

The regional identity of the inhabitants of regions which have experienced an interrupted continuity in their socio-historical development. A case study of Czech regions that were resettled after World War II

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ABSTRACT The article is focused on the phenomenon of regional identity and its relationship with processes of socio-historical development. The objective is to compare the regional identities of the inhabitants of two typologically specific regions located in Czechia. These regions' specific characteristics are defined by dramatic interruptions in their development that occurred during the twentieth century. The existing regional identity of the inhabitants was assessed with regard to the role of the regions based on four principles used in the process of identity construction. Primary empirical data was obtained via questionnaire and subjected to further comparative analysis. In its conclusion, the article notes that the regional identities of the inhabitants of regions that experienced a discontinuity in their socio-historical development can vary considerably. In our conclusions, we augment the existing knowledge concerning the forms that the regional identities of inhabitants can take in regions with interrupted continuity in their development.

KEY WORDS regional identity of inhabitants – principles of identity – socio-historical development – regional typology – Czechia

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1. Introduction

The regional identity of the people targeted in this paper is an important dimension in the study of regional identity (Paasi 2011). Its importance lies in the fact that it represents the potential for the future development of regions in general (Raagmaa 2002). The regional identity of a population must be seen first and foremost as the result of long-term development, during which time the region was formed. Lewicka (2013) emphasizes that a conscious engagement with the past is one aspect by which mobile residents achieve a sense of belonging to a spatial unit. In this respect, the discontinuity of the socio-historical development of a region is crucial. Research carried out by Chromý and Skála (2010) suggests that a region may be perceived differently by the inhabitants who live in a part of that region which has a disrupted tradition of development, as compared to those who live in a part of the region with a continuous developmental tradition. In addition, Šerý (2014) demonstrated that the regional identity of the inhabitants in regions with disrupted developmental traditions may be noticeably different to the regional identity of the inhabitants of regions that did not experience this discontinuity.

But does this hold true for all regions affected by a discontinuity in their socio-historical development? For instance, Savage, Bagnall, Longhurst (2005) refuse claims of history about the shaping of spatial attachment. In a recent study, Tomaney (2015) states that the role and use of history in creating a feeling of belonging to a local area are the subjects of competing claims in academic debates. Therefore, our research problem will be concerned with the contemporary regional identity of the inhabitants of regions with an interrupted continuity in socio-historical development.

Although Czechia is a small country, many regions have experienced disruptions in their socio-historical development. These disruptions occurred as a consequence of various processes. Here we should mention processes as population dynamics in borderland (for problematics regarding its delimitation see Chromý (2000) after the end of World War II, intensive communist industrialisation of selected regions, the suburbanisation process which has clearly been developing since the nineties and the increase in residential mobility during the transition era following the Communist period. Among these processes, we understand that the post-war resettlement processes are the most significant as well as the most intensive. Hence, the aim of the paper is to compare the regional identity of the inhabitants of two regions located in Czechia, both of which underwent dramatic breakdowns in their traditions after World War II; the Jeseník region and the Lanškroun region. The reasons for choosing these regions are described in detail in Chapter 3.

We will endeavour to achieve our goal by analysing the principles used by an individual in the process of constructing his/her own personal identity (Breakwell

1992). More specifically, we will try to analyse how the residents of the regions in question express the region in which they live when applying these principles. The research questions are as follows:

- first, we will be interested in finding whether the regions of interest allow the spatial differentiation of an individual, and of the whole population of the region, from populations located outside the region. In addition, we will ask whether the regions under study provide a sense of continuity to their inhabitants;
- the second research question looks at whether the inhabitants have feelings of pride in connection with the region they live in;
- the last research question is related to the efficacy of the region. That is why we will be interested in finding whether the qualities of the regions under study make the daily lives of their inhabitants easier.

The choice of Czechia and the two regions presented above for the purposes of this paper was not self-serving. Czechia, as a Central European country is, thanks to its development during the 20th century, a suitable “laboratory” for a study of the regional identities. We first have in mind the displacement of the German-speaking part of the population and the resettlement of the vacated regions. Both processes were carried out during the very dynamic period after the Second World War and they mainly affected the borderlands, including both regions under analysis. Considering the above-mentioned facts, we believe that the article can contribute substantially to the current theoretical discussion about the regional identity of the population. By analysing empirical data, we can attempt to verify whether regional identity must necessarily have identical features in regions that are typologically the same; more specifically, in regions with the same historical experience in the form of socio-historical discontinuity. In our opinion, a successful fulfilment of the aim will lead to the enrichment of the existing knowledge concerning the role of historical discontinuity in the process of forming regional identities.

2. Conceptualising the regional identity of inhabitants

According to Pred (1984) and Paasi (2011) originally and in the long term, the regions were understood to be spatially rigid entities that were stable over time. Within this concept (see MacLeod 1998), regions were considered to be spatial entities that could be delimited scientifically on the basis of objective criteria, whether physical-geographical, geographic, political, or social and economic.

The discussion about the traditional approaches to the nature of the regions was enriched in the 1980s by studies (Knight 1982, Paasi 1986, Pred 1984) looking

into the issues of the regions. The intention was to understand the very essence of the regions, as well as their development. Regions are newly conceptualized as entities that are primarily a product of social constructivism (Paasi 2002). The main benefits of these approaches include the following theses: a region is the result of a long-term historical process that determines the current character of the region (Pred 1984), regions are also considered to be entities whose existence is conditioned by the institutionalization processes (Paasi 1986) which took place while they were being formed, reproduced, transformed, and condemned to decline. Therefore regions are historically and spatially conditioned entities and understanding what they mean must be based on context. The above-mentioned innovative approaches and the resulting theses support the enrichment of the subject's orientation of research into regions. Recent research has focused on previously neglected phenomena which are not easy to analyse. Here, we refer to the importance that people attribute to the region they inhabit (Knight 1982), the metaphors that the regions represent to their residents (Paasi 2002), the symbolism of the regions (MacLeod 1998), and their relationship to the territory and the regional identity of their inhabitants and its formative constituents (Paasi 2003). All these research approaches to regions bring about some subjective assessments.

The regional identity of the inhabitants is a complex phenomenon. It can be seen as a manifestation of the most important human social need; the need to belong somewhere (Maslow 1943), the fulfilment of which gives an individual an idea of his/her role in a complexly structured geographical environment. In this process, a wide range of attributes are used, among which spatiality is essential. Under spatiality, we can understand everyday human activities within different spatial categories (Tuan 1977). Spatial categories, which naturally also involve regions, are therefore used in the formation of human identity, and their role in this process is irreplaceable.

The regional identity of inhabitants is one of the spatial forms of identity. As mentioned above, this is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to grasp. To understand it better, it is possible to use the analytical classification proposed by Paasi (1986). In this sense, the phenomenon of the regional identity of a population is shaped by three basic dimensions. The first is the *image of a region*. In addition to a region's population, its image is also built with the active participation of communities living outside the region and by decision makers and stakeholders (Terlouw, van Gorp 2014). Discrepancies necessarily arise because the image of a region that is presented within that region is usually different from its external image. If the autochthonous population is suddenly replaced with an allochthonous population, the internal image of the region may lose its original form and be largely replaced by its external image. These different images affect both the regional identity of the inhabitants and the wider concept of regional identity.

The second dimension is *identification with the regional group or community*. This identification can be both *factual* and *ideal*. Factual identification represents the real relationships between the individual residents of a region. The nature of real relationships is influenced by the level of the residents' acculturation and the extent of their familiarization with the structures of expectation. Both factors are the result of long-term formation. Similarly, this is the case for ideal identification, which is communicated through the institutional practice of a region and its society. There is an image of group identification which is also represented in institutional practices. Both types of identification usually produce a mutual discrepancy that also influences the process of shaping the regional identity of the population. In the post-war period, considerable discrepancies can be observed in a number of regions, particularly those in the borderlands which were affected by the exchange of residents. The exchange of the inhabitants transformed the *factual identification with the community* (Slováková, Šerý 2016). *Ideal identification with the community* also underwent changes because of regional institutions (e.g. media) that responded to newly created conditions (Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík 2005; Gerlach 2010). The processes outlined above then fundamentally determined the further shaping of the regional identities of the residents.

The last, but no less important dimension, is how the residents identify with their region. This is a process by which the residents evaluate *the role of the region in the hierarchy of regional consciousness*. This assessment reflects the experience of the residents with the region, especially with its institutions.

This experience changed in the post-war border regions (Gerlach 2010). The changes that have taken place in connection with the symbols of the border regions are equally important. As a result of these trends, the following situation occurred in the repopulated border regions over a relatively short period of time: the transformed structure of the population interacts with the transformed structure of institutions and symbols.

As has already been suggested, none of the above-mentioned dimensions can be understood as a static entity. The evolution of these dimensions is a long-term process. During this process, the resulting form of regional identity of the population can be consciously and unconsciously (Zich 2003) consolidated and also transformed, and in extreme cases its extinction is also possible. Thus, the essential characteristic of the regional identity of the inhabitants is that it is formed on a long-term basis (Bialasiewicz 2002).

Therefore, it is possible to assume that there would be more dynamic manifestations of the developmental changes in a region where there had been a rapid change of population with a resulting interruption in the continuously transmitted information necessary to maintain relationships with the region, compared to a region in which this continuity was not interrupted. Methodologically, we will attempt to assess the existing regional identity of the inhabitants of the regions

in question through the principles proposed by Breakwell (1986, 1992). Specifically, these are four principles that are used during the construction of human identities:

1. the principle of distinguishing oneself from other individuals; by applying this principle an individual creates an idea of his/her own uniqueness and specificity;
2. the principle of continuity; in the process of defining oneself the long-term aspect also applies, i.e. the consciousness of an individual about his/her permanent existence;
3. the principle of self-esteem; another principle whose application gives a human individual feelings of pride in himself/herself;
4. the principle of self-efficacy; with the application of this principle, there is a situation in which an individual is aware of some of his/her own qualities, and the application of these qualities can make his/her life easier in many aspects.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) innovatively applied these principles concerning the formation of identity. In their study, they evaluated how the principles involved in the formation of identity are expressed by the place where an individual lives. More specifically, they evaluated how attachment to a place was applied in the process of the construction of these principles (see Gustafson 2001). However, place is not the only spatial entity involved in this process. The same role can also be played by a region, which we understand here to be a collective category. Human activity shows a collective significance in the case of a region, in contrast to a place (Paasi 2003, Chromý 2003). Institutions and people's experience of them are important in this context. The significance attributed by residents to these institutions and the daily perceived symbols of a region are also processes with collective parameters (Šifta 2016; Šifta, Chromý 2017). A region is also a device for storing collective history, not just the history of an individual, as in the case of a place.

3. Regions under Study

The precipitous post-war development of social processes, particularly in the borderlands (e.g. Wiedemann 2007), caused regions with discontinuity in their socio-historical development to arise in Czechia. The Jeseník and Lanškroun regions have been affected by exactly this phenomenon which, in view of the research problem, justifies the selection of these regions for this study. At the end of World War II, the German-speaking population was larger than the non-German-speaking population in both regions (see Table 1). In the second half of the 1940s, ethnic cleansing occurred in the Czech borderlands (Gerlach 2010). The displaced

Table 1 – Population of the regions under study before and after World War II.

1930									
Jeseník region	Total	Czechoslovaks		Germans		others		foreigners	
		abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)
	71,717	2,703	3.8	66,987	93.4	135	0.2	1,892	2.6
Lanškroun region	Total	Czechoslovaks		Germans		others		foreigners	
		abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)	abs.	rel. (%)
	26,815	9,628	35.9	16,980	63.3	207	0.8	119	0.4
1950									
		Total				Index of change 1950/1930 (%)			
Jeseník region		37,571				52.39			
Lanškroun region		17,894				66.73			

Sources: Bartoš, Schulz, Trapl (1982, 1994); authors' own processing

autochthonous population of the borderland was replaced by allochthonous settlers, with varying degrees of success. The regions under study also experienced the displacement of the vast majority of the autochthonous German-speaking population and the resettlement of the regions by a large number of immigrants. Initially, in many places there was a coexistence between newcomers and the autochthonous German-speaking population which was later displaced. However, the post-war displacement did not affect the entire German-speaking population. A small part was not included in the displacement process and remained in the regions. These people, like the incomers, were equipped by their specific post-war experience for the further development of the regions. These experiences, as well as the facts described in the following paragraph, have acted as formative factors in the subsequent development of a specific *idea of community* for the regions in question.

The above-mentioned newcomers did not migrate to these regions from only one source region (see Daněk 1993). The Lanškroun region was mainly repopulated by migrants from its immediate surroundings, i.e. the neighbouring regions. However, migrants from most of the regions then in existence also participated in its resettlement. The Jeseník region was repopulated by people from more distant regions; the neighbouring regions did not contribute to its repopulation. Again, the majority of the regions then in existence participated in this repopulation. Both regions were also repopulated by migrants and returnees from Slovakian regions and regions outside Czechoslovakia (SSO 1951). Generally, over a relatively short period of time, both regions were repopulated by immigrants whose former domiciles were geographically highly diverse.

As a result, within the framework of the typology of regions (Chromý 2003, p. 172; Chromý, Kučerová, Kučera 2009), to which regional consciousness is



Fig. 1 – Position of the regions under study in the current administrative structure of Czechia. Sources: ARC DATA (2016); the authors' own processing.

attached, both regions can be classified in the category of regions that have lost, to a greater or lesser extent, their regional identity bearers; the autochthonous inhabitants. Similarly, Kuldová (2005) proposed a regional typology based on the dichotomy in the regional identities between the inner Czechia and its borderland. The long-term development of a regional identity in the inhabitants of the regions in question was severely interrupted and its subsequent redevelopment took place under completely new conditions. Therefore the seemingly forgotten historical experience of the post-war migrations into these border regions may still exist in the minds of individuals; in the form of a historical consciousness that is generationally transmitted and reproduced over time and which is related to the formation of the regional identity of the population to the present day.

For the sake of completeness, let us add that the present form of the regional identity of the inhabitants of the regions in question was also determined by other formative factors, particularly those related to the process of the rebuilding of the border areas (Wiedemann 2007), which contributed to the transformation of the institutions and the symbols of the regions, such as land allocation and subsequent collectivisation, the establishment of cooperative farms and mountain pastoral

cooperatives, or the nationalization and subsequent liquidation, relocation, or merger of industrial enterprises. We can also talk about a specific form of cultural infrastructure or changes in land use and transformation of the symbolism of the landscape (Kučera, Kučerová 2012).

The spatial form of the two regions which primarily consist of rural areas (Perlín, Kučerová, Kučera 2010) has been shaped to a large extent by the decisions of the authorities, and this was reflected in practice by changes in their administrative structures (Daniel 2017). Apart from the fact that both regions of interest were reproduced by the political powers during their historical development, they were also subjected by these powers to processes of transformation and deinstitutionalization. In addition to these objective processes, it is also possible to speak about subjective processes in which the spatial form of the regions in question is reproduced and transformed in the consciousness of the residents, as well as in that of people living outside the regions (Semian 2012; Siwek, Bogdová 2007). Taking into account the spatial form of the regions in question becomes a difficult matter in this context. For the purposes of the study, we have identified the regions in question with the administrative districts of municipalities with extended competences (MECs). These small districts are essential units in the state administration of Czechia. In addition, the spatial form of the regions defined in this way is similar to the administrative spatial shapes of these regions, which were institutionally defined in the past. The advantage of this spatial definition of these regions is undoubtedly the availability of aggregated statistical data that was used during the creation of the research sample. The spatial forms of the regions under study, as they are understood in this paper, as well as their locations within Czechia, are shown in Figure 1.

4. Methods

The essential research method was field research in the form of a questionnaire. Primary data was obtained using this method and then subjected to further analysis. The sample included people aged 15 and over whose permanent residence was one of the municipalities in the regions under study. The respondents who participated in the questionnaire were interviewed face-to-face in an outdoor environment. Respondents were selected purposefully with a respect to qualitative representativeness (see below). They were asked a series of questions from the questionnaire. In a number of cases, communication with the respondents was spontaneously expanded through informal interviews which went beyond the requirements of the questionnaire, and this generated additional data. The additional data contributed to the comprehension and interpretation of the answers to the questions in the questionnaire. In the Jeseník region, the questionnaire was

conducted in May 2009; in the Lanškroun region, the questionnaire was conducted from May to July 2016. Because of the character of the research problem, we believe that the data obtained is mutually comparable, despite the time gap between the dates of the questionnaires. During the field data collection, we tried to respect the requirements for the quantitative, qualitative, and spatial representativeness of the research sample. With regard to quantitative representativeness, in the Jeseník region 420 respondents were included in the research, which represents 1.20% of the population aged 15 and over (35,034) living there at the time of the field research (CZSO 2010). In the Lanškroun region, there were 191 respondents, which is 1.00% of the total population of the region aged 15 and over (19,061) living in the region at the time of the field research (CZSO 2016).

Because of the need for qualitative representativeness in the research sample, it was necessary to have approximately the same socio-demographic profile in the respondents as the socio-demographic profile of the inhabitants of the regions at the time of questionnaire. Considering that the chosen research method, like any other, cannot take into account all socio-demographic profiles, attention was focused only on the following structural parameters: gender, age, highest level of education, and nativeness (the length of time the respondent had lived in the municipality of his/her current residence). These particular socio-demographic profiles were taken into account during the building process of the research sample. Their selection can be justified by the following fact: the specific form of these structures has the potential to determine very strongly the resulting knowledge of a wide range of spatial phenomena, including the regional identity of the population. In order to create specific socio-demographic profiles of the regions, we used data from the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), specifically data from the 2011 census (ratio of native residents, the highest level of education achieved) and data provided by yearly statistics (gender, age). The level of compliance of the research sample profile, which was based on these categories with an equally conditioned profile of the approximate total population living in the Jeseník and Lanškroun regions at the time of the survey, was verified using the statistical method of the χ^2 test. The findings are presented in Table 2.

The χ^2 test was applied and it demonstrated, at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the consistency of the research sample with the total population of the two regions as regards gender, age, and nativeness. In the case of the Lanškroun region, this consistency can also be observed in relation to education. The consistency cannot be confirmed for the Jeseník region, as demonstrated by the critical value being significantly exceeded; see Table 2. The main cause of the observed inconsistency is the above average ratio of university educated (11.3%) respondents. It can be said that, regarding the quality of the selected respondents' socio-demographic profiles, the selected research sample is sufficiently representative, with the only exception being the level of education of the residents surveyed in the Jeseník

Table 2 – Qualitative representativeness of the sample; χ^2 test results

	Jeseník region			Lanškroun region		
	value of criteria	critical value	structure answers	value of criteria	critical value	structure answers
Structure by gender	0.16	χ^2 (0.05;1) 3.84	yes	0.02	χ^2 (0.05;1) 3.84	yes
Age structure	11.05	χ^2 (0.05;5) 11.07	yes	0.56	χ^2 (0.05;5) 11.07	yes
Educational structure	32.04	χ^2 (0.05;3) 7.81	no	0.60	χ^2 (0.05;3) 7.81	yes
Structure by birthplace	1.12	χ^2 (0.05;1) 3.84	yes	0.80	χ^2 (0.05;1) 3.84	yes

Sources: CZSO (2010, 2011, 2013); field survey; authors' own processing

region. We also sought to ensure the involvement of respondents from all the municipalities of the regions under study by creating a representative sample from a spatial point of view. In the Lanškroun region, we questioned respondents from all the municipalities administratively belonging to the Lanškroun region, with the exception of the municipalities of Čenkovice and Petrovice. Similarly, in the Jeseník region the inhabitants of the town of Javorník and three marginal municipalities (Bílá Voda, Uhelná, Vlčice) around it were not included in the study for logistic reasons. Because of the above-mentioned facts, the research sample can be considered sufficiently representative in quantitative, qualitative, and spatial terms.

The individual principles (Breakwell 1992) by which a region is used by its inhabitants in the formation of their identities have been measured empirically – see Shamai (2017) on this issue. Because of the objective of our work, we decided to evaluate quantitative empirical data. The necessary data was obtained through a field survey. The second principle was an exception. In this case, we used ratio data related to native residents, specifically the aggregated data of the CZSO, which was contained in the censuses of 1991, 2001 and 2011. When analysing this data we were aware of certain limits. The data takes into account how long an individual has been living in a given spatial unit, but, unfortunately, it does not provide information on the quality of the awareness of the given spatial unit. The first principle was analysed using the nominal data and the third and the fourth principles were analysed using the ordinal data generated using a bipolar, unidimensional scale (see Shamai, Ilatov 2005). Considering the character of the data, the degree of compliance or difference between the two regions was expressed in a contingency table and then measured using the χ^2 test. The data required for the creation of Figures 2 and 3 was taken from the book *Population Indexes in Czechoslovakia in 1946 and 1947* (SSO 1951).

5. Results

Table 3 contains data that has been used to evaluate the extent to which the region is expressed in the process of building the principle of difference. The table shows the structure of the responses in both regions, as well as the differences between these structures.

It is obvious that the respondents in the two regions expressed different attitudes. The χ^2 test that was applied has demonstrated, at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, some statistically significant differences in the response patterns. A greater number of positive responses were recorded in the Jeseník region. For this reason, it is possible to consider the stronger position of the region in the process of applying the principle of distinction in the Jeseník region rather than in the Lanškroun region. In the Lanškroun region the respondents mostly perceived their region as something that is not specific. The region is anchored in their minds as an integral part of the regional structure, without positive or negative connotations. The respondents who stated that the Lanškroun region was specific generally mentioned the rural character of the region. In the Jeseník region, on the other hand, one fifth of the respondents declared that their region was specific and rationalized these attitudes by citing negative qualities attributed to the region. In this discourse, such features of the region as “marginal position” or “end of the world” appeared. These characteristics were perceived negatively by the respondents and showed the peripheral position of the region, a factor which places the region outside the interest of other people. It is also possible to say that, from the point of view of the local respondents, the Jeseník region is specific because of its underdevelopment. Last but not least, the region was perceived pejoratively as strongly rural. In the Jeseník region we can also talk about a more negative *identification with the regional community*. The negative features which cause the region to be specific were also related to the local population, among whom respondents declared there was a low level of educational attainment. As regards positive aspects of the region's differences, only the local landscape was commended.

Table 3 – Structure of answers to the question *Do you think that the Jeseník and Lanškroun regions are somehow different?*

Region	Absolut		Relativ (%)		Total	p value (0.05)	Significant statistical difference
	yes	no	yes	no			
Lanškroun	13	178	6.81	93.19	191	9.89×10^{-6}	yes
Jeseník	89	331	21.19	78.81	420		

Sources: field survey; authors' own processing

Table 4 – Inhabitants of the regions in question according to nativeness in 1991, 2001, and 2011

Region	1991			2001			2011		
	residents	native residents	ratio (%) of native resident	residents	native residents	ratio (%) of native residents	residents	native residents	ratio (%) of native residents
Jeseník	42,583	15,032	35.30	42,413	18,025	42.50	40,630	16,883	41.55
Lanškroun	21,542	10,291	47.77	21,750	11,238	51.67	22,984	10,978	47.76

Sources: Růžková et al. 1995; Škrabal et al., 2005, 2013; authors' own processing

We will now focus on the second of the principles applied, i.e. on how the region can be expressed when applying the principle of continuity to the process of identity formation. In the evaluation of the continuity principle, we did not use the primary data obtained from the research sample. In Table 4, the aggregated statistical data on native residents is presented. This data was obtained by the CZSO in the last three censuses conducted in Czechia. The native residents form a population category that has an aspect of permanent continuity. They are residents who were not only born in a given spatial entity, but also spend their lives there. Despite the above-discussed limitation, it is possible to use the data on native residents acquired by the CZSO to analyse the rate of expression of the region in the process of applying the second evaluative principle.

From Table 4, it is obvious that the representation of native residents in the populations of the two regions has varied over the three years under review. Considering that the (almost) total population of the regions at the time of the individual censuses is taken into account in the table, there is no need to test the statistical significance of the observed differences in the ratio of native residents between the regions. In 1991 the difference in the proportion of native residents in the two populations was at its highest, which can be related to the intensity of post-war migration in both regions; see Table 1. The differences in the ratio of native residents within the regions gradually diminished during the years under review. This seems to be related to the start-up and the further developments in the transformation processes that occurred in Czechia after 1989, during which the totalitarian state was rapidly and dynamically transformed into a post-totalitarian form. On the basis of the ratio of native residents and the trends in its development, the residents of the Lanškroun region can be seen as a population in permanent interaction with their living space, to a greater extent than the residents of Jeseník. This may involve the longer-term experiences of the residents with their region, the longer-term formation of its internal image, and the longer duration for the process of the construction of the *idea of community*. In addition, there is a long-established perception of the regional environment in the Lanškroun region; the residents have long-standing experience with regional institutions and they

Table 5 – Structure of answers to the question *Are you proud of the region in which you live?*

Region	definitely yes	quite yes	not really	in no way	I do not care	total	p (0.05)	Significant statistical difference
Lanškroun	33.60	47.60	12.10	2.60	4.10	100	3.19×10^{-6}	yes
Jeseník	30.00	30.90	17.20	17.20	4.70	100		

Sources: field survey; authors' own processing

have been perceiving the symbols of the region on a long-term basis. The potential for a region to express itself in the process of applying the principle of continuity is, on the basis of the data analysis, greater in the Lanškroun region.

In Table 5, we present the evaluation of the data obtained in connection with the analysis of how the regions in question are used in the process of *self-esteem*. It demonstrates the structures and differences in the respondents' attitudes that were stated in connection with their pride in the region. The results of the χ^2 test give us, at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, sufficient evidence to indicate the difference in the response structure as being statistically significant, and it can be stated that in the case of the residents interviewed in the Lanškroun region, the region evokes feelings of pride with greater intensity. In the Jeseník region, 60% of the comments were positive, compared with almost 80% in the Lanškroun region. Significant disproportions are evident even in the case of negative responses, but only a small number of respondents had no opinion. It appears that from the viewpoint of the residents of the Lanškroun region, their region is very significant in the process of forming the principle of *self-esteem*. The role of the region, which represents the spatial dimension of the principle of *self-esteem*, is even comparable to the situation empirically demonstrated in some traditional regions (Šerý 2014). By traditional regions, we mean those where there is no experience of discontinuity in historical development.

Finally, we will assess the role of the two regions in the process of applying the principle of *self-efficacy*. This is the last of the four principles involved in the

Table 6 – Structure of answers to the question: *Do you think that the region in which you live makes your life easier compared to other regions?*

Region	definitely yes	quite yes	not really	in no way	I do not care	total	p (0.05)	Significant statistical difference
Lanškroun	16.75	38.74	35.60	4.71	4.19	100	7.10×10^{-23}	yes
Jeseník	6.87	9.44	35.62	43.78	4.29	100		

Sources: field survey; authors' own processing

building of identity as proposed by Breakwell (1992). These principles, as mentioned above, are used in some way by people in a region to create their own identities. The last of these, which will be dealt with in the next part, relates to a region's ability to make life easier for its population through its qualities (Gustafson 2001). The results of this part of the field survey, which is related to the expression of the region in the process of applying the principle of *self-efficacy*, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 demonstrates the differences in the structures of the answers to this question. There is a statistically significant difference in the structure of the answers provided, as confirmed by the results of the χ^2 test at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. In the Lanškroun region, more respondents (more than 50%) answered positively to the question than in the Jeseník region (16%). Although the majority of the respondents in the Lanškroun region characterized their region as self-efficacious, less than 17% of the respondents chose the more compelling response "definitely yes". However, only 6% of the respondents identified with the response that the Lanškroun region does not facilitate the daily life of its inhabitants at all. From Table 6, it is obvious that the subjects in the research sample from the Lanškroun region used the more modest variants of answers much more often, i.e. more likely yes, which suggests that they were not so sure about the unambiguity of their positive attitude. Nevertheless, this is in significant contrast with the situation found in the Jeseník region, where almost 80% of the research sample had a negative attitude. Moreover, in the case of almost half of the respondents, it is possible to refer to a fixed and strong form of negative attitude. The respondents in the Lanškroun region most often supported their positive attitudes by mentioning economic aspects, such as the number of job opportunities. Other regional qualities did not feature in such large numbers. Still, the respondents agreed on other benefits to living in this region. Other important factors for the region were its peacefulness and the opportunities to pursue cultural and sporting activities, as well as its clean environment and the high-quality transport infrastructure. Positive attitudes in the Jeseník region were most often the result of the perception of environmental qualities, namely minimal air pollution, a healthy environment, the cleanliness of the natural surroundings, and the sense of belonging to these surroundings. The second most frequent reason was based on the presence of family and friends in the region. In contrast, the economic dimensions of the region (quantitatively and qualitatively adequate job opportunities, the wealth of the region, and its positive development) were identified in the Jeseník region as aspects that only to a minimal extent determine the formation of the principle of the self-efficacy of the region.

6. Discussion

The data analysis provided results that differ between the two regions. However, it is necessary to be aware of a certain limitation in the data used (Kuldová 2005). In this context we should remember the weaknesses discussed above concerning data on native residents. It is also necessary to critically assess the primary data analysed in the case of the fourth principle. Respondents in many cases primarily reflected on economic aspects without taking into account other aspects (environmental, social, cultural, etc.) in their responses. We believe that observed differences can be interpreted in the context of post-war displacement and resettlement. In other words, the two regions that were studied experienced a different intensity of economic development and migration (Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík 2005; SSO 1951); a difference can also be found in the spatial aspects of these migrations. Although both regions underwent turbulent development in the post-war period, Table 2 provides evidence that the post-war dynamics are more closely associated with the Jeseník region. Specifically, this is evidenced by the values of the change

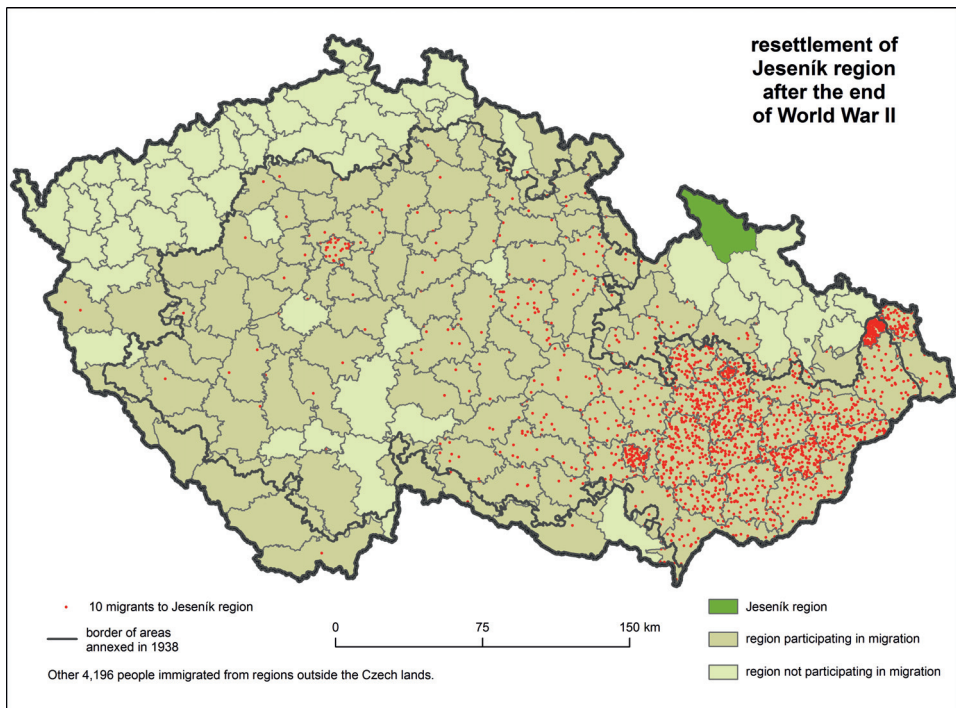


Fig. 2 – Spatial aspects of immigration into the Jeseník region from 1945 to 1947. “Border of areas annexed in 1938” delimitates a borderland which was annexed by Nazi Germany and Poland after the signing of the Munich agreement. Sources: SSO 1951; authors’ own processing.

indices and the pre-war share of the German-speaking population in the total population. These data prove that the Jeseník region was more affected by the loss of the autochthonous population, i.e. the traditional bearers of regional identity, than the Lanškroun region.

Figures 2 and 3 provide findings which capture the spatial aspects of post-war resettlement. The figures show diametrically different trends in the spatial aspects of resettlement in the Lanškroun and Jeseník regions. In the Lanškroun region migrations can mainly be observed from the immediate neighbourhood of the region, and some of the settlers have their origin in the region itself. On the other hand, the Jeseník region was resettled by people migrating from far greater distances and, moreover, the regions they came from were very heterogeneous. The second key finding from Figures 2 and 3 is, of course, the difference in the number of new post-war settlers. It is evident that the Lanškroun region absorbed a smaller number of immigrants than Jeseník. The Lanškroun region was therefore settled by a smaller number of people who, to a large extent, must have had some prior knowledge of the region. On the other hand, the migrants who went to the

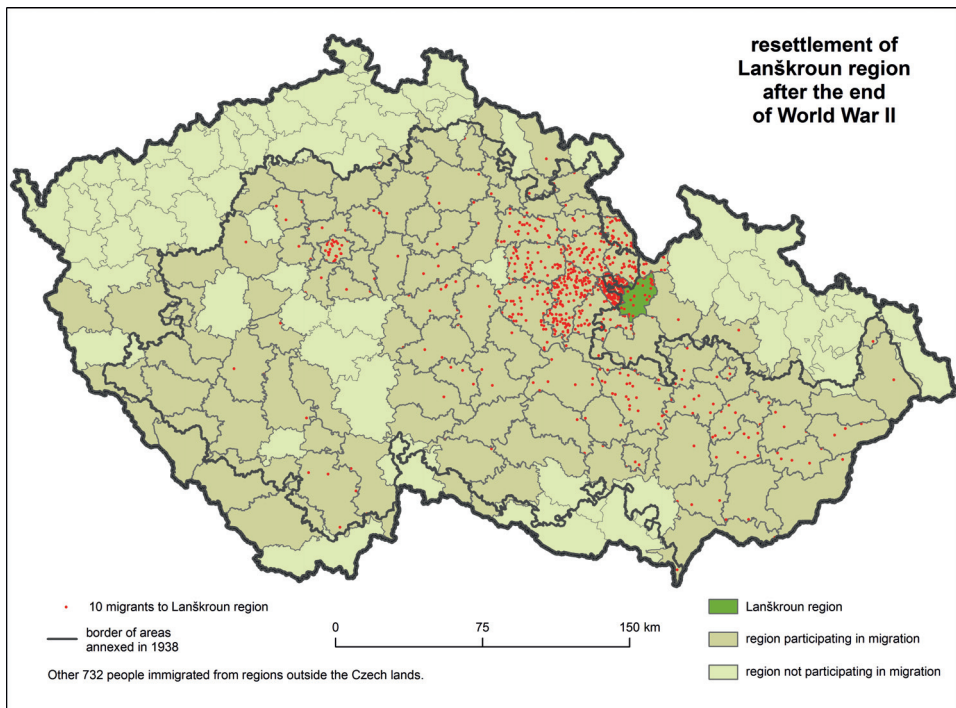


Fig. 3 – Spatial aspects of immigration into the Lanškroun region from 1945 to 1947. “Border of areas annexed in 1938” delimitates a borderland which was annexed by Nazi Germany and Poland after the signing of the Munich agreement. Sources: SSO 1951; authors’ own processing.

Jeseník region could hardly have known this region in much detail. Also in many cases the necessary personal experiences were missing. These facts are furthermore supported by the numbers of people who migrated from outside the Czech lands (see Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík 2005). This ethnically heterogeneous group of immigrants (see Daněk 1993) was almost six times larger in the Jeseník region than in the Lanškroun region. Figures 2 and 3 capture the conditions that would certainly be more favourable for the Lanškroun region with regard to the further development of regional identities.

The discussed differences in post-war development established that there were different starting points for further development in the regions. Their specific manifestations can be seen, for example, in the differing intensity of the transformation of property in the regions (Gerlach 2010). As Fitjar (2013) points out, a change in economic conditions has the potential to change the discourse of regional identity. Furthermore, there may be differences in the willingness of residents to participate in the administration of public affairs, which is also an aspect strongly influenced by the process of socio-historical discontinuity (Kindel, Raagmaa 2015). The manifestations mentioned above, on the one hand, contribute to the construction of *identification with the regional community*, while on the other hand they affect the interconnection of the residents with the institutional sphere, through which another dimension of the regional identity of the inhabitants – *the role of the region in the hierarchy of regional consciousness* – is formed. Another possible manifestation is the perception of the symbols of the regions. The perception of symbols generally guarantees a deepening of the spatial identity of the population (Relph 1976). As demonstrated by Pfoser (2014), if old residents remain present in a particular space, they perceive elements that have symbolized this space on a long-term basis. For example, it may be a symbolic landscape. In contrast, the allochthonous population may have a problem with the perception of traditional symbols, which could have implications for the further formation of regional identities.

Chromý and Janů (2003) concluded that the differences between the regional identity of the inhabitants of the interior and that of the resettled borderlands were still apparent in Czechia at the beginning of the 21st century. Chromý, Kučerová, Kučera (2009), on the basis of subsequent empirical research, developed this dichotomy and created a regional typology of Czechia. A similar regional typology is presented by Kuldová (2005), who notes the same dichotomy between the transformed borderland and the socio-historically continuous interior as regards the regional consciousness of the population. The findings obtained in the Jeseník region are in line with these regional typologies. On the other hand, the findings from the Lanškroun region point to the following fact: not all the re-populated regions of the Czech borderland have to show a similar character in the regional identity of their inhabitants. On the contrary, it seems that this character may, in

the case of the selected regions, be closer to the regional identity of the inhabitants of the traditional regions situated in the inland areas (see Šerý 2014). This finding to some extent corresponds to the findings of Zich (2003), who asserts that by the third generation of immigrants their regional identification is consolidated and their social links in individual border areas are gradually stabilized. Similar arguments were presented in the 1990s by Nedomová (1995), who concluded that the identification of the inhabitants of selected border municipalities and their attitudes and opinions have been influenced by factors other than those directly related to the events which followed World War II. In both these studies, as well as in our study, a specific urban space and specific regions were researched. Despite this limitation, it can be said that in some regions with a discontinuity of socio-historical development, a positive transformation in the character of regional identity of the inhabitants may be possible over time. In the particular case of the Czech border regions, it is not possible to assume a homogeneous environment in terms of the regional identity of the inhabitants. It seems that different border regions with an interrupted continuity of socio-historical development can differ noticeably in terms of the regional identity of their inhabitants.

7. Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to compare the regional identity of the populations in regions that share the same experience as regards an interruption in the continuity of their socio-historical development. For this purpose, two regions located in the borderlands of Czechia both of which underwent an extensive transformation of the population after the end of the Second World War, were selected. This transformation was characterized by the displacement of the autochthonous German-speaking population and the arrival of new inhabitants. We have attempted to assess the regional identity of the population by measuring the extent to which the region is referred to in the process of applying the four principles in the formation of identity as proposed by Breakwell (1992). Hence, to fulfil the objective of the article, we have tried to find answers to the following research questions:

- Do the regions of interest allow for the spatial differentiation of an individual, and of the whole population of the region, from populations located outside the region? In addition, do the regions under study provide a sense of continuity to their inhabitants?
- Do the inhabitants have feelings of pride in connection with the region they live in?
- Do the qualities of the regions of interest make the daily lives of their inhabitants easier?

For the first question, it can be stated that the Jeseník region was referred to more often in connection with the principle of differentiation. In this case however, the negative characteristics of the region were used. Based on the fact that a number of residents accentuated these negative aspects, we can deduce a specific *image of the region*. Thus, the region may be fairly clearly anchored within the regional structure, but partly as a result of negative connotations. This fact can then cause a negative view of the region in the principle of differentiation. In connection with the first research question, it has also been demonstrated that in the Jeseník region, the conditions for using the region are less suitable in the case of the second principle of continuity.

As regards the other research questions, the stronger position of the region has been demonstrated in the Lanškroun region. In the case of this region, its aspects (*idea of community* and *image of the region*) are more intensely used by the residents in the process of forming the principle of *self-esteem* than in the case of the Jeseník region.

For the third research question, we demonstrated a stronger reference to the Lanškroun region in the process of the creation of the *self-efficacy* principle. Moreover, we can state that the intensity of the references to the region in the exercise of the third and fourth principles in the Lanškroun region is comparable to that proven by the previous research (Šerý 2014) in typologically different regions with continuity of socio-historical development.

From the answers to the research questions, it is clear that the spatiality represented by a region is manifested in the process of the creation of identity much more among the residents of the Lanškroun region than among the residents of the Jeseník region. Therefore, in this paper we have demonstrated statistically significant differences between the regions in question. Our main, more general conclusion is that the regional identity of the inhabitants living in regions affected by a discontinuity in their socio-historical development may vary considerably. This discontinuity needs to be understood as having a negative impact on the development of the region; however, despite the common starting line, the subsequent development of the regional identity of the population of the affected regions can be according to entirely different scenarios. Similarly, Terlouw (2009) argues that specific regional identities change over time and become thinner or thicker. Of course, the limitation of the paper is that these scenarios have not been analysed.

On the basis of our results we state that socio-historical discontinuities need to be taken into account in research on regional identities. Their intensity seems to be an important formative factor for regional identities. We believe these findings can enrich the current knowledge concerning the forms of regional identity of the inhabitants in specific types of regions characterized by a discontinuity in their socio-historical development. In this context, some new issues emerged in the course of the data processing, the solutions to which would further extend the

aforementioned current knowledge. By these issues we refer to an assessment of the intensity of post-war transformations and a deeper assessment of the influence of the communist dictatorship on the subsequent development of regions affected by the post-war transformations.

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