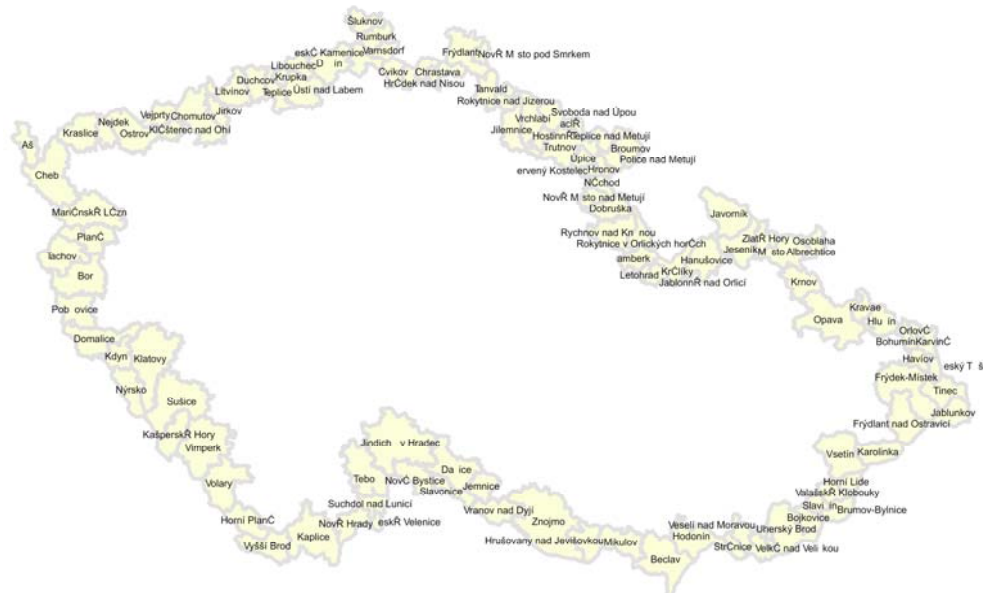


Consequences of post-war ethnically based population exchange in the Czech borderland for the regional development



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Historical background

- About 3.1 Million German people lived in Czechoslovakia before WWII
- As a consequence of the war, almost all these inhabitants disappeared:
- 300 – 500 thousands died in the war
- 300 thousand fled on the Hitler's command
- Many were killed by Nazis (left-oriented, German speaking Jews)
- 2.1 Million were transferred to occupied Germany (of them 20-30 thousand were died or killed during the transfer)
- Only proved anti-Nazis, people from mixed matrimonies and specialists were allowed to stay

Geographical context

- The largest concentration of German speaking population was in the borderland
- The remainder could be found in big cities and some inland enclaves
- It means that the borderland lost a majority of population which was necessary to substitute





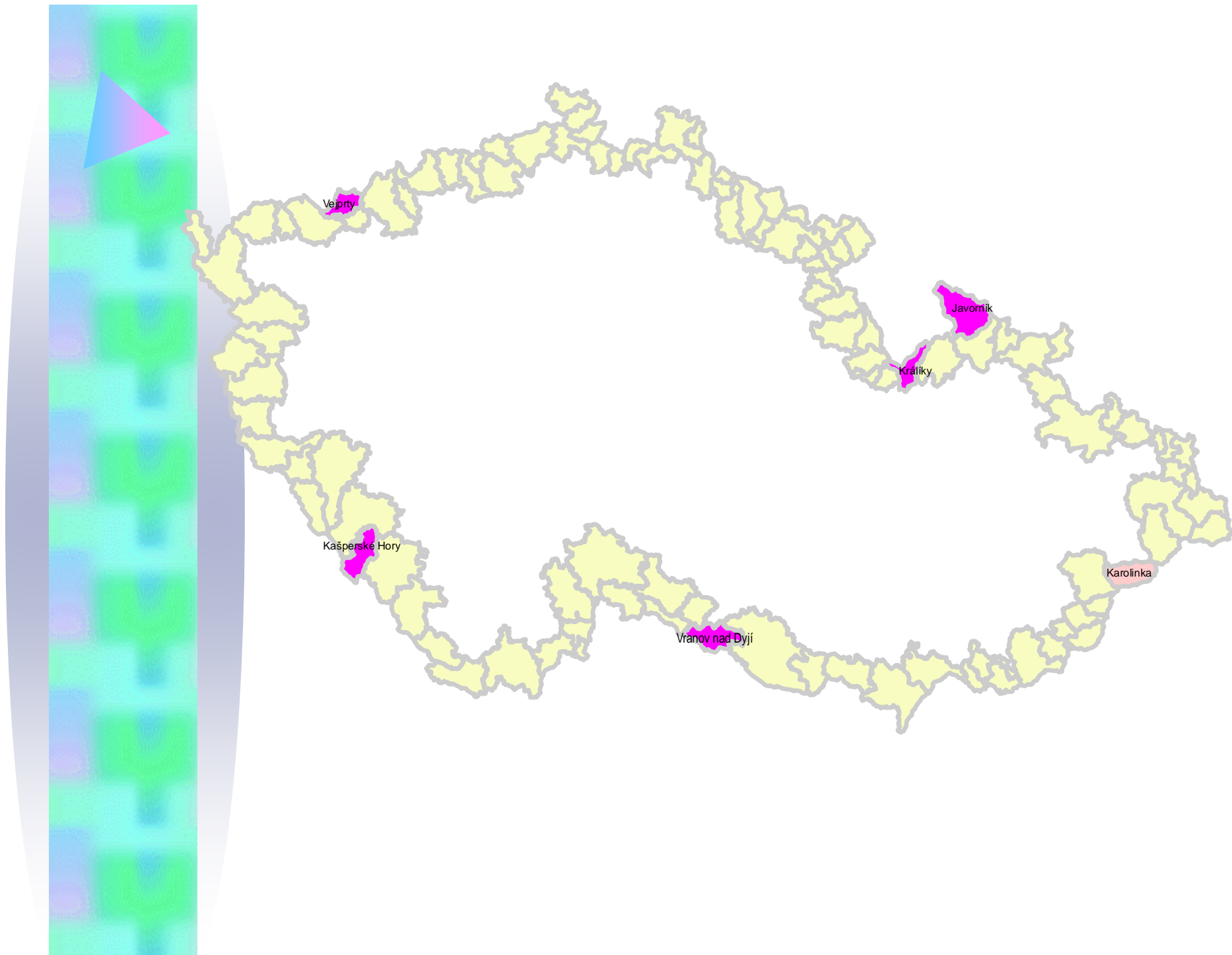
Substitution

- Mostly Slavonic people
- Czechs and Slovaks from inland
- Different groups of Czechs and Slovaks from abroad (Wolhynien, Hungary, Romania, Austria, western Europe)
- Special cases (Croatiens from South Moravia, Greek refugees – mostly Macedonian origin)
- Later some people within a punishment (e.g. big farmers from southern Slovakia) and Roma



Case studies

- Detailed micro-regional studies (small town + its hinterland) were elaborated in individual parts of the borderland:
- Vejprty (Saxonian border)
- Králíky, Javorník (Polish border)
- Vranov nad Dyjí (Austrian border)
- Kašperské hory (Bavarian border)
- Some other studies were used within other projects or diploma theses

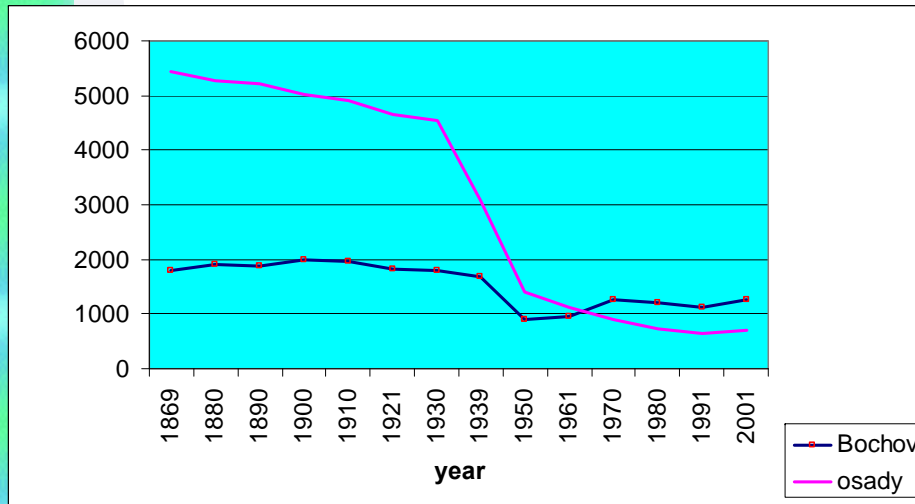




Geographical consequences

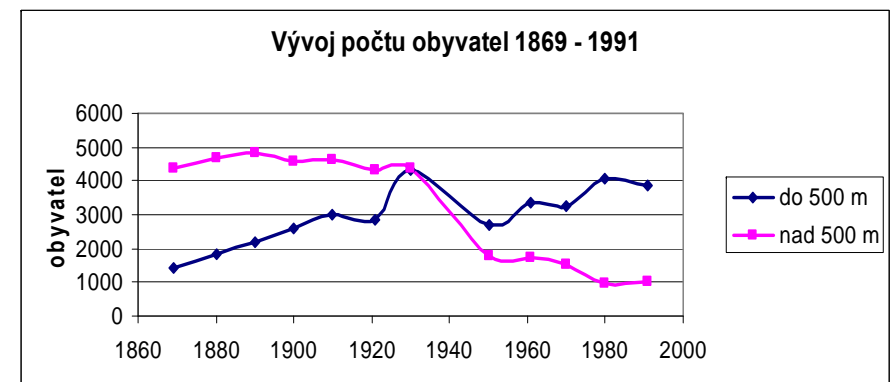
- Original population numbers were substituted hardly in cities and towns but never in rural areas
- New settlers were concentrated to the valleys, to better accessible territories; - the consequence: central places have kept the population more or less, but non-central places lost majority of population, some villages disappeared or changed their functions to second housing only
- Newcomers had hardly any relation to the settlements and/or houses in the borderland, they perceived the land as rented – so they did not invest there

Population development



Case Bochov
(W Bohemia):
comparison of
the central town
and
surrounding settlements

Hanušovice
(N Moravia):
comparison of people
living over and under
500 m a.s.l.



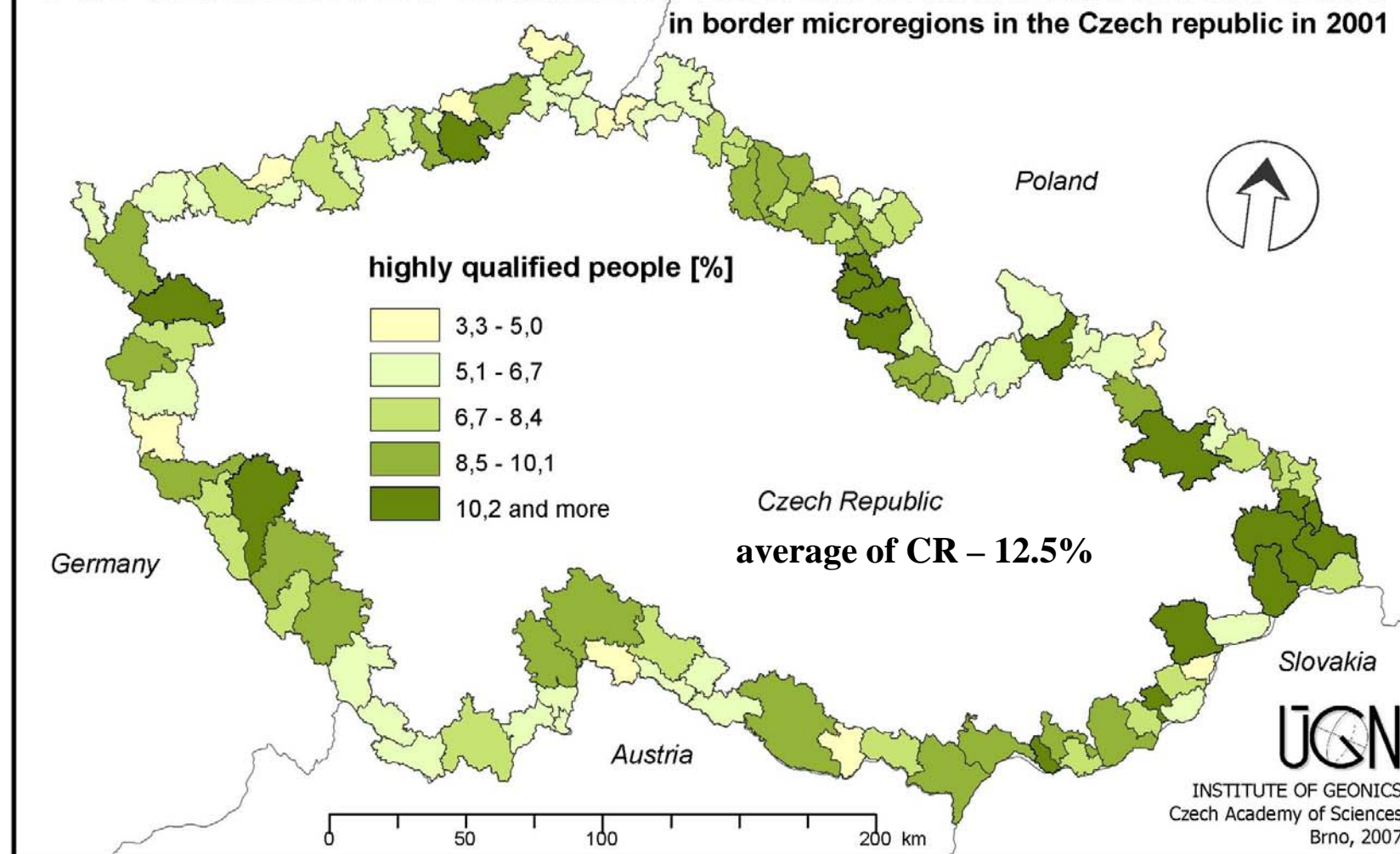


Social consequences

- Ethnically almost homogenous but culturally extremely different society in the borderland
- Factual elimination of middle class (because the majority of settlers were people from lower classes)
- High support of the Communist Party in elections, common agreement with forming agricultural cooperatives and state farms
- Lower education level, innovation potential etc.
- Social consequences are so important that in social sciences borderland is identified with the territories where the population was exchanged after WWII

POPULATION BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

in border microregions in the Czech republic in 2001





Economic consequences

- The old way of life (combination of activities in agriculture, industry, commerce etc.) disappeared
- Big employers came to the territory (state farms, branches of industrial enterprises from inland but also armed bodies (army, border police, custom service; which were very strong in the times of iron curtain)
- The inhabitants gain the psychology of state employees



Landscape consequences

- Newcomers have hardly any relation to the landscape, they did not understand it;
- Old terraces, paths but also lookout towers ceased to exist
- The change was featured also in the case of big floods in 1997 (the shift of the people and buildings from hilly positions to the valleys caused relatively high damages and many victims
- But iron curtain ensured landscape and environmental protection especially in the South



Development 1945 - 1989

- Situation seems to be differentiated, e.g. in South-Moravia original villages were resettled almost partly by people from an inland village e.g. in Eastern Moravia, the settlers brought their relations customs and way of life
- Of course, the population mixed during 40 years; new generations gained some relation to their region; individual border regions were supported by the state in different ways
- On the other side, difficult life conditions caused low attractiveness for young educated people



Situation after 1989

- Economic decline (leaving of industrial branches; termination of ineffective agricultural enterprises; decrease of employees also in surviving factories; withdrawal of the army)
- The population with employees' psychology was not prepared for serious business
- A big part of the territory is protected (majority of National Parks and many Protected Landscape Areas can be found in the borderland)
- Almost the only possibility is seen in tourism, but this branch is not able to substitute the jobs lost
- Cross-border collaboration



Questions

- To which extent is present development in the borderland a consequence of the population exchange after WWII?
- Are there any positive impact of the population exchange?
- What development we could expect?
- Is it possible and realistic to do anything in terms of improvement the situation in the borderland?



Consequences of population exchange

- Educational structure is in all border micro-regions (including urban ones) under the national average
- The stability of population against migration is weaker
- Some other non-statistical features could be documented from the field (like persisting employees' psychology)
- On the other side, each new generation loses a part of the mentioned characteristics



Positive consequences?

- Younger population structure which partly reproduces till this time and defends against stronger depopulation tendencies
- Sometimes relatively free areas in intravilans of villages which enables new constructions without changes in territorial plans



Presupposed development

- The situation is complicated with predominantly mountain character of the border regions which form really natural limit (with some exceptions)
- Natural conditions for productive agriculture are poor
- Difficult traffic accessibility defends industrial and other development
- Poor human resources hamper not only location of innovative branches but also limit own activities in rural borderland



Possible starting points

- Unfortunately, no general recipe has been found
- Possible positive factors which could be used by local people in some parts of the borderland:
 - Landscape of an excellent quality (but landscape protection often defend against economic activities)
 - Cross-border collaboration (with many obstacles)
 - Ecological agriculture, forestry, elaboration of local products, social services
 - Utilization of special attractions of individual places

27 SWOT analyses in borderland LAGs were analysed



Strengths

- Excellent environmental quality
- Potential for ecological agriculture
- Cross-border activities possible
- But these strengths are usually the second sides of the coin (underdeveloped economy, bad natural conditions for productive agriculture, marginal position). It means there exist only in relation with weaknesses.



Weaknesses

- Bad transport accessibility and connecting features
- Economic weakness or structural problems
- Disadvantageous settlement structure (small villages)
- Problems of human capital
- The weaknesses mentioned are objective and historical pre-conditioned; their improvement is difficult or impossible



Occasions

- Subsidies of EU, national and/or regional
- Cross-border collaboration
- These occasions depend on political decisions – it means that they could be unawares limited or cancelled



Threats

- Problems of human capital – exodus of young educated people to regions with better conditions
- Lack of investments, loss of competitiveness
- Conflicts between large-scale landscape protection and economic intentions of entrepreneurs and communes
- These threats are realistic and demonstrative at the present time



Conclusion

- Both population exchange after WWII and objective natural and geographical conditions impact the situation in the Czech rural borderland
- There is no general starting point how to improve the situation
- The situation in rural borderland will be problematic and way of solution should be looked for in individual cases according to individual conditions

Thank you for attention

