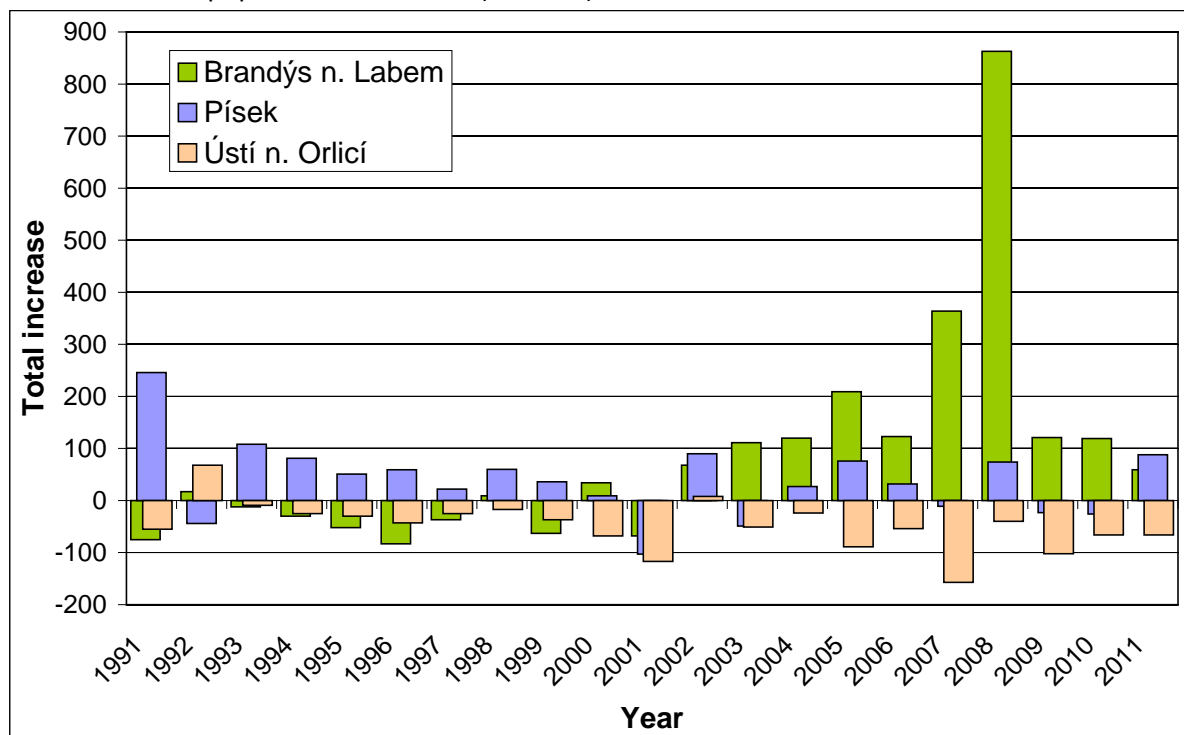
Job market 2005-2011 by month



Comparison of the three case study towns

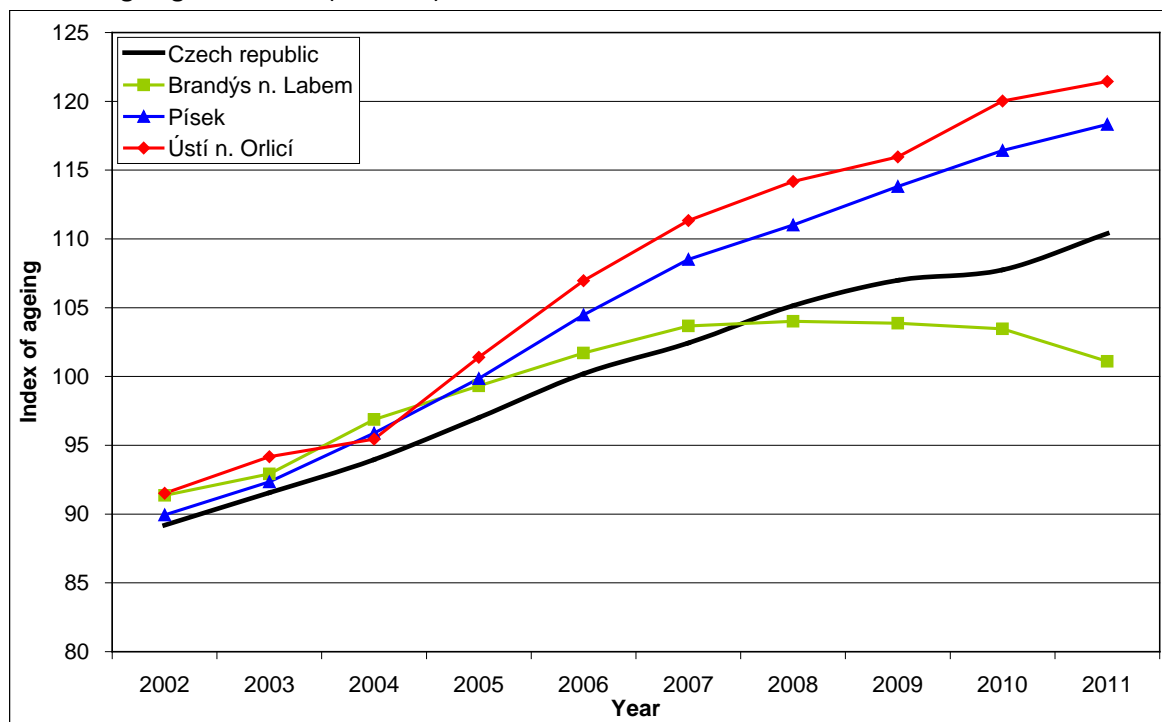
The population growth is taken as an indicator that reflects the economic wellbeing and general performance of cities. In terms of the population change, the three towns have had very distinct development trajectories over past two decades, specifically in the period from the beginning of millennium, i.e. when institutional transformation was accomplished, to 2009, when economic crisis began impact on economic and urban development. Agglomerated town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav is a typical example of the effects of suburbanization and decentralization in metropolitan areas with rapid growth since 2000, following years of decline and stagnation. Importantly, the growth still continues, yet at more peaceful rates. The autonomous town Písek has been through the two decades slowly growing with some years recoding population decline. This is due to its former role of district centre, still keeping its significance for local region and using local development strategies promoting both the development of industries on the one hand side, and advance services, education, culture and tourism on the other hand side.

Total increase of population 1991-2011 (all cases)

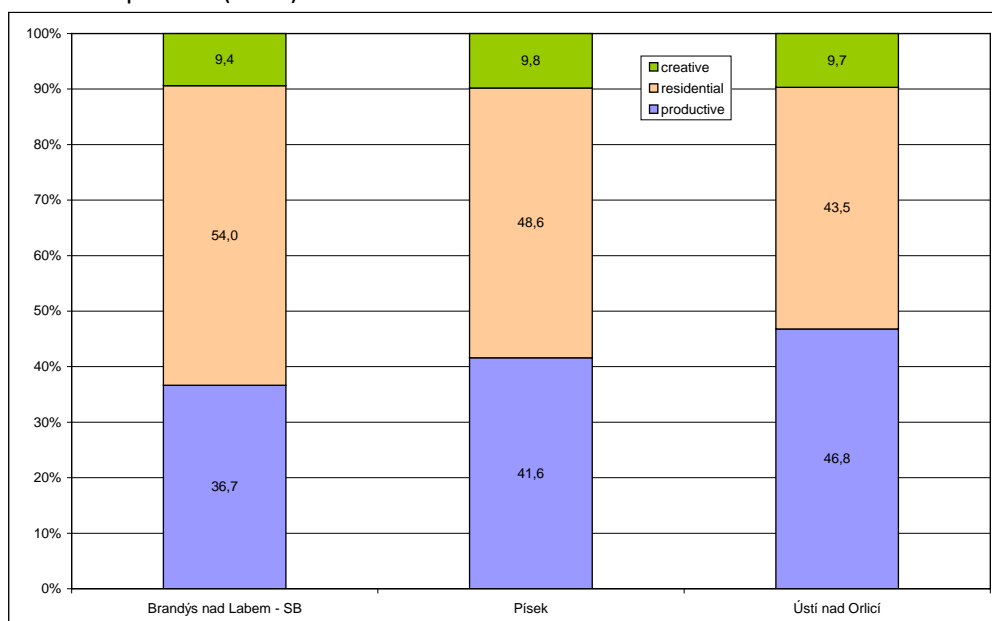


Ageing is one of the key challenges that face contemporary advance societies. In post-socialist states the general trend of ageing has been further strengthened by sharply declined levels of natality due to economic uncertainties related to transformation. Since the beginning of the millennium, regional disparities increased hand in hand with the diverging trajectories for cities, towns and villages in different regions. While 2002, the index of ageing was on similar level in all three case study towns and close to the average of the Czech Republic, its development radically departed from the average in individual towns. For the town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav, the index of ageing decreased significantly due to fast development of suburbanization and immigration of young families. In Písek and Ústí nad Orlicí the index of aging has increased more rapidly than was the country average, especially in the case of Ústí nad Orlicí. With the exception of suburban towns in major metropolitan regions, this trend is typical for most small and medium sized towns.

Index of ageing 2002-2011 (all cases)



Economic profiles (2011)



The three towns differ in their economic profile. The profiles reflect the employment of resident population which is not necessarily fully related to job structure in the town. This is especially the case of Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav with strong commuting to Prague. While creative economies are on generally low levels in all three towns with employment not exceeding 10%, the major difference concern the employment split between productive economies and residential (service) economies. Despite deindustrialization and loss of jobs, the productive sector still dominates in Ústí nad Orlicí. In Písek, the balance is more towards residential/service sector, that is, despite reindustrialization, related to the significant role of

a district service centre with some supra-local and even supra-regional activities. The dominance of residential sector over productive is remarkable in Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav. Despite that Brandýs has established new industrial zone leading to the increase of jobs in secondary sector, the major share of population is employed in services, especially due to job supply in the nearby capital of Prague, where the population is daily commuting.

3.4. Case study towns performance in 2001-2011 positioned among the three types of SMSTs

Figure: Population and job change according to the three types of SMSTs

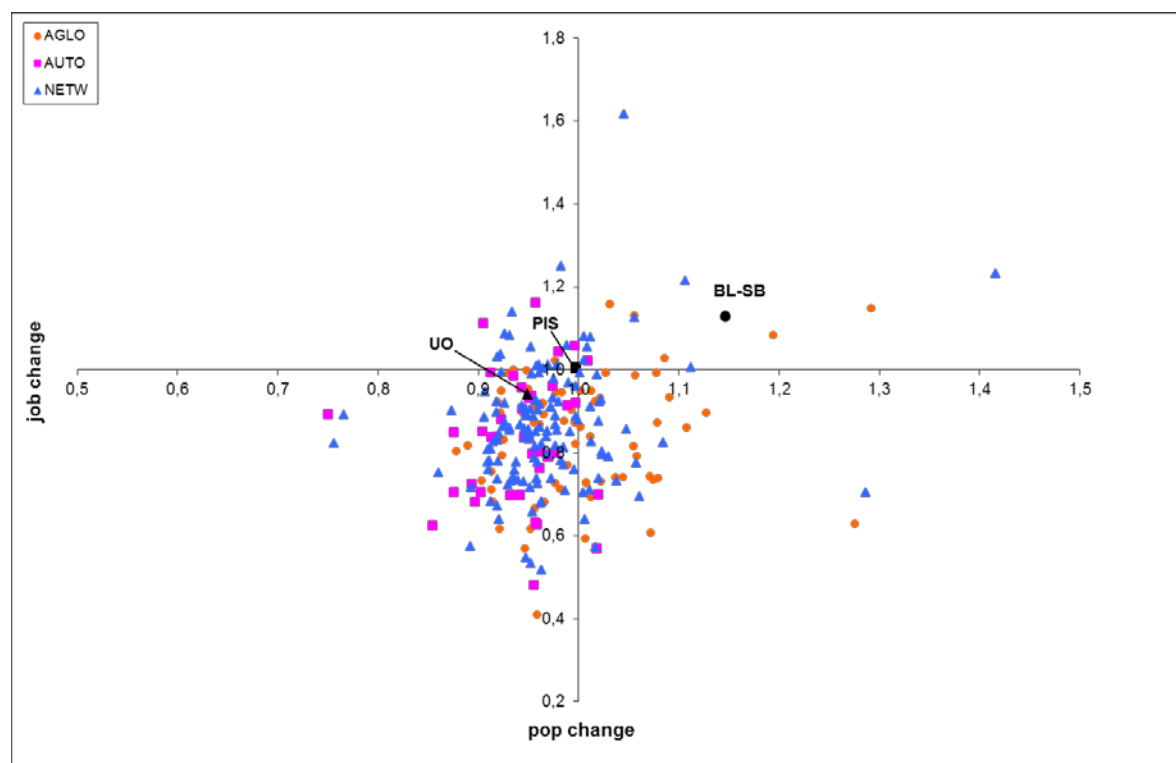


Figure: Population change and change in tertiary educated according to the three types of SMSTs

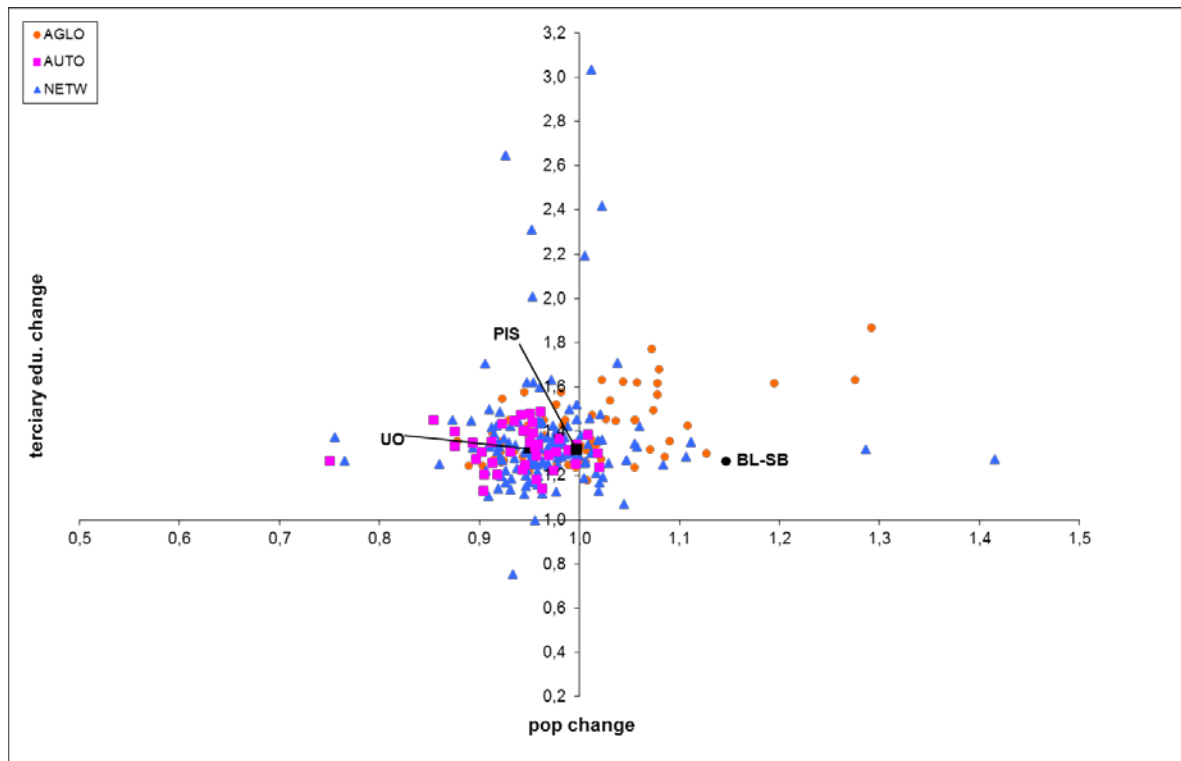


Figure: Job change and change in the rate of unemployment according to the three types of SMSTs

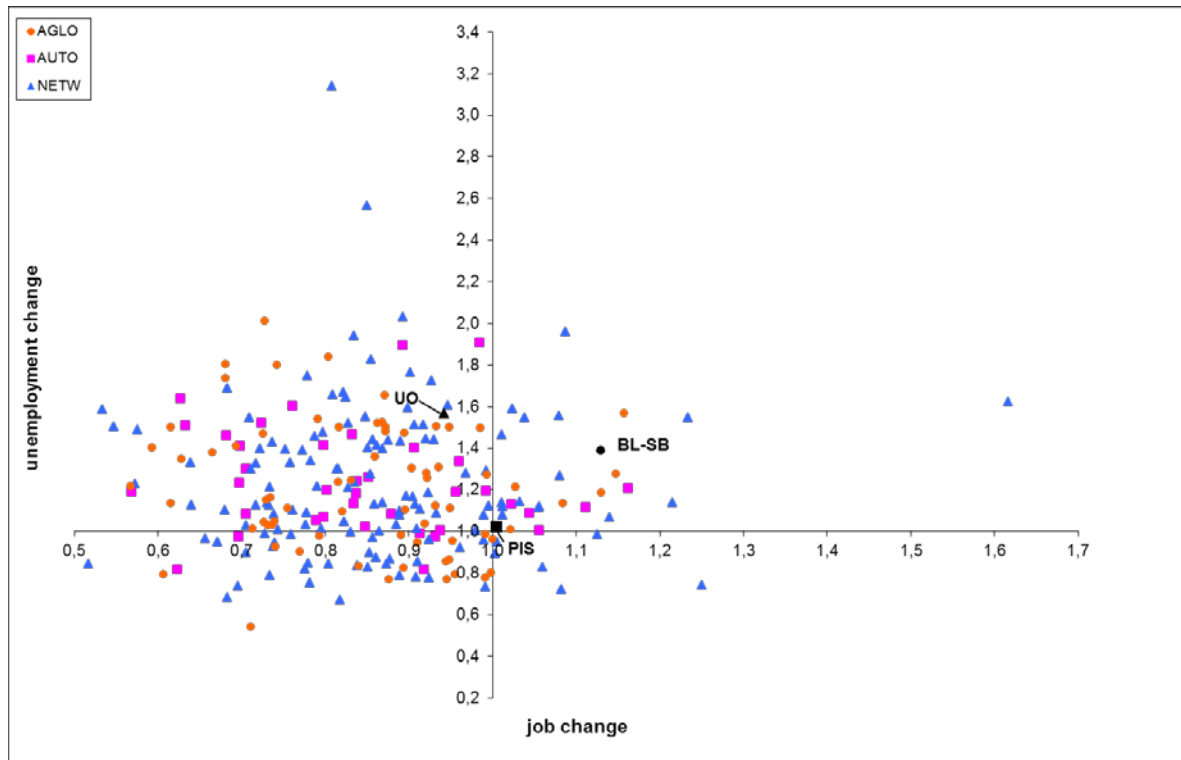
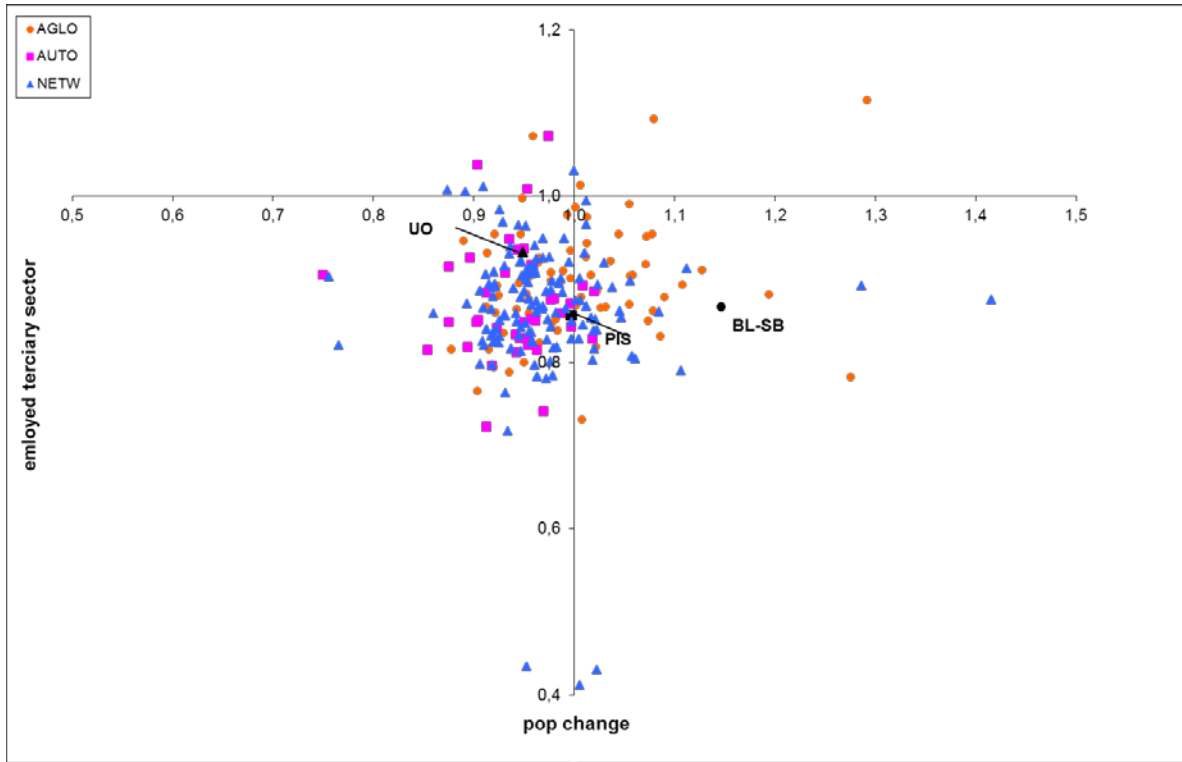


Figure: Population change and change in tertiary sector employment according to the three types of SMSTs



3.5. Case study towns performance positioned within their region

Figure: Change in the rate of unemployment in the three case study towns in comparison to their respective regional contexts

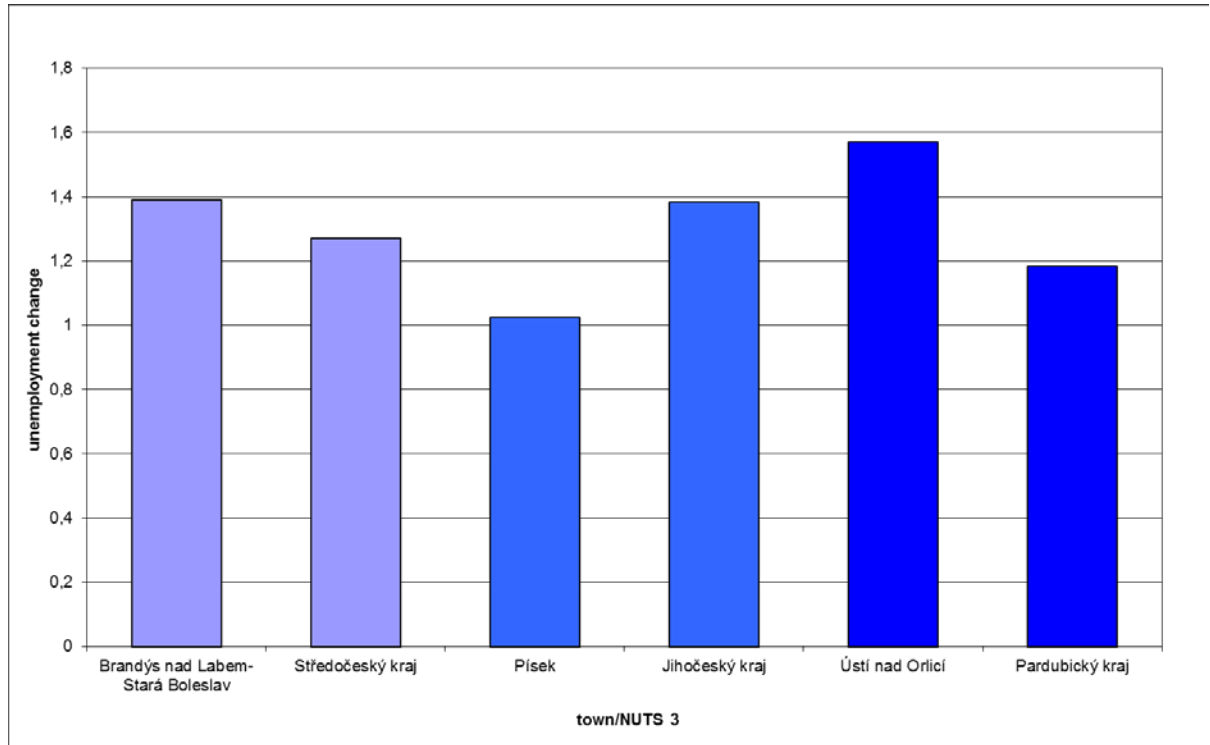


Figure: Change in the employment in tertiary sector in the three case study towns in comparison to their respective regional contexts

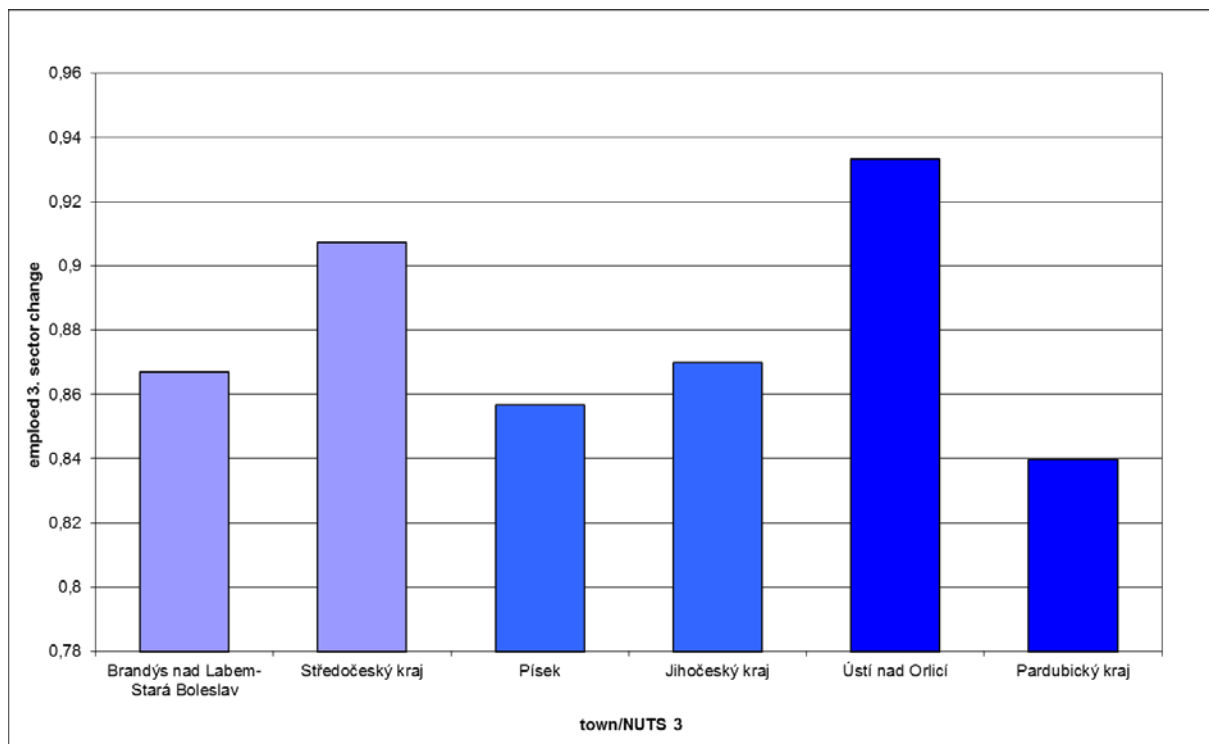
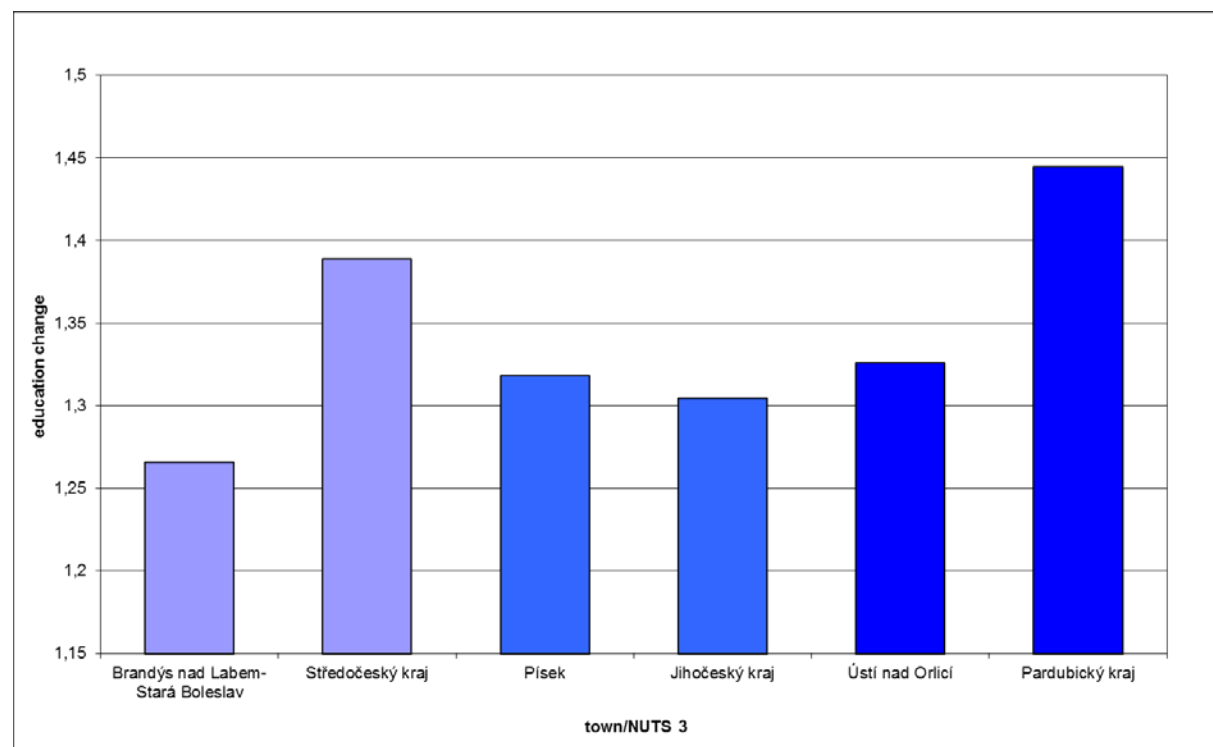


Figure: Change in the share of tertiary educated in the three case study towns in comparison to their respective regional contexts



4. Policy analysis

4.1. EU, national and regional policies (and their impact) on SMSTs

SMST in Czech policies and planning documents

Czech regional/spatial development and planning policies are generally very decentralized – to 14 regions with elected regional representations, or even to the level of about 6250 municipalities. National policy documents often analyze the issues of spatial development and point out some challenges or priorities. However, these policies are often weak in terms of implementation. The goals can be only implemented by regions or municipalities which might get support to do so, but it is in most cases at the end their decision to implement or not implement particular policy. Planning system in Czechia is based on two pillars – spatial planning (územní plánování) and strategical planning. Recently, as multiple EU agendas are implemented in Czechia, new policy documents appear on other issues like urban policy.

Urban policy guidelines (Zásady urbánní politiky, 2010)

The role of SMST is mentioned in several contexts. Extensive analytical part of the document describes the settlement structure in Czechia as very different from other EU countries because of few large cities (velkoměsta in Czech, understood as municipalities with 100 000+ inhabitants) and an important share of SMST. There are only 6 such cities in Czechia (and 4 other close below this line), compared to larger numbers in other countries with similar population. Large share of small towns (5000+ inhabitants) makes it difficult to make a clear urban-rural distinction. Moreover, dense network of SMST is an obstacle in development of large growth poles (with the only exception of the capital city Prague). On the other hand side, high density of SMST contributes to territorial cohesion. SMST concentrate some services and job opportunities which are crucial for quality of life in rural areas. This role of SMST should be further supported.

However, practical implementation of this goal is given to the urban policies of the regions as they “should create a balanced and polycentric urban structure and support inadequate potentials of some regional centers and centers of lower category which could substitute regional centers in less urbanized areas”. These areas are not explicitly defined. Moreover, the regions do not have explicit “urban policies”.

Masterplanning guidelines (Politika územního rozvoje, 2008)

SMST are not considered explicitly as a category in this document. The documents deals with two scales below the national level – the 14 self-governmental regions (NUTS3) and of 205 administrative regions (whose size is between NUTS 4 and NUTS 5 units). These units are evaluated from multiple perspectives of competitiveness, potentials for sustainable development etc. Similarly to the Urban Policy Guidelines, regional master plans should support those of SMST which are the centers of disadvantaged micro-regions. However, there are no specific mechanisms suggested how this support could be implemented in regional documents.

Strategy of regional development (Strategie regionálního rozvoje, 2007-2013, 2014-2020)

Strategy of regional development is a key document which informs and guides e.g. particular programs of the ERDF and ESF. The role of SMSTs was not mentioned in the 2007-2013 documents. In the 2007-2013 period, allocation of finance from some EU operation programs was conditioned by creating “integrated urban development plans” to coordinate sectorial and territorial policies in urban contexts. These plans were obligatory for cities and towns with population above 50 000 (and Mladá Boleslav which is slightly below this line) and was optional for other cities with population above 20 000.

In the national strategy of regional development for 2014-2020, the role of SMST is understood similarly to Urban Policy Guidelines. On one hand side, high density of SMST is considered as strengths of the country as it contributes to territorial cohesion. On the other hand side, dense network of SMST is an obstacle in development of large growth poles.

Unlike the Urban Policy Guidelines, the Nation strategy of regional development for 2014-2020 is more specific in terms of implementation and is more selective in terms of supported SMST as well. Using geographical location, current densities of population or economic activities and development of selected performance indicators, the country is divided into three types of territories: developmental, stabilized and peripheral. Cities, larger SMST and SMST close to cities are considered as developmental territories. Other SMST are delimited as stabilized territories. The strategy sets specific priorities for each of these types. For developmental areas, “their potentials should be utilized” and “social environment should be improved” while in stabilized areas “balanced development” should be supported. It is therefore possible that some SMST will improve their performance, while the others will not experience significant improvements.

SMST in rural development policies - LEADER

There are specific programs which support rural development administrated by the ministry of agriculture. These activirties started as national Rural recovery program since 1990s and were later extended by EU funding in the pre-accession period. The LEADER method (Liaison Entre Actions Développement de l'Économie Rurale) is used in the program and so call local action groups (místní akční skupina) are formed in rural areas. Local action groups consists of municipalities or unions of municipalities, non-governmental organizations, schools and local businesses in homogenous territories with population 10 000 – 100 000 which does not include towns with more then 25 000 inhabitants. Local action groups create and implement their development strategies and distribute soma part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in current program period. Local action groups are formed bottom-up on voluntary basis. Some small and medium sized towns are part of these groups while others are not.

Current and prospective funding schemes of the EU funds thus implicitly constructed distinction between several types of SMSTs. Towns with population above 50 000 are considered as urban and expected to use specific strategies and funding for urban areas. Towns between population 20 000 – 50 000 can use these urban tools as well. Towns with population below 25 000 can use specific tools for rural development and support their relations with surrounding rural municipalities. However, only a minor part of project funding is allocated to these size-specific programs. Majority of resources can be acquired by other funding schemes which do not consider size of the town as eligibility criteria.

4.2. Local development policies and practices of SMSTs in case study towns

This section is based on the analysis of key policy and planning documents of local development and interviews with key stakeholders of local development in case study towns, examples of an agglomerated (Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav), autonomous (Písek) and networked towns (Ústí nad Orlicí).

The key questions addressed in the interviews were:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of town considering its size and location? What advantages, respectively disadvantages are related to the position of the town in relation to other towns and cities and considering, whether the town is autonomous, agglomerated or networked?
- In what sense the town differs from other SMSTs in the country? Why it is performing better/worse (in terms of population and job growth) in comparison with other towns in similar position in the region (i.e. for instance other agglomerated towns in vicinity)?
- What are the key factors of town competitiveness? In which economic sectors is the town attractive for businesses?
- How do you explain and what are the main factors behind population and job development in past decade?
- How has the socio-economic position/situation of the city changed over past 10 years? What have been the impacts of the post 2008 economic crisis and can you compare it with similar towns?
- Can you characterize the town local development since 1990? What have been the key success and failures? How much was it influenced by the town size and geographic location?
- What are the main planning documents and tools? How they reflect town's strengths and weaknesses? Do the development strategies focus on growth or fighting decline and stabilization of current position?
- What have been the main successes of planning and policy interventions?
- What are the development priorities for the new programming period 2014 -2020?
- How successful is the cooperation with the municipalities in the town hinterland (in its microregion) and what is the role of town for its microregion?
- How are the relations with other towns in the region?
- What are the impacts of regional, national and EU policies on local development? Where are the main weaknesses of these policies, and is there anything what you suggest to change?
- How important is financing from own town resources in relation to funds from the regional and national governments and the EU funds?

4.2.1. Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav

This profile of Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav is mostly based on indepth interviews with town mayor (Přenosil – ODS, conservative party), vice-maoyr Nina Nováková – TOP 09, libewral party, also vice-director of Gymnasium secondary school and member of regional assembly for Central Bohemian Region), Ida Elsnerová (member of municipla assembly for Communist Party) and Havlíček (director of department of development and historical

heritage conservation). It has been supplemented by the study of planning documents and other materials.

Socioeconomic performance and recent developments

The town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav has been since the beginning of the Millennium performing quite well in terms of population and job growth. This has been confirmed by all respondents. The mayor of town complained that the population growth is even much higher than the official statistics shows. This is because not all people who moved to Brandýs and live here did register their permanent address in the town. This has some unpleasant effects on local finances as the town does get subsidies only for registered citizens.

Traditionally there has been a difference between the two historic towns, which form the twin-town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav each located on the other banks of Labe (Elbe) river. While Stará Boleslav has been agricultural and religious / pilgrimage place, Brandýs nad Labem developed as market town, later with the growth of industries, services and schools. The spiritual character of Stará Boleslav in combination with the Brandýs nad Labem affected by industrial modernization offer a variety of choices for present day population.

The post-1989 restructuring and growth of town economy could build on the industrial tradition from the late 19th Century. At that time, the machinery plant (Melichar) produced machines and appliances for agricultural production and exported them all over the Europe and North Africa. This production reflected the location of town in the region with good quality agricultural land and intensive agricultural production. After nationalization of the plant by the Communist government, it was converted to foundry and engineering production factory and the assortment of products was completely changed.

The critical momentum in town development came in the early 1990s with the privatization of local Brandýs foundry and engineering factory to a French investor. The firm got bankrupt leading to the loss of 2000 jobs. Before this event, the factory not only offered a wide spectrum of jobs, but it also actively supported local social life and cultural events. Fortunately, in the second half of the 1990s, the town recorded major success with the establishment of new industrial zone. The zone attracted several larger employers in light industry (VDO - automotive parts, Baumit – construction materials), and wholesale and distribution (national headquarter and depot for Lidl – retail chain). Firms in this new industrial zone offer jobs not only to local people and commuters from nearby region but also attract hundreds of foreign workers mainly from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania or Bulgaria, living now in workers housing or individually subletting flats in the town.

The town population has been fastly growing since 2000 due to immigration of new residents to newly constructed housing. The town attractiveness for new housing construction is related to massive suburbanization in Prague metropolitan region. According to respondents, the economic crisis has not impacted significantly the local development in Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav. Despite increase in unemployment, the levels are still below the national average. In the housing sector, while the housing construction continued, the size of houses and plots of land decreased due to stagnation in people incomes.

However, a female councilor elected for Communist Party emphasized that despite unemployment is lower than in the rest of country, the increased level of unemployment has affected local population and might bring social problems. Local people are not used to live

under the condition of scarcity and decline, as the town has been growing and developing and population is always measuring itself against the situation in Prague, concerning incomes, choice and general wellbeing. At the same time, with increasing unemployment and growing number of foreign employees, local people often articulate negative perception of foreign workers blaming them for taking jobs from local population.

Strengths and weaknesses

Our informants named a long list of strengths of the town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav and only few weaknesses or threats. The strengths could be in general associated with two large areas: good location of the town and good quality of local life.

The key strength is related to the town geographic location and position in a close proximity of the capital city of Prague, which offer jobs, services, entertainment and culture. The distance to Prague is about 15 km to the edge of the city and terminus underground station at Černý Most. The proximity is strengthened by good transport connection that include the highway R10 (Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav is located on its exit) use by individual car transport and a good operation of mass transit system by ROPID (regional system of transit lines that connects Prague with about 300 municipalities in its hinterland in a unified fare and ticketing system and allows to reach the edge of Prague and underground station at Černý Most in 15 minutes – see the box).

Prague Integrated Transit System and ROPID

The case of Prague Integrated Transit System (Pražská integrovaná doprava PID) is a rare example of metropolitan cooperation between Prague, a large number of municipalities (towns and villages) in surrounding region and publically owned and private transportation companies. The aim of the ROPID (the Regional mass transit system agency) project has been to develop the regional transit system through connecting public transit in Prague with transit in surrounding municipalities using a unified fare and ticketing system. Another goal was to provide an attractive, affordable and feasible alternative to the private car for mass movement within the metropolitan area. The idea initiated in 1970s in association with the planning of Prague Settlement Agglomeration and came into realization in the early 1990s as the response to political, economic and social change in the metropolitan area. PID was initiated by Prague which intended build modern integrated mass transit system in the city and its hinterland. This idea was developed in the Principles of Transport Policy approved by the city council (1996). The city pursued an integrated transport policy in which various forms of transportation complemented each other with the ultimate aim of an effective working transport system including mass transit, the provision of park and ride facilities at the city outskirts to limit individual passenger car traffic in the inner city.

The core of Prague Integrated Transit (PIT) is city mass transit (MHD) served by the city of Prague transport company (Pražský dopravní podnik). The MHD network includes three underground lines, a dense network of tram lines serving the inner city and city buss lines primarily oriented towards outer city. In 1991, the city of Prague transit company started to serve neighbouring municipalities. The agency that was to be responsible for the development of integrated transit system at metropolitan level was ROPID (the Regional Organisation for Prague Integrated Transit System) was established in December 1993 and was wholly owned the Prague City Authority. ROPID first introduced a unified fare and ticketing system for zones within and outside Prague covering participating municipalities in 1995. Park and ride facilities have been developed since 1998, however, at a slower pace than planned. The organisation is now the focus through which municipalities can discuss mass transport planning issues.

PIT has rapidly expanded from a position in 1995 when it served 15 municipalities to a position of serving 159 municipalities in 2000 and then 299 in 2010. In 2010, PIT included 152 bus line routes outside the city and 180 within the city (city mass transit MHD). With an extensive network of 224 railway stops involved in PIT, 66.6% of train passengers used in 2010 PIT mass transit passes or tickets.

ROPID manages the actual coordination of transportation, leads negotiations about fare levels and the division of revenues between involved parties including significant subsidies from the city of Prague that keeps fares more affordable. Central Bohemia regional government as yet does not contribute to these subsidies. ROPID also manages the development of united ticketing and information system and monitoring of PIT.

The key objective of ROPID is to provide attractive and affordable transportation for all social groups of residents and visitors in Prague and its wider region as a viable alternative to rapidly growing passenger car transport. It emphasizes rail transportation (underground, trams, railway), extension of busses to areas that can not be effectively served by mass rail transportation and development of provisions for combined transportation using passenger car and mass transit through park and ride system.

The proximity of Prague and frequent and fast transportation and thus possibility to participate on Prague's labour market and use the capital city schools and other services have significant effects on the low level of unemployment, sound level of incomes and good quality of life in the town. People now live in Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav and commute to Prague.

Beside the low level of unemployment, another often quoted local strength were the well established local services, especially good quality elementary schools and secondary schools, active local social life and good quality of local life with good opportunities for short term recreation and sport. The town has good quality educational institutions including 3 large elementary schools (children in age 7-14), one secondary level school (Gymnasium) and a facility of Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University (however, it is now obsolete and not used by the university). The vicemayor, who is also the vicedirector of Gymnasium (secondary school for ages 14-18), emphasized, that there are no such problems and social pathologies like the use of drugs. This attracts students (it speaks to their parents) from wider region including commuting from Prague. She has compared Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav with neighbouring town Čelákovice, where they have major problems with the use of drugs and associated crime and related this to the accessibility of Čelákovice by rail, which according to her brings students from lower social strata. The availability of good schools and other services attracts young families that suburbanise from Prague to Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav.

Both the town mayor and vicemayor emphasized the local social life, many active cultural clubs and associations as well as recreational and sport facilities. They appreciated not only good social climate and security for kinds but also the town small size and walking distance proximity of places of residence and services. The historical spirit of the town forms a specific local "genius loci". The history of town, which has developed under the rule of Emperor Rudolf II., which at the turn of 16th and 17th century promoted the local castle as his second residential place beside Prague, and recently renovated castle, forms not only good environment for local citizens, but it also attract tourists. Similarly, the location on river Labe (Elbe) with bike and inline trails along the river banks and several artificial lakes in former sand and gravel pits offer good opportunities for short term recreation of local inhabitants and people from wider region. The attractive historic landscape and setting on

the river also attracts migrants and the flat lowland landscape allows for easy land development and construction.

The major weaknesses and threats are seen in the decreasing strength of local community, its internal social bonds and local social capital. Large parts of population nowadays commute daily to Prague for jobs and services. They spend most of their daily time in Prague coming to Brandýs only for night. The mayor emphasized the growth of individualism and decreasing interest of citizens in the development and participation in local community. The mayor expressed opinion that more cohesive local communities are still in more autonomous towns that are not affected by the proximity of major metropolis.

The proximity of Prague also affects low choice of local services and their decreasing volume and quality level. Most people now shop in shopping centres in Prague or on Prague edge, which are easily and quickly accessible in as little as 15 minutes (malls in Letňany, Čakovice, and Černý Most). This has effect on local services that are used by decreasing number of local population. People also travel to Prague cultural facilities and events having no or very limited interest in local culture, which can not compete with the offer in Prague. The local councilor for Communist party mentioned that the weakness is the absence of larger local cultural house with larger hall for cultural events.

The respondents associated key factors of town competitiveness with:

- good transportation connectivity to the capital city of Prague
- well developed local services especially education
- strong local identity, strengthened by local social and cultural activities and events
- no social tensions and quality of life attractive especially for young families
- good town environment consisting of distinct local quarters
- good recreational hinterland
- land for development and construction

It must be noted, that all respondents primarily focused on the competitiveness in terms of attracting new population.

Major planning and policy achievements since the 1990

The local policy and planning reacted to socio-economic developments, threats and opportunities. Our informants see town Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav as successful as it has not declined, but grown, people have employment and town offers environment for a good quality of life. It is generally understood that the success of Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav has been determined by the sequence of jobs supply, new housing development and development of services. The starting point of today success came in the middle of the 1990s, when the town prepared the development of new industrial zone (in land use plan and town development strategy) in the reaction to economic decline and job loss in consequence of postsocialist transformation. In general, the local development strategy was based on supply of land for residential as well as non-residential construction by private firms, developers and individuals. With the demand related to growth in Prague metropolitan area, the town became one of many growing nodes in Prague wider city region, and thanks to the development of new jobs, it retained certain autonomy of local centre serving its own smaller hinterland. The private developments concerned especially new firms in the newly established industrial zone, new retail stores (TESCO, PENNY) and new housing developments realized by Central Group (Pražská čtvrť), Sládek Group (U vodojemu), Excon Development (rezidence Melicharka), Unistav (Park Stará Boleslav). It was clearly expressed that Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav does not want to be only a

residential suburb of Prague. Its complex economic, social and cultural development is the key priority for local policy and planning.

The town government used own and other public resources to support local development, mostly through the (re)construction of technical and transportation infrastructure, public spaces and housing. The major successes have been recognized as:

- Reconstruction of town central square – financed predominately by the city
- Reconstruction of the bridge across Labe (Elbe) river that connects the two historic towns of Brandýs nad Labem and Stará Boleslav – financed by regional government
- Reconstruction of castle serving now as local cultural centre
- Reconstruction of local streets and roads
- New townhall consisting of reconstructed part and new building
- Reconstruction of bus terminal in Stará Boleslav
- New waste watertreatment plant – financed from the state fund for environment (SFŽP)
- Reconstruction of housing estate Na kloboučku
- Parking system in town
- Construction of new bike and inline paths
- New transport connection of industrial zone

One project was mentioned as problematic. It was the construction of new housing estate of apartment housing “Zahradní Město” in 2000 with 166 rental flats in municipal ownership. The city paid 88 mil. CZK for land and took a bank loan which is still being aid back. The key problem are unresolved property owneship issues. Despite achievements, there are some local roads and streets that need to be repaired and reconstructed and the capacity of parking is recognized as not fully meeting demand/need.

The main development priorities for next decade and the new programming period 2014 - 2020 include, according to respondents, rather technical tasks in the area of further infrastructural development. They include continuing reconstruction of local streets and roads, development of transit linkage along Labe river in East-West direction, and construction of new cultural house and more public spaces. However this is framed within the general discussions about town future. We could observe a strong duality of future development visions with contrasting priorities for massive growth versus argument for stabilization an no-growth strategy. While the mayor of the town s open for growth up to the population size of 30-50 thousands, vice-mayor strongly argued for long term stabilization of the town at population size about 20 thousands inhabitants with a priority focus on internal development of individual quarters within Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav, which should remain a small town.

Financing for many projects came from the EU financed Regional Operational Program. Usullay, the initial investment comes from external sources and consequent management and maintenance is covered from local town budget. The mayor called EU money as “expensive”, as for the projects and strategic documents preparation, the city has to pay quite high financial sums. Mayor also complained about complicated public procurement procedures and various controls of projhct financing. Therefore the strategy is to use EU money only for large investments while smaller projects are financed from national programs (such as waste water treatment plant fro 25 milions CZK – about 1 mil EUR). The town also gained finaces from the Ministry of Finance / Parliament of the Czech Republic for support of local activities, thanks to the activity of the former member of parliament and chair of the parliamentary club of conservative party ODS Petr Tluchoř, who comes from

Stará Boleslav. At present this role is played by the parliament member Stanislav Huml elected for social democratic party.

Regional cooperation

The cooperation with the municipalities in the town hinterland (in its microregion) is seen as very weak. These small municipalities – villages have their own independent local governments. Their relations with Brandýs are mainly in terms of state administration tasks which Brandýs exercises for them as it has a status of municipality with extended powers serving surrounding small municipalities in areas such as issuing building permits, etc. Recently (January 2013) a Local Action Group (MAS Střední Polabí) was established within the framework of LEADER program. The MAS Střední Polabí involves towns Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav and Čelákovice and 8 other smaller municipalities. One of the respondents commented that the establishment of MAS has not received any enthusiastic support from the mayor of Brandýs, as the town government is primarily focused on transport and technical infrastructure infrastructure, not on the support for the development of human and social capital.

There are good informal relations with other towns located along Labe River (North East from Prague) especially with Neratovice. The mayor informed about occasional, irregular and informal meetings between mayors of towns on Labe River including Brandýs nad Labem, Čelákovice, Lysá nad Labem, Neratovice and Nymburk. There has been no formal cooperation with Prague except the ROPID Prague Integrated Transit System, which works very well.

4.2.2. Písek

This profile of Písek is based on planning and other analytical documents of the municipality (most valuable has been Strategic Plan), media reports and information received from interviews with the head of regional development department of the town of Písek, current deputy mayor and former mayor of the town.

The profile first discusses the general issues of socioeconomic performance and recent developments, town strengths and weaknesses, major planning and policy achievements and regional cooperation. In the following parts, the development of Písek and town policies are introduced on three cases that document the complexity of balanced socio-economic local development: (1) support of investments and business environment, (2) provision of housing and social services and (3) promotion of culture and tourism.

Socioeconomic performance and recent developments

In the beginning of 1990s, the city of Písek was facing several challenges concerning its economy and further development. Beside some machinery and electronic industry, the main employer in the city was textile industry employing especially women. During post-socialist transformations, the textile company was not able to compete under new market conditions. Písek was also an important army base with a large military area on the edge of the city and extensive barracks. Due to the army reduction and relocation, soldiers left the military base and barracks were vacated. Písek faced high unemployment. On top of this, parts of the town were heavily damaged by floods in 2002.

Despite these problems inherited from the past, and unlike other towns with similar initial conditions, Písek experienced a successful development and is now a town with stable population, economy and low unemployment (compared to other SMSTs). With unemployment level of 5,5 %, Písek is far below the national average. Písek was one of the first towns which offered new industrial zone for incoming investors. Textile industry, which dominated the town in the past, was replaced by automotive and electronic industries. Firms in the new industrial zone currently employ about 2500 people. The industrial zone is still being improved and developed; new parking lot for trucks is now under construction.

Up to present, the town attracted labor-intensive economic activities. Currently, there are coming firms focusing as well on capital and knowledge intensive industries. New Technology Park focused on ITC is under construction. Tourism is developing as well, together with many cultural festivals and institutions. The town has recently opened cultural center Sladovna, there are several museums, galleries and other cultural and tourist oriented facilities.

Písek is now even a seat of institutions which are usually related to larger cities, such as is a private film-making college offering bachelor and master studies and a new technology park now under construction. Písek also concentrates specialized secondary schools, which serve wider region. However, the town focus on education has been influenced by demographic decline of young cohorts. Decreasing numbers of students lead to the reduction of secondary education by the regional authority and concentration of these institutions in fewer buildings. Town government is now looking for new uses of these empty spaces.

The economic crisis had limited influence on the town prosperity. Businesses in a new industrial zone were not affected. However, new construction and housing development sharply declined and privatization of municipal property stagnated due to low demand. Private companies are less willing to support communal, social or sport activities, so the municipality has to provide more subsidies in these fields.

Strengths and weaknesses

The main strengths of Písek include good geographic location, developed employment opportunities, good social infrastructure and services and housing supply.

Písek is located in between three large cities, national capital Prague and regional capitals of České Budějovice and Plzeň. The distance to Prague is relatively short and the connection is relatively fast, highway covers more than a half of the distance. Písek is located on the connection between Prague and Český Krumlov which are both popular tourist destinations. Tourists can thus make a stop in Písek. However, tourists mostly stop day visit continuing to their main destinations for overnight stay. However, there are cases, when the distance of Písek from regional centers played negative role, for instance when a branch of Westbohemian University from Plzeň was planned in Písek, but the project did not materialize because of long commuting distance from Plzeň.

The city has been awarded to be the best city for business in Southern-Bohemian Region. This reflects not only the success with the industrial zone, but also complexity of town economic profile and town support for business development. Town offers jobs not only in the newly developed industrial zone, but also in service sector, and tourist oriented businesses. For its citizens, Písek offers well developed and complex supply of social services

and infrastructure. The capacity of nurseries, schools, houses for elderly can satisfy the demand of population. Amenities are easily accessible within a walking distance. Town housing policy led to sufficient housing supply. The town owns large social housing stock and supported private developers in new housing construction.

Major planning and policy achievements

Successful development of Písek is closely related with activities of the municipality since early 1990s. The town government has had ambitious development goals and has been active in many fields. The town attempted to balance support for business and competitiveness with support for social cohesion. For the fulfillment of its goals, the government was able to use both its internal resources (e.g. land and other property transferred from the state in early 1990s) and opportunities offered from national policies and programs and involvement in cross-border cooperation and European integration.

The development in Písek has been guided especially by Strategic Plan that was first issued in 2001 and since has been updated regularly. Currently, a new update is being prepared to react on town weaknesses. The 2001 strategic plan was quite ambitious. It primarily focused on strengthening the position of Písek („town with university education”, “high quality of life“). Many of these ambitious goals has been realised. For the 2007-2013 programming period, the town prepared an Integrated Urban Development Plan (IPRM) which has dealt with social cohesion and regeneration of town’s housing estates. Písek has also been involved in planning activities on wider spatial scale, such as cross-border cooperation with Bavaria and Upper Austria. Urban spatial development is regulated by physical master plan. Detail building plans (regulační plány) have been used for the regulation of construction in localities of regeneration and new development.

The town considers its support for business activities as successful. Primarily, new industrial zone “Sever” was constructed by the municipality in the 1990s to attract new investors in the time when traditional activities were declining (textile industry, army activities). This Industrial zone “Sever” now locates many important employers and help to keep low levels of unemployment. Another success story has been the reconstructions and revitalization of the town center and its surrounding including new parking possibilities, pedestrian zones and bicycling lines. New housing construction was stimulated by several forms of public-private partnership. New localities of apartment housing as well as single family housing were prepared in cooperation with private developers. Private development started by initial public involvement and later continued independently on market bases without further need of public support. The town also successfully reconstructed municipal property such as theater, cultural center, former brewery Sladovna, youth center. The municipality also provides extensive social service and social housing for needy citizens. Another achievement is regeneration of public spaces and reconstruction of infrastructure – playgrounds for children, public parks, car parking and streets.

For town development, Písek uses its own resources as well as grants and projects from other regional, national or EU sources. These resources are very important for the town development as they enable it to make significant investments and sustain financial stability of the municipality at the same time. EU resources have been used since 2004. In 2007-2013, the municipality was using sources especially from the Regional Operational Program Jihozápad and Operational Program Environment. Other resources include grants of the ministry for regional development. Funding schemes cover larger parts of costs of many projects, especially in the area of infrastructure, social services, etc. However, a high share of

contribution from the EU does not lead to effective spending. Among mentioned obstacles have been different interpretations of EU rules by different ministries, unclear implementation rules, etc. The municipality has already refused to participate in some EU projects because of these unfavourable conditions. Regulation of public procurement and especially priority of low price over other criteria leads to problems with low quality work of suppliers during the projects. Representatives of the town government attempted to influence national governmental decisions about crucial investments in favor of the town in case of the highway bypass of Písek and its connection to Prague.

Not everything, however, has been a success story. New jobs were created for employees with lower qualification, not for university educated. The town is now facing loss of its elite, well educated inhabitants. The ambitions of having university education in the town were met only partially. Technically oriented school, originally planned here, is missing in the whole region. Regeneration of former main campus of army barracks (Žižkovy kasárny) is still pending with the municipality government not supportive of the project of Technology (EU funded).

For the next period, the development priorities include further reconstructions of municipal housing stock (using Jessica program), regeneration of public spaces, more parking in town centre and construction of bicycling infrastructure. There is an ongoing debate about the construction of new aquapark in the city. Former mayor Průša pointed to decreasing development ambitions and activities of the municipality. New projects are less focused on business development or strategic ambitions and more related with free-time activities.

Regional cooperation and the impact of regional, national and EU policies

Písek closely cooperates with other municipalities in the region and coordinates some activities for other municipalities. These activities are focused on support of tourism in the hinterland of Písek, betterment of water quality in Orlík dam, etc.

Písek also has good relations with other towns. A direct cooperation has developed in the area of waste management which is organized together with nearby Strakonice, a town which has similar population size.

Písek as entrepreneurial town

Increasing difficulties of local industrial companies in the early 1990s created threats of high and long-term structural unemployment. The municipality therefore reacted focusing on attracting new foreign investments to provide new jobs. A French company was interested in building new plant in Písek, not for acquisition of existing companies. The investor demanded land for green-field investment. In mid 1990s, town prepared the industrial zone "Sever", which offer more space exceeding the demand of the initial investor. Municipal property (mainly forests and some agricultural land) was used to acquire the land, often through exchange of land with private owners in the site or using finance from sales to purchase the needed plots for construction. Municipality provided necessary investments into infrastructure and sold the developed land to the investor for a low price. As Libor Průša, former mayor of Písek stated: "Nowadays such policies would not be possible. It was a public support of private companies." The case of the French company demonstrated new investment possibilities to other investors. Local businesses could enter the industrial zone under the same favorable conditions as foreign companies. At that time, Písek was among first Czech cities and town which offered industrial zone for investors. Other towns started

to construct such industrial zones later when attracting of foreign direct investments became an important national policy. National programs of industrial zone construction were used in further management of Písek zone. With 2500 employees in the zone, economic base of the town proved to be strong during the economic crisis. The unemployment rate in Písek did not increase as much as in other parts of the country and is below the national average.

The municipality also attempted to improve business environment in many other aspects. Písek is located in between of three cities – Prague and two regional centers Plzeň a České Budějovice. Good quality of transport connection is therefore essential for businesses in Písek. The municipality was pushing the national institutions to continue construction of R4 highway which connects Prague and České Budějovice via Písek. The municipality also acquired land in the course of R4 highway near the city and donated it to the state to speed up its construction. About 20 km of R4 highway near Písek, including the bypass around the town, were constructed, which made the connection to Prague and other destinations much faster.

The municipality attempted to open branches of universities in the town, so that people could increase their qualification and the town will attract highly qualified immigrants. The town was interested especially in programs in technical education. Some universities offered bachelor programs in Písek for some years. However, only the private “Miroslav Ondříček Film Academy” is now located in Písek offering bachelor and master studies. Some top Czech directors and film-makers are teaching in this school.

The municipality also supported communication and cooperation within business sector and creation of social capital. Since 2001, according the strategic plan, an office of the Chamber of Commerce was opened in Písek. Business companies are voluntary members of the Chamber which organizes meetings and seminars where information can be exchanged or received from invited experts.

New investment in the industrial zone offered extensive job opportunities for employees with lower or medium levels of qualification (including some foreigners). However, only few jobs were created for university educated experts. The municipality understood this as a threat in the long run, because the “elite of the town” (people with university degrees) will move out if they have no jobs in the place. After the industrial zone was completed and well functioning, the municipality begun to concentrate on attracting universities and business activities which require qualified experts.

In former military barracks, the Písek Technology Center is the latest ongoing project which attempts to offer positions for highly qualified experts in knowledge-based, innovation activities and information and communication technologies (ICT). Using the European Fund for Regional Development funding, business spaces for small and medium sized enterprises are in preparation. Písek is again an exception and at the frontier, because university education facilities and technology centers are not common among small and medium size town in country.

Písek as town of high quality of life

Písek and many other towns of its size present themselves as places of high quality of life. The town of this size is not only a job center. It offers wide spectrum of services and amenities which are necessary for everyday life in the place – primary and secondary education, health care ranging from general doctors to a local hospital, retail shops and

services, sport and other free time facilities, cultural institutions and events. The town area is relatively small and all these facilities can be reached within walking distance. Moreover, it is very easy to get out of the town to an open landscape for outdoor activities.

Písek has been improving the quality of life also in the area of housing. In the early 1990s, new housing construction declined. State organized and centrally planned housing construction was abolished and new private construction has not developed yet. Private housing development appeared first in Prague and other major cities, as they concentrated demand from foreigners and new upper and middle classes. Without new housing supply, Písek would lose its population.

In this context, municipality of Písek started to support housing development in the form of public-private partnerships. Land owned or acquired by the municipality was offered to private development companies. Public involvement minimized the risks of new development in small town and attracted private developers. Moreover, municipality was willing and able to ensure that new construction will follow detailed (regulatory) plans that clearly specified urban structure and style of architecture so the new construction of housing and shops would correspond well with traditional urban structure of the town. The town prepared opportunities mainly for the construction of tenement housing and also some single family houses. Municipality of Písek also constructed its own houses with the support of the State Fund for Housing Development - they provide affordable housing option for low-income residents. After the initial phase of housing construction stimulated and supported by the town government, private developers became more experienced and more willing to construct in Písek and the municipality became less involved in the process of new housing construction.

However, the municipality continues to support those activities in housing sector where it seems to be necessary or needed. Currently, the allocation of the EU funds for Integrated Urban Development Plan is used to regenerate the Portyč housing estate which was built in the socialist period. Both public spaces and the houses are reconstructed to increase their value, energy efficiency, durability and residents satisfaction.

The municipality developed social services and education as well. The town has enough places in pre-school facilities, so the demand is fully satisfied, while in the whole country, about 26% of pre-school applications are refused due to limited kindergarten capacities. Low capacities of nurseries lead to low participation of mothers on labor market in Czechia (as the prices of private nurseries are high). The town has also constructed houses for the elderly.

Písek as tourism and cultural center

The municipality did not consider investment in industries as the only development priority. Písek is a historical town with the oldest stonebridge in Czechia and the oldest hydro-power station. However, these objects are not sufficient for attracting tourists for more than one-day stops. A wider focus and regional cooperation is thus needed in the area of tourist development - Písek is located on the way between Prague and Český Krumlov (one of most visited towns in Czechia). Šumava Mountains and Orlický Dam in the wider surrounding of Písek are popular destinations for domestic tourism and vacations. Písek as tourism destination is marketed on tourism festivals and exhibitions. Support of tourism and destination management is therefore organized together with other towns and

municipalities in the Southern-Bohemia region. The municipality cooperates with national tourism-promotion institutions as well.

The historical center of the town was reconstructed (with the support of EU funds in 2004-2006). Former brewery in the town center was reconstructed to an exhibition and cultural institution with the aim to offer interesting and quality programs which could attract visitors from the whole country and abroad. The municipality supports several festivals and events in the city which increase the amount of visitors. Cooperation between hotels was initiated by the municipality.

Conclusion

Písek is autonomous SMST in terms of its local micro-regional spatial functional organisation. However, its development policies are based on the understanding of wider regional, national and European contexts of the town. Písek cooperates with other municipalities and towns in its nearest vicinity and is actively involved in regional cooperation on wider scale. Municipal policies have reflected changes in the town and its wider context. The town government has been searching for new opportunities and benefits from its involvement in national and European programs. High investment in town development was possible thanks to these acquired external resources.

Successful development of Písek resulted from initial ambitious goals and strong activity of the municipal government to achieve these goals. The development of the city was not one sided, but rather based in complex understanding of multiple aspects of town economy and interests and needs of various groups of its inhabitants. The municipality attempts to support its economic competitiveness and position compared to other cities and simultaneously create favorable conditions for quality of life of its citizens. Support of social services and housing was not compromised in favor of business activities. Successful economic development enabled further investment and improvement of other aspect of life in the town. In the sense of balancing external competitiveness and internal social cohesion, policies of Písek are an example of good practice in national context.

The position of Písek between three large national and regional centers, its functional autonomy and its internal ambitions enabled to locate many progressive activities in the town. Písek is now “scaling-up” and attracting functions which are typical for regional centers with much larger populations. Technology center or tertiary education institution is very uncommon for towns of this size in Czechia and are not located in many larger towns.

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4.2.3. Ústí nad Orlicí

This profile of town development and policy in Ústí nad Orlicí is mainly based on the interview with town mayor Petr Hájek and supplemented policy and planning documents.

Socioeconomic performance and recent developments

The town development has been impacted by the collapse of textile production which triggered the downward development spiral. At present, there are derelict factory buildings in town without any productions and technologies. The textile industry as the local production base is definitely the past. The town itself does not have sufficient potential to provide appropriate jobs for all its residents. Consequently, people migrate or commute to stronger regional centres with more prosperous labour market, such as regional capitals Pardubice or Hradec Králové.

While in 1990s, town development was symbolized by massive infrastructural investments, the present day situation is very different. Town is heavily indebted.

The city budget has undergone major shifts in terms of debts and investment and operating expenditures. The debt of the town increased substantially between 2006-2010 (town government had to pre-finance some EU projects; in 2010 the town bought compound of former textile factory Perla 01). The current debt is about 126 000 000 CZK (approx. 5 250 000 EUR). The financial burden makes the town hall reduce all non-essential investments and systematically cut the operating costs of the city.

The economic crisis reduced local entrepreneurial activities as well as tax yields. The economic problems of local small businesses are most visible especially in retail sector. This situation is similar to other cities in the region, which are exposed to similar economic and political conditions.

Strengths and weaknesses

The mayor of Ústí nad Orlicí on the first place emphasize weaknesses rather than strengths. In this aspect the town differs from the other two case studies which represented relatively successful towns.

The most serious weaknesses of the city is the lack of jobs and brain drain. The city is not attractive for foreign investments partly due to its textile-industry past and unfavorable transport accessibility. The young and qualified people do not find the provincial character of the town attractive for their life and move away. Especially young university graduates prefer to develop their careers in Brno and Prague, so they do not return back to town after graduation. This is the most typical form of brain drain. The town representatives feel that the town of this size lies on a kind of border between small town with a strong local identity and cohesive social community and middle size, dynamic and economically attractive urban centre, however, with decreasing local identity.

On the other side the town is, according to its mayor, taking advantage of its provinciality. The city scape, medium population size and nice environment make the town attractive for sport and leisure time activities (especially in biking and hiking). The most known and popular resident of the city is Jaroslav Kulhavý, Olympic games 2012 winner in cross-country biking. Smaller population size allows for maintaining and developing relatively lively community atmosphere – amateur theatre, cinema, many civic platforms and groups help to

strengthen local sense of belonging. However, most of activities are organized by secondary school students under 18 or by seniors. University students and productive population slowly fade away from the city cultural life. This generational polarization is seen as major problem in city social and cultural life.

The city has strong potential of secondary schools – it profiles as the center of secondary education for wider region. The textile industry as the key driver of city development and prosperity has gone, company RIETER CZ (textile machinery systems manufacturing) is the only successor capable to offer some jobs in formerly strong industrial sector. Existence of hospital is another important employer and key service for population of wider region with the catchment area of about 130 000 people. The hospital is in relatively good shape in economic terms and strengthens the role of town as a regional center.

Major planning and policy achievements

The town succeeded in the field of essential investments to technical infrastructure and social services. The city invested heavily to the network of social services and built up/refurbished six houses with nursing care and one home for elderly. This kind of investments reflects actual demographic trends. Town also financed the reconstruction of “Hernych Villa” (the villa house of textile factory owner Florian Hernych, built up between 1906-1907 in the style of floral Art Nouveau). The reconstruction has much more symbolic effects than practical ones – it is an investment to reinforce the local memory and identity. The town has been very active in the preparation of plots for new construction. The motivation was to offer land for new housing construction to mitigate negative population development.

However some investments, for instance swimming pool with salt water, at present represent high burden in terms of operating costs. The reconstruction of the swimming pool belongs to the category of “dispensable” investments. It echoes the policies of “local boosterism”, very typical for 1990s. The original motivation was to develop some kind of landmark, a dominant feature with supra-regional impacts. However the large swimming pool never fulfilled completely those ambitions as towns in the close region built up similar infrastructures. This can be perceived as a result of insufficient inter-urban cooperation and the atmosphere of escalated inter-urban competition.

Unfortunately local residents tend to equate infrastructural investments with “real” city development. The main task for the City Hall is to draw new vision of development which would not be based on massive investment but on the attention paid to the local quality of life in a broad sense.

Policy and planning document and priorities

Ústí nad Orlicí has the physical master plan, as well as the strategic plan called “innovative strategy”. The master (physical, zoning) plan was approved in 2006 – it was prepared by Prague architect Roman Koucký. The new master plan is under preparation nowadays – it is supposed to be completed in 2014. The basic idea of the city master plan is to uncover the potential of particular city places and areas. The master plan does not contain any major

interventions to the physical structure of the city and works with only minimal set of regulative tools.

The main issue of the town strategic plan/innovation strategy is the future use of relatively large premise Perla 01. Perla 01 used to be a textile factory, from 2010 the idled plot and buildings are in the ownership of the city. The successful redevelopment of this 3 hectares brownfield site is crucial for the city as it occupies relatively central position in the urban layout. Project Perla 01 has also its symbolic level – the discussion on its future use reflects much deeper debates on the future orientation of the whole city. Shall be Perla 01 turned into the multi-sport centre reflecting the recreational potential of the city? Is the proposal of congressional centre better expressing the administrative and educational role of the town within the region? The symbolic importance of Perla 01 redevelopment makes it currently the most prominent local project.

In the new programming period 2014 -2020 the attention of the town will be focused to Perla 01 redevelopment. The town is ready to find suitable funding schemes or to modify the redevelopment plans just to fit the requirements of available programs.

The conceptual framing of the new cohesion policy and expected new approach to territorial investments are not (so far) real issue for the city policy. Timing of funding as well as the formal prerequisites of the projects are much more important from the viewpoint of the “practical, everyday” decision making. Moreover the microregional urban centers represent just one of many interest groups shaping the final formulation of cohesion policy.

Regional cooperation

The cooperation with the municipalities in the hinterland and with other towns in the region is very good. Ústí nad Orlicí is the founding member of Orlicko-Třebovsko region association. There are outstanding informal ties between the mayors of these two (Ústí nad Orlicí and Česká Třebová) microregional centers. The institutionalized cooperation lies in broad range of activities, from cycling routes construction to regional marketing. On the other hand the idea of polycentric region and division of urban functions is still not developed very well.

Regional policies definitely impact local development. However, mayor says that there are only very few points where the regional policy really meets the urban decision making. The regional policy works in another scale and deals with different sorts of problems. The regional planning documents for instance do not take into consideration the specific functional structure and polycentric arrangement of the East Bohemia region and do not provide any institutional frames promoting deeper inter-urban cooperation.

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