

THE APPLICATION OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

The purpose of economic geography is to investigate why industry, agriculture and settlements grew up where they did and to study reasons which led to their growth and which continue to influence them. If economic geography, as a branch of the science of geography, deals with research on the development, structure and location of industry and inhabitants and their mutual relationships within a given geographic region as a whole, then there are also factors which make it possible to study this region when it is broken down into smaller districts. If, in physical geography, it is possible on the basis of the variety of natural conditions to group the territory of a state into natural, physical geographical districts, it is also possible in economic geography to divide this same territory into existing economic geographical districts on the basis of a complex of conditions of economic and natural importance. (See: M. Střída: *Hospodářské oblasti*. Praha (NČSAV), p. 4, now in print).

The establishment of economic geographical districts is a specific problem in each country and one which cannot be based only on general principles or on experience in other countries. It is necessary, therefore, together with experience gained in other countries, particularly in socialist countries, to make full use in particular of experience accumulated at home — in our case, in the territory of Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia, which is situated on the frontier of the socialist camp in the middle of Europe, is a country with a rich geographical relief structure, with varied climatic and soil conditions, with varied mineral resources. It is densely but unevenly inhabited. Some localities have remained since the Neolithic Age. They have a good production tradition and industry as a whole is very widespread although it differs widely in location and in structure. Our country has a highly developed and varied farm production and there is a dense network of railroads and highways which are heavily travelled. There is high specialization in the economy and a developed internal and foreign trade system. Given such conditions, such complex questions as the economic geographical determination of districts, cannot be tackled without a lot research in order to gradually work out individual topics, to supplement theory and improve methods.

On the basis of domestic and foreign experience, an attempt was made to collect some general principles of complex economic division-setting as well as their importance and extent of validity within Czechoslovakia (l. c. 29). Five fundamental points were arrived at:

- 1) Economic districts really exist as a result of local divisions of labor. During research in Czechoslovakia, we can start analysis of the location and determine the structure and relations of national economy, even through a certain portion evolved during the capitalist period. They are mutually so equal in importance that they not fall outside the framework of their category. Their character, appearance and size also correspond more or less with the level of previous economic development and local conditions within the territory they include and the special characteristics in comparison with the rest of the country.

- 2) Because economic regions develop, we must bear in mind in our research their present situation and the development of location, structure and relations

as well as planned prospects for the development of the national economy during the next few years.

3) Because of Czechoslovakia's varied climate and natural conditions as well as its variety of communities and economies, and in view of its differently historically developed territorial limits, an entire system of economic regions of different degrees has evolved.

Their boundaries should correspond, at least approximately, to the boundaries of the nationality and administrative whole of a given degree. Thus there is a certain construction which exists among economic regions of different grades so that large economic regions are basically composed of primary regions. The economically strongest and best located center within this large region becomes the central nucleus of the large economic region.

4) Each economic region displays a given field of specialization or conditions for the development of such specialization of production or in some cases, of non-production functions. These fields of specialization have more or less their place in the state plan. As a rule, specialization in Czechoslovakia is concentrated in economic nuclei — industrial centers, which are the leading factors in the formation of economic regions.

5) Influenced by the main economic functions, three groups of fields are formed within the structure of the economic region: one group of specialization is of importance beyond the region itself. Another group specializes in production and its maintenance, the third involves services devoted to local consumers' needs. Then, depending on the expressions of the specialization and the number of inhabitants, a certain local economic complex is formed, on the basis of various natural and economic conditions. In Czechoslovakia, it can be studied and defined on the basis of the degree of development of its internal economic relations, particularly as they are expressed in the field of transport.

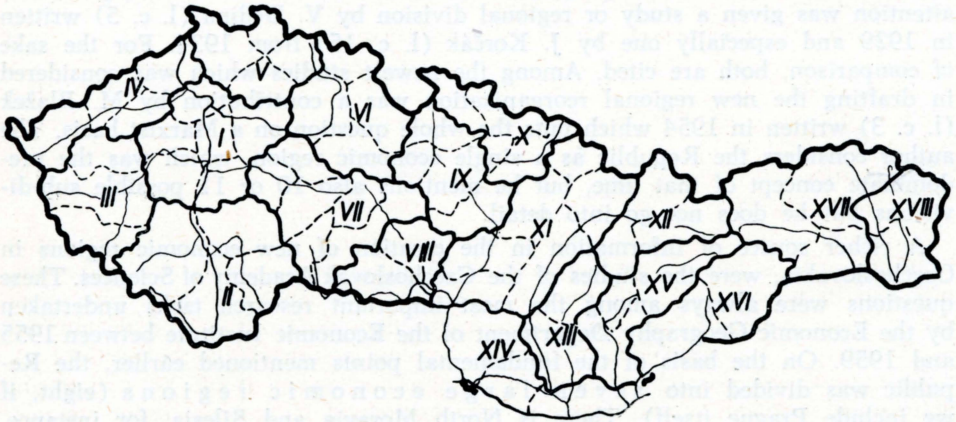
As far as method is concerned, work in economic geographical division into regions within Czechoslovakia is based on the following evaluations: a) **natural conditions**, particularly in regard to elevation, terrain and sources of raw materials; b) **distribution of population** and its structure, particularly evident in urban communities and their functions, as well as questions of source of manpower and its needs; c) **economic conditions** including size, location and structures of industrial and farm production and economic relations, expressed in transport.

Industrial production is the leading factor in the life of almost every economic region in Czechoslovakia. In method, then, we can start from the geographical relationships to industry. In determining the division of regions in Czechoslovakia, an important role is played by the urban centers and agglomerates which function as the economic nucleus of each region.

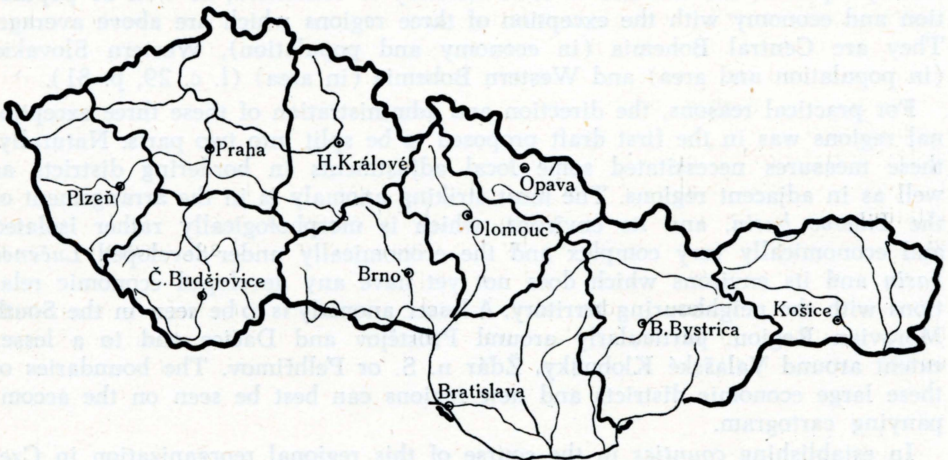
On the basis of these fundamentals, which have been just briefly enumerated, the most important necessary data was computed regarding natural conditions and resources, industry, agriculture, transport, population and settlements. Later, the concept of a nucleus and economic relations enabled us to move from theory to an original, independent conclusion arrived at on the basis of geographical prepared data and field observations.

The results of this geographical work in determining the regional divisions in the Republic were submitted to the competent governmental organs. Parts of these results were at the same time collected in two separate studies (l. c. 26, 29).

In connection with the completion of the socialist building in Czechoslovakia, a reorganization of regions was carried out and completed by July 1, 1960. It was done on the basis of democratic centralization, which is the guiding principal directing a socialist state and the planned development of its economy. Measures to insure a speedier development of individual regions on the basis of their most favorable natural and economic conditions, should help to achieve a more equitable distribution of the national economy and a rising standard of living in all parts of the country. The territory of the Republic was divided into ten new regions with the capital of Prague as an independent unit, and 108 counties. The county organs were invested with powers somewhat greater than those which formerly rested in the previous regional organs. These county seats



Regional division of the Czechoslovak Republic by V. Dědina (1929).
 Regionální členění Československé republiky podle V. Dědiny (1929).
 Территориальное разделение Чехословакии для В. Дедины.



Regional division of the Czechoslovak Republic by J. Korčák (1934).
 Regionální členění Československé republiky podle J. Korčáka (1934).
 Территориальное разделение Чехословакии для Я. Корчака (1934).

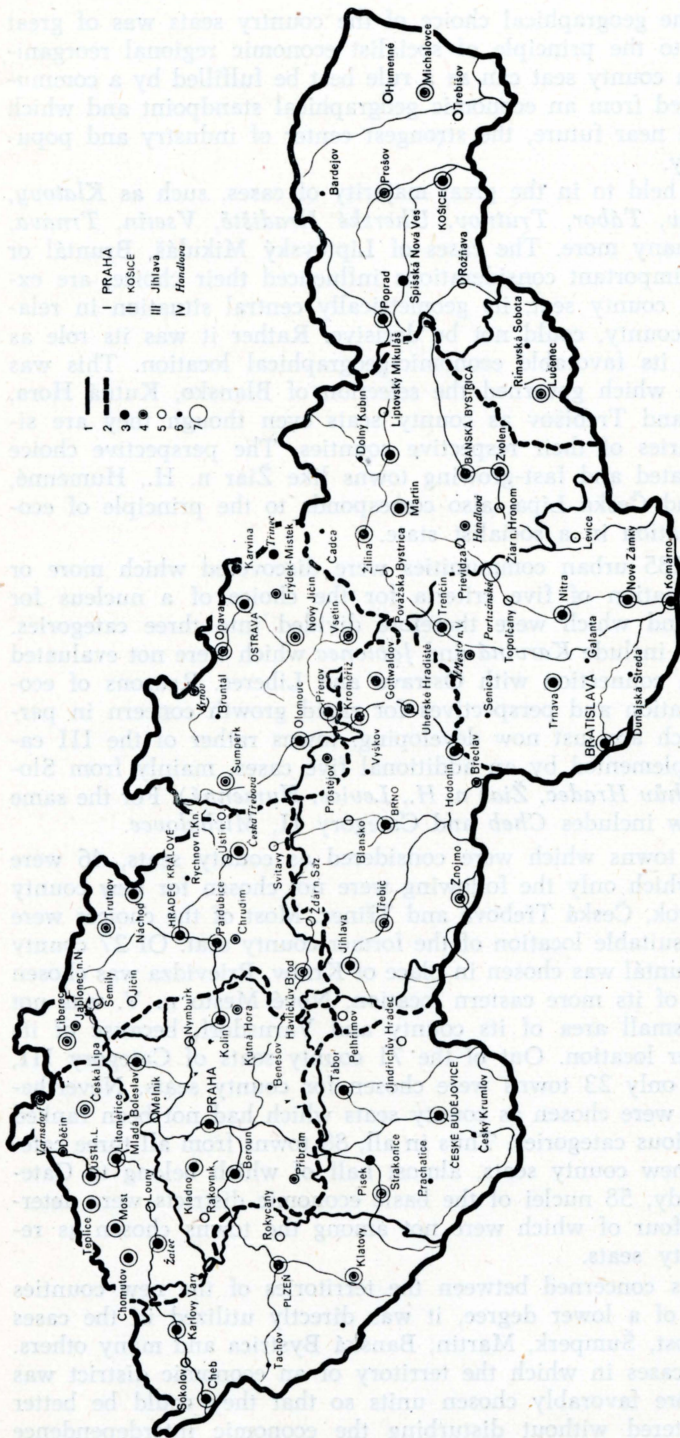
have been established in 103 chosen communities. In this regional reorganization, stress was laid on the economic and organizational activities of the regional organs, the National Committees which direct or coordinate almost the entire economy within their district. A more pressing need then arose — that the territory administered by the National Committee should form at the same time a convenient economic and geographic unit. That is why economic regions provided the foundation for the new district reorganization, even though the practical aspects of their direction and administration were naturally also decisive in determining when and to what extent these regions could be utilized.

From previous geographical work, a survey of which was submitted at the first conference of economic geographers in Liblice in 1956 (l. c. 16), particular attention was given a study of regional division by V. Dědina (l. c. 5) written in 1929 and especially one by J. Korčák (l. c. 15) from 1934. For the sake of comparison, both are cited. Among the newest studies which was considered in drafting the new regional reorganization was a contribution by M. Blažek (l. c. 3) written in 1954 which puts the whole question on a Marxist basis. The author considers the Republic as a single economic region, which was the predominant concept of that time, but he mentions also 10 or 11 possible subdivisions but he does not go into detail.

A richer source of information in the creation of new economic regions in Czechoslovakia, were the studies of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. These questions were always among the most important research tasks undertaken by the Economic Geography Department of the Economic Institute between 1955 and 1959. On the basis of the fundamental points mentioned earlier, the Republic was divided into seven large economic regions (eight, if we include Prague itself). There is North Moravia and Silesia, for instance, Eastern Bohemia, Eastern Slovakia which were created during the building of socialism. They were based on an earlier development with recognized perspectives and could be characterized by geographical methods. These regions are generally equal as far the size of their territory is concerned, as well as population and economy with the exception of three regions which are above average. They are Central Bohemia (in economy and population), Western Slovakia (in population and area) and Western Bohemia (in area) (l. c. 29, p. 81).

For practical reasons, the direction and administration of these three exceptional regions was in the first draft proposed to be split into two parts. Naturally, these measures necessitated some local adjustments in bordering districts as well as in adjacent regions. The most striking anomaly is in the arrangement of the *Liberec basin*, and its environs, which is morphologically rather isolated and economically very complex and the economically under-developed *Lučenec basin* and its environs which does not yet have any developed economic relations with the neighbouring territory. A lesser anomaly is to be seen in the South Moravian Region, particularly around Prostějov and Dačice and to a lesser extent around Valašské Klobouky, Žďár n. S. or Pelhřimov. The boundaries of these large economic districts and new regions can best be seen on the accompanying cartogram.

In establishing *counties* in the course of this regional reorganization in Czechoslovakia, the economic geographical stand-point was taken less into consideration because here there are more aberrations from economic regions of a lesser degree which were found in working on the basic economic districts (l. c. 30).



Nuclei and large economic regions. 1 — boundary of the new Regions; 2 — boundary of the large economic regions; 3 — centres of the 1st category; 4 — centres of the 2nd category; 5 — centres of the 3rd category, elected; 6 — centres of the districts out of the categories; 7 — nuclei of the fundamental economic regions; 1 — capitals; 2 — centres of the new Regions; 3 — centres of the new districts; 4 — centres not elected as the seats of the districts.

Jádra a velké hospodářské oblasti. 1 — hranice nových krajů; 2 — hranice velkých hospodářských oblastí; 3 — střediska I. kategorie; 4 — střediska II. kategorie; 5 — střediska III. kategorie vybraná; 6 — okresní střediska mimo kategorie; 7 — jádra základních hospodářských oblastí; 1 — hlavní města; 2 — střediska nových krajů; 3 — střediska nových okresů; 4 — střediska, která nebyla vybrána za sídla okresů.

Ядра и большие экономические районы. 1 — ограничение новых административных областей; 2 — ограничение больших экономических районов; 3 — центры I. категории; 4 — центры II. категории; 5 — некоторые центры III. категории; 6 — районные центры без категории; 7 — ядра основных экономических районов; 1 — столицы; 2 — центры новых административных областей; 3 — центры новых административных районов; 4 — центры не избранные в качестве административных районов.

Nevertheless here too the geographical choice of the country seats was of great importance. According to the principle of socialist economic regional reorganization, the function of a county seat can as a rule best be fulfilled by a community which is well located from an economic geographical standpoint and which is or will be within the near future, the strongest center of industry and population within the county.

These facts could be held to in the great majority of cases, such as *Klatovy*, *Teplice*, *Mladá Boleslav*, *Tábor*, *Trutnov*, *Uherské Hradiště*, *Vsetín*, *Trnava*, *Lučenec*, *Poprad* and many more. The cases of *Liptovský Mikuláš*, *Bruntál* or *Louny*, in which more important considerations influenced their choice, are exceptions. In choosing a county seat, its geometrically central situation in relation to the rest of the county, could not be decisive. Rather it was its role as the nucleus as well as its favorable economic-geographical location. This was the correct qualification which governed the selection of *Blansko*, *Kutná Hora*, *Břeclav*, *Nové Zámky* and *Trebišov* as county seats even though they are situated near the boundaries of their respective counties. The perspective choice in the case of well-situated and fast-growing towns like *Žiar n. H.*, *Humenné*, *Žďár n. S.*, *Příbram* and *Česká Lípa*, also corresponds to the principle of economic district reorganization in a socialist state.

In the cited works, 135 urban communities were discovered which more or less fulfilled the combination of five criteria for the choice of a nucleus for districts of II degree and which were therefore divided into three categories. These towns should also include *Karviná* and *Jablonec* which were not evaluated separately but rather in connection with *Ostrava* and *Liberec*. Reasons of economic geographical situation and perspectives for rapid growth concern in particular those towns which are just now developing, towns rather of the III category, which were supplemented by an additional five cases, mainly from Slovakia (*Rožňava*, *Jindřichův Hradec*, *Žiar n. H.*, *Levice*, *Humenné*). For the same reasons, Category I now includes *Cheb* and Category II, *Michalovce*.

Of this total of 144 towns which were considered as county seats, 46 were put in Category I, of which only the following were not chosen for new county seats: *Louny*, *Ružomberok*, *Česká Třebová* and *Třinec*. Most of the choices were made because of the unsuitable location of the former county seat. Of 27 county seats in Category II, *Bruntál* was chosen in place of *Krnov*, *Prievidza* was chosen over *Handlová* because of its more eastern location, *Nové Mesto n. V.* was not chosen because of the small area of its county and *Varnsdorf*, because of its very complicated frontier location. Out of the 71 county seats of Category III, a very mixed category, only 23 towns were chosen for county seats. Nevertheless, in 15 cases, towns were chosen as county seats which had not been ranked in any of the three previous categories. Thus in all, 88 towns from all three categories were chosen as new county seats, almost half of which belong to Category I. In the cited study, 58 nuclei of the basic economic districts were determined (l. c. 30), only four of which were not among the towns chosen as regional capitals or county seats.

As far as harmony is concerned between the territories of the new counties with economic districts of a lower degree, it was directly utilized in the cases of *Cheb*, *Litoměřice*, *Most*, *Šumperk*, *Martin*, *Banská Bystrica* and many others. There were even more cases in which the territory of an economic district was divided into two or more favorably chosen units so that they could be better controlled and administered without disturbing the economic interdependence

within the region. As an example we can cite the division of the Western Bohemian territory in the Plzeň region into 6 parts, of the Ostrava, Michalovce and Kolín districts into three parts, Upper Nitra, Liptov and Orava, Hodonín and Karlovy Vary into two new county units.

A complicate question was the finding of areas of National Committees around such densely populated, industrial communities such as Gottwaldov, Kladno, Liberec and particularly in Bratislava, Ostrava, Plzeň, Brno and other large towns which were also chosen as regional capitals. But the solution in the Ostrava region differs greatly from that adopted in the environs of Plzeň.

Some geographers had the opportunity of participating in the political discussions surrounding the regional reorganization, even though to a limited degree. The comparisons show in themselves, however, that the work of Czechoslovak geographers in drafting the new organization of regions and counties in Czechoslovakia in 1960, where it based itself on economic districts and their nucleus, was indeed outstanding and of greater importance than ever before.

The division of the state territory into economic regions for scientific, planning and administrative purposes, is a basically geographic task. From the broader concept to scores of detailed local analyses, as well as drafts of administrative measures, much more is involved than geographic problems and economic geography alone cannot fully solve them either. Nevertheless, without geography, this problem would be scientifically insoluble.

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APLIKACE HOSPODÁŘSKO-ZEMĚPISNÝCH OBLASTÍ NA PŘÍKLADĚ ČESKOSLOVENSKÉ REPUBLIKY

V souvislosti s dovršením výstavby socialismu byla provedena v roce 1960 reforma územní organizace v Československu, v zájmu dalšího vývoje hospodárství a rychlejšího rozvoje oblastí, podle jejich přírodních a ekonomických podmínek, s cílem postupného vyrovnávání životní úrovně ve všech částech země.

Území státu bylo rozděleno na 10 nových krajů a město Prahu, a na 108 nových okresů. Podkladem, zvláště pro území krajů a pro výběr středisek se staly hospodársko-zeměpisné oblasti a ekonomická jádra, i když samozřejmě hlediska řízení a správy rozhodovala kdy, jak a do jaké míry lze těchto oblastí využívat.

Z dřívějších zeměpisných prací bylo možno přihlídnout zejména k námětům V. Dědiny a J. Korčáka, z novějších pak k příspěvku M. Blažka a zejména ke studiím Oddělení hospodárského zeměpisu Ekonomického ústavu ČSAV z let 1955—1959. Podle nich bylo na území ČSR vymezeno 7 velkých hospodárských oblastí, z nichž tři byly z důvodů řízení pro velikost svého území, nebo hospodárství rozděleny na dvě části. Pak už bylo dosaženo celkem souladu nových krajů s hospodárskými oblastmi, s výjimkou Liberecké a Lučenecké kotliny a menších odchylek na obvodu Jihomoravského kraje. Při vytváření nových okresů měl význam zejména zeměpisný výběr jejich středisek. Zde se bylo možno do jisté míry opřít o metodu výběru jader v práci o základních hospodárských oblastech. Okresní orgány byly umístěny do 103 měst,

z nichž 88 byla středisky I.—III. kategorie v uvedené práci. Z 58 jader základních hospodářských oblastí v Československu se nestaly sídly nových krajů nebo okresů pouze 4 (Žatec ve prospěch Loun, Ružomberok ve prospěch Liptovského Mikuláše, Česká Třebová ve prospěch dosavadního, s ní téměř souvisejícího střediska, Ústí n. O. a Partizánské ve prospěch nyní rychleji se rozvíjející Převídzky).

Lze se tedy domnívat, že podíl zeměpisných prací v návrzích nových územně administrativních celků, pokud se opíraly o existující hospodářské oblasti a jejich jádra byl větší než kdykoliv předtím.

ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЕ ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ЭКОНОМИКОГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ РАЙОНОВ НА ПРИМЕРЕ ЧЕХОСЛОВАЦКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

В связи с завершением строительства социализма была в Чехословакии в 1960 г. проведена новая организация территориального управления. Это мероприятие было сделано с целью дальнейшего развития хозяйства и быстрого подъёма областей в зависимости от их природных и экономических условий и постепенного выравнивания жизненного уровня во всех частях страны. Территория государства была разделена на 10 новых областей (город Прага имеет самостоятельное управление) и 108 новых административных районов. Исходным пунктам для выделения областей и экономических центров послужили экономикогеографические районы и экономические ядра, несмотря на то, что проблема управления и хозяйственной организации сама определила где, как и в какой степени можно эти районы использовать.

Из более старых работ можно было использовать предложения В. Дедины и Я. Корчака, из более новых работу М. Блажека и особенно материалы, подготовленные в Отделении экономической географии Института экономики ЧСАН в 1955—59 гг. В этих материалах была территория страны разделена на 7 больших экономических районов, из которых три были в связи с трудностью управления из — за большого размера разделены на две части. В остальных случаях новые административные области почти совпадают с экономическими районами. Исключение составляют Либерецкая и Лученецкая котловины и некоторые небольшие отклонения на окрестностях Югоморавской области. При организации новых административных районов большое значение приобрёл географический отбор центров этих районов. При этом можно было в определённой степени исходить из материалов о ядрах, который содержится в работе об основных экономических районах. Органы управления районов возникли в 103 городах, из которых 88 являются центрами I—III — ей категории в данной работе. В качестве центров новых административных областей или районов не были из 58 ядер основных экономических районов в Чехословакии, обоснованных в данной работе, избраны лишь 4 (вместо г. Жатец — Лоуны, вместо г. Ружомберок — Липтовски Микулаш, вместо г. Ческа Тршебова — Усти над Орлицей, вместо г. Партизанске — Превидза, которая сейчас быстрее развивается).

Таким образом можно считать, что участие географических работ в проекте новых территориально-административных единиц пока они происходили из существующих экономических районов и их ядер было в этот раз, большее чем когда-либо в прошлом.