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## Master's Thesis

**Changes in European landscapes. What are driving forces of the changes in European landscapes?**

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České Budějovice 2021

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# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BOHEMIA IN ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE

Faculty of Economics

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## ASSIGNMENT OF DIPLOMA THESIS

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### Theses guidelines

The Ústecký region is one of the most problematic regions in the Czech Republic in environmental, economic and social terms. This thesis focuses mainly on two of these spheres – the environmental and the social. The aim of this paper is to discover their interconnections, influence on everyday life of the local inhabitants and regional development. Finally, based on this research, this work also aims to make suggestions for better and sustainable development of the region in the future.

Extent of work report: **50-60 pages**  
Extent of graphics content: **as needed**  
Form processing of diploma thesis: **printed**  
Language of elaboration: **English**

#### Recommended resources:

KRAJSKÝ ÚŘAD ÚSTECKÉHO KRAJE. Problémová analýza ústeckého kraje. 2011

KUCHAŘ, P., BALEK, P. Rozvojový potenciál Ústeckého kraje. Univerzita J.E. Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem, 2019.

LIPOVSKÁ, Z., VAISHAR, A., ŠŤASTNÁ, M. Sokolov-východ (Czech Republic) – From Open Cast Pits to New Landscapes. In WIRTH, P., ČERNÍČ MALI, B., FISCHER, W. (Ed.). Post-Mining Regions in Central Europe – Problems, Potentials, Possibilities. München : Oekom, 2012, p. 63-77.

PRUDKÝ, L., ČÁBELKOVÁ, I., ŠMÍDOVÁ, O., ŠŤASTNÁ, V. et al. Analýza potřeb a možností zkoumaných krajů. Díl první: Česká republika. Praha : Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy, 2016. ISBN: 978-80-7571-003-1

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## 1. Introduction

Ústecký region scores as one of the worst in Czech Republic in terms of economical, ecological, and social point of view. This region went through important and sometimes contradictory changes during last two centuries - on the one hand, it suffered destruction of the landscape and nature by coal mining, industry and pollution connected with these activities. On the other hand, the closure of the borders and depopulation of border areas led to creation of vast areas of forest where there used to be prospering settlements. The contradiction does not end here. On one side, the beautiful natural sites like national park České Švýcarsko or protected areas like České Středohoří are present on the territory. On the other side the image of the region is often connected with prevailing mining and industry, and social and ethnicity problems.

The landscape plays an important role in the life of humans as it represents their living environment that is not only influencing them but is also shaped by them. This mutual relationship, that changed profoundly over time, leads to identification of the humans with the landscape.

The Ústecký region is most often studied from the point of view of former Sudetenland and its changes after the second world war or from the point of view of very problematic areas (whether socially or environmentally). But as Chromý (1999) in his text “Kam patříš, Jemnicko?” writes, all the attention is focused on these “extreme” areas, whereas the localities that do not belong to typical borderland and are not strongly affected are not studied. Chosen area of interest for this work – the town Postoloprty - is therefore interesting at least from this point of view, because it lies in the inland border of the former Sudetenland.

The aim of this work is to find out, how the inhabitants of Postoloprty perceive their environment and how do they identify with their region. If the identification with the territory is low, what steps could help to increase it?

The topic of territorial/regional identity is important not only in the landscape ecology and environmental geography studies but in practical life the knowledge about the regional identity and how to stimulate it can contribute to the regional development.

For the purpose of this work, the theoretical part in the beginning aims to clarify the theoretical background of landscape changes and (regional) identity. The area of interest is presented in this chapter as well. Afterwards, the methodology is presented. The results coming from the process of evaluation and their discussion precedes the conclusion.



## 2. Landscape and landscape changes

### 2.1. Introduction to notion of landscape and study of landscape

Probably the most straightforward definition of landscape might be that landscape is a section of dry land with more or less unified features. More scientific definition of a landscape describes it as long-standing, relatively unified set of natural and anthropogenic characteristics tied to specific relief with specific historical base (Cíl, Ložek et al. 2011, P.13.). Landscape is similarly defined by Green (2000, in Lapka, Cudlínová, 2003), who describes it as „... *a particular configuration of topography, vegetation cover, land use and settlement pattern, which delimits some coherence of natural, historical and cultural processes and activities*” (P.366).

From these definitions follows that landscape is a result of interaction of nature and humans. The word “landscape” hides in itself the interconnection of ecological, natural characteristics (land-) and the anthropogenic, symbolic and cultural features (-scape which stands for scenery) (Lapka, (n.d.))[powerpoint presentation]).

Consequently, study of landscape changes cannot be narrowed only to the materialistic view as the tangible and intangible aspects in the landscape interact dynamically with each other. Former landscape ecology, however, employed only materialistic (geographical and ecological) views on landscape in its studies. On the other hand, modern landscape ecology seeks holistic approach, connecting the traditional approaches with the human element which adds intangible features into the tangible landscape structures. In other words, from natural landscape humans create the cultural landscape<sup>1</sup> (Lapka, Cudlínová, Maxa, 2002, P.72, Lapka, Cudlínová, 2003, P.366). Only such holistic approach can help to understand “*the unique combinations of natural and cultural heritages within particular landscape*” in a complex manner (Lapka et al. 2001, P.126).

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Ortwin Sauer (1925): “*The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural are the medium, the cultural landscape is the result*”  
Source: The Morphology of Landscape. University of California Publications in Geography 2 (2):19-53.  
in Lapka, presentation „Landscape sociology“. Source derived from moodle (not publicly available).

## 2.2. Dynamics of landscape formation

Natural forces that created and are still creating the landscape were most significant in the Quaternary - youngest period of geological era that lasts circa for the last 2 million years. It is in this geological period that the humans appeared and started to impact nature and landscape. Human activities mingle with natural processes since prehistory. Today's shape of the landscape is a result of both natural and anthropogenic influences (Ložek, 2011, P.10,11). Most of geomorphological processes are very slow (exception - natural catastrophes). On the other hand, anthropogenic impacts are quicker than most of the natural geomorphological processes (see Figure 1) and influence the form, functions and ecological stability of landscape (Lipský, 2000, P.88). For these reasons, landscape ecology introduces notions of primary and secondary landscape structure, where the primary landscape structure represents the natural landscape structure and the secondary corresponds to land use by humans (Lipský, 2000, P.88).

The shape and structure of the landscape is therefore a result of long geomorphological evolution and man-nature interactions (Weber, 2006, P.172). The secondary landscape structure (land use) changes reflect the changes in society, its needs and thinking (Bičík et al., 2015, P.200).

Figure 1: Time span of landscape changing processes

10 <sup>6</sup> roků a více	Geologické procesy platformní tektoniky Vývoj megaforem reliéfu Vývoj biologických druhů
10 <sup>5</sup> –10 <sup>4</sup> roků	Makroklimatické změny (glaciály, pluvialy) Utváření makro- a mezoforem reliéfu
10 <sup>3</sup> roků	Vývoj půd (např. podzolizace, laterizace) Hydrogeologické procesy
10 <sup>2</sup> –10 <sup>1</sup> roků	Sedimentační procesy Biologické zpětné vazby (sukcese společenstev po přírodní katastrofě, po narušení) Lesnictví – pěstování lesa
10 <sup>1</sup> až rok	Zemědělství, zahradnictví, stavebnictví
Měsíce	Biologické epidemie Sezónní cykly podnebí Stavební práce
Dny až měsíce	Zrychlená vodní eroze vyvolaná lidskou činností Sopečná činnost Záplavy
Hodiny	Katastrofální meteorologické jevy – tropická cyklóna, vichřice, příválový déšť
Sek. až minuty	Zemětřesení, atomový výbuch

Source: Lipský, 2000, P.88

## **2.3. Evolution of human impacts on the Czech landscape**

### **2.3.1. Period from Neolithic until the Industrial revolution**

In the times when humans were hunters-gatherers, they did not influence the environment more than the wild animals. Important change arrived in Neolithic period (in Czech lands circa 6,000 BC) which brought the invention of agriculture and permanent settlements. In this era small-scale farming, targeted deforestation, grazing and mining of materials for tools began. Those processes triggered or fastened natural processes (e.g., farming and grazing opened up space for intensive soil erosion) and they intensified in the course of time (Ložek, 2011, P.160). The evolution led humans to becoming the most dynamic causal agents of landscape changes (Lipský, 2000, P.88).

As the most noticeable changes in the landscape in the Middle Ages could be mentioned for example intensified mining of raw mineral materials (in Czech lands notably silver) that left traces in the landscape in the form of holes, elevations from mining waste, etc. and construction of castles and ponds. The two latter reshaped the picture of landscape and also served as place for establishing of specific fauna and flora. For example, the ruins of castles still serve as refugia of diversity in intensive agricultural landscapes (Ložek, 2011, P.162, 164, 167).

In the Baroque period (17th and 18th century), the landscape is cultivated and organized according to the intentions of feudal owners. These changes led to creation of the structure of cultural landscape that served as a basis of the Czech landscape as we know it now. From the mid-18th the Enlightenment phase arrived in the Czech lands. It accentuated the rationality (also in the farming), aimed to intensify agricultural production, new crops started to be cultivated and agriculture gained an attention on the national level (Weber, P.173).

In the 1870's extensive farming reached its peak. In this time, transition to market-oriented economy from late feudal system was happening because of the Industrial revolution (Bičík et al. 2015, P.195, 200).

### **2.3.2. Industrial revolution and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Industrial revolution arrived in the Czech lands in the middle of the 19th century. The urbanization increased rapidly, and agriculture intensified. The anthropic influence on the landscape increased (Weber, P.173). For example, the enormous growth of mining of raw

materials for production had a huge impact on the landscape of North-West Bohemia where surface mining of brown coal changed the surface of landscape completely (Ložek, 2011, P.168). However, thanks to the stability of property relations, the overall structure of the agricultural landscape remained more or less unchanged until the 1950s (Weber, P.173).

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, reliable, and detailed data about land use started to be collected. It was thanks to the imperial patent “Land tax Stable Cadaster” by Franz I from 1817 where the concept of stable cadasters (later only cadasters) was introduced. Through mapping and evaluation of the land conditions, the stable cadasters were supposed to delimit and classify land use structure so that the land taxes could be paid accordingly. The first thorough measuring surveys were held between 1826-1830 and 1837-1843. Based on the surveys, a cadaster map, measuring of the levelling network and listings including summary data on land use were created for each cadaster municipality. The listings contain land use categories such as forests, fields, meadows, gardens, vineyards, pastures, marshes, unproductive earth, etc.<sup>2</sup> (Kupková, 2002 P.135).

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought extreme political and economic events - the two world wars and independence of Czechoslovakia. Despite this fact, no significant land use changes were documented. However, major changes were triggered by the post-war development. Expulsion of the German population from Czech border regions (Sudetenland) after the WWII was an important driving force of land use as it greatly accelerated previously only slow land abandonment trend. This resulted in reduction of arable land which became the most important land-use change in this period (Bičík et al., 2015, p.195, Bičík & Štěpánek, 1994 P.47). In most parts of former Sudetenland, the forest succession took place, or the land was built-up (especially along the Western border). Part of the previously cultivated land became permanent grassland (meadows

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<sup>2</sup> “The stable cadaster was progressively replaced by the land tax cadaster and by the land cadaster. The records into the land cadaster were disturbed by the war and even after 1945 the cadaster maps were not being updated. After 1948 standard farming co-operatives were created, there occurred transfers of plots between different cadasters and villages were linked together.

*Because the cadaster maps lost their function of register of the property, legal and other relations, the geodesy service started after 1956 to compile the Unified Soil Register containing the data on plots according to their use without regard to their ownership.*

*Today the land use data contained in the real estate cadaster are gathered by the Centre of Central Databases of the Czech Office of Land Survey and Cadaster in Prague again according to the cadasters of the Czech Republic and to the ownership.” Kupková, 2001, P.135*

and little used pastures) (Bičík & Štěpánek, 1994, P.48). However, it is important to note that land use structure changes have an important inertia. For this reason, changes triggered by the exodus of Germans are not yet visible in the data from 1948 and occur with a certain delay (Štěpánek, 2002, P.112).

Right during the expulsion of ethnic Germans from the former Sudeten, the resettlement of borderland was taking place. Čapka et al. label the post-war resettlement as the biggest inland transfer of the inhabitants in the history of Czech lands where around 5 million people were migrating from which more than a half of them were the new settlers – Czechs, Slovaks, and other Slavic nations, mostly the re-emigrants and repatriates. The newcomers had to get used to new, often harsh living conditions and learn new skills notably in agriculture (fruit-growing, hop-growing, etc.) (Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík, 2005. P.5,6,186,197).

Numerous Romani families from Eastern Slovakia and, to a lesser extent, nomadic Olah Romani from South-eastern Europe also came to the Czech border region. The settlers, however, rejected them which often led restriction of the stay of this ethnicity in some border localities by the authorities. The Roma found themselves on the same hostility level as the remaining Czech Germans (Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík, 2005, P.191).

The expulsion of the Germans also meant the disappearance of many cultural traditions and religious, ethnographic, and folkloristic customs. New, strongly atheistic Czech population was not familiar with the German traditions that were present in the the borderlands for centuries and was not really interested to learn about it. It goes without saying that after the war, everything connected to the Germans was unacceptable. This resulted in considerable devastation (sometimes intended, sometimes not) of religious and cultural monuments - churches, parishes, cemeteries, statues, etc. (Čapka, Slezák, Vaculík, 2005, P.197).

### **2.3.3. Socialism (1948-1990)**

From 1948 the communist seized the power in Czechoslovakia and this political event brought radical changes in all possible sectors. The transition to centrally planned economy, collectivization of agriculture, nationalization of businesses, technical modernization, very strict law on “protection” of the agricultural land, extreme exploitation of raw resources, restricted access to the areas on the borders, etc. represented

driving forces of land use changes for following 52 years (Bičík et al., 2015, p.195, Bičík & Štěpánek, 1994, P.49, Štěpánek, 2002, P.112).

The closure of the borders and restricted access to the border areas along the iron curtain led to great changes in the landscape. Once densely populated prospering border areas were completely depopulated, and the former settlements left to slow decay (around 1,100 settlements disappeared). Natural forest succession started to dominate on abandoned land once used for farming and grazing. Sudeten regions encountered more radical landscape changes within a few years than over all the centuries before. Because of this development where nature dominated the area, these regions nowadays have new functions e.g., recreational (Kastner 1996 in Chromý 2009, P.128, Štěpánek, 2002, P.112).

Scientific Technological Revolution that arrived in the 1950s made socialistic agriculture modernized, mechanized and much more intensive. It introduced electricity and combustion engine and (as a result) heavy machines to the agriculture – tractors, combine harvesters, etc. This revolution also brought progress in breeding of animals, massive use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.

Another typical feature of socialist collectivized, intensive agriculture is joining of small fields into vast fields, destroying the field roads, baulks and bosques that were present in the landscape until the first half of the 20th century. These changes led to agricultural landscapes patterns unification (and erosion) (Jeleček, 2002, P.49, Ložek, 2011, P.171). Enormous state subsidies have maintained a high share of arable land and agricultural production even in less fertile and ecologically sensitive areas (e.g., Protected Landscape Areas) (Lipský, 2000, P.88).

The water streams were also harshly affected by the socialistic management. In a lot of locations, the streams were transformed into deep, narrow, concrete stream beds. Numerous big water dams were constructed in that era, too, which is now considered as the worst intervention into the natural ecosystems and landscape character. Not only that the rivers (e.g., Vltava) lost its natural meadows due to these changes, but the rivers lost their dynamics and river ecosystems were disrupted (Ložek, 2011, P.171,172).

These changes were so dramatical that Lipský (2000) talks about violated landscape submitted only for production. This landscape has lost its self-regulating mechanisms

(increase of erosion, aridification of agricultural land, loss of biodiversity, etc.) but also liveability as for the animals, as well as for the humans (Lipský, 2000, P.88).

Transition to a centrally planned economy included forced collectivization of agriculture. The collectivisation led to elimination of small local enterprises and loss of individual entrepreneurial interests. Moreover, in connection with increasing industrialization and urbanization, it led to higher emigration notably from the border rural areas. People left rural areas looking for better life in the cities. This explains the increase in built-up and other areas and shrinking proportion of agricultural land in this period (Kastner 1999 in Chromý 2009 P.128, Bičík et al., 2015, P.198). The built-up areas grew by 48 % and the „other” areas increased even by 197 % in time span of 52 years from 1948 to 1990 (Jeleček, 1993, in Bičík & Štěpánek, 1994, P.48). At that time, “other areas” was a land use category that included communications or transport areas, mining areas, construction sites, dumps, etc. (Bičík & Štěpánek, 1994, P.48). The urbanization (in connection with development of motorways and creation of large fields) resulted also in fragmentation of the landscape and consequently in interruption of the migratory routes (RNDr. Kostkan, Ph.D., personal consultation, 25.10. 2021).

In conclusion, during the socialist era in Czechoslovakia, major driving forces of land use change were of political and modernization character - large-scale industrialization and mining (notably open pit mines in the North-west Bohemia or Ostrava region) urbanization, mechanization, agricultural intensification, and restricted access to the borders. As a result, the most significant landscape changes were decrease of agricultural land and increase of urban areas and other areas and forests. Almost all these processes were to the detriment of the environment which was not adequately protected at that time (Bičík et al., 2015 P.200, 205, Štěpánek, 2002, P.113).

#### **2.3.4. 90s and recent period**

After the Velvet revolution in 1989, the Czechoslovakia entered different political and economic phase. The privatization and restitution of property during the 1990s drastically impacted the land use structure because most of those who regained the land did not start any agricultural activities (Bičík et al. 2015, P.198). The trend of decreasing employment in the agriculture continues today when in 2019, only 1,9 % of the employed Czechs worked in agriculture sector (Ústav zemědělské ekonomiky a informací – Ministerstvo

Zemědělství, 2019, P.114). The 90s were also times of high corruption and uncontrolled suburbanization in the core areas (Bičík et al. 2015, P.198).

The land use data on the national scale from the 90s indicate slight decrease in arable land, stable amount forest areas, and expansion of meadows and pastures. Although, there are differences between the regions e.g. in the fertile lowlands with intensive agricultural production the changes are rather insignificant (Lipský, 2000, P.89).

The future development is predicted return to the use of part of agricultural land abandoned in the 1990s. The ongoing urban sprawl around the urban centres will probably cover more agricultural land. Another modern trend are new spatial functions of the landscape – parking lots, roads, recreational areas, sports grounds (Bičík et al. 2015, P.207, 208) but also of industrial and shopping zones (Lapka, Cudínová, 2003, P.364). In today's globalized world, the external international driving forces (European, global) play major role (P.209, Bičík et al. 2015). In the former socialistic countries, the societal space is rather opened to the new trends (Lapka, Cudínová, Maxa, 2002, P.77.).

In terms of the protection of the landscape, the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century stirred up the debate about unfavourable effects of the socialistic management on the landscape. The stress was also put on the support of non-productive functions of the landscape and landscape care programmes emerged<sup>3</sup> (Lipský, 2000, P.88,89).

As written by Cíl and Ložek (2014, P.14), European landscapes are rich in diversity and this heritage translates also in international documents about protection of these specific landscapes. One of the most important international documents considering landscape is the European Landscape Convention from 2000.

This document focuses the topic of landscape and its management and preservation. The convention defines landscape in Article 1 as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*” (Council of Europe, 2000, P.2). One of the key values in this document is that “*the landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone*” and that “...

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<sup>3</sup> Today, Agentura Ochrany Přírody A Krajiny České Republiky (AOPK ČR) / Agency for the Protection of Nature and Landscape of the Czech Republic/ is in charge of the landscape programmes that promote the prosperity of biologically and landscape valuable sites. Landscape Care Programme was established by the Ministry of the Environment in 1996.

Source: Agentura ochrany přírody a krajiny České republiky



*the landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity” (P.1, Council of Europe, 2000).*

Weber (2006) emphasizes that this convention encapsulates and stipulates the need for new concept of dealing with the landscape and its appreciation and indicates its sustainable development. The writer further develops the idea that the convention considers not only the beautiful natural landscapes but also the ordinary, disrupted urban and sub-urban ones (P.174,175).

Important external, global driving force of changes in the landscape is definitely also climate change (Lapka, Cudlínová, 2003, P.364, Bičík et al. 2015, P.208). This climate change is linked to droughts, weather fluctuations, rising of sea level and many more environmental problems. In combination with approaching scarcity of primary resources such as water or fossil fuels these changes pose a direct threat to the humanity (Bičík et al. 2015, P.208). And as outlined before in this work, the changes in landscapes have impact not only on the tangible elements of landscape structure, but they impact also the intrinsic world of human values and perception (Lapka, Cudlínová, 2003, P.375).

The positive message from Chromý, Semian and Kučera (2014) is that in the developed countries, the relationship between human and landscape is slowly shifting from concurrence to cooperation. People gradually create more intimate and tight relationship with the territory via the landscape and are more aware about the essence of preservation of good quality environment. Even the Czech society (with certain delay behind the Western world) starts to transform its values, relationships and behaviours concerning the landscape (P.263).

### **2.3.5. Conclusion**

From the Neolithic, the landscape shaped by human land use reflects the societal characteristics (political, economic, demographic, etc.) and the relation between society and landscape (Lipský, 2000, P.88). Until 19th century, anthropogenic changes in the landscape relief were not so striking. On the one hand, human activities suppressed the wild nature, but on the other hand they led to creation of diverse habitats suitable for diverse species and therefore to increased biodiversity (Ložek, 2011, P.172, Weber, 2006,

P.173). Example of such influence is for example scything of meadows or grazing in salt marsh<sup>4</sup>.

Most intense landscape changes resulting from human activities happened over the last 175 years (Bičík et al., 2015, P.195). Large-scale mining, creation of vast fields, excessive modification of water streams, pollution and uncontrolled urban sprawl introduced impoverishment of nature and landscape in terms of biodiversity but also in terms of its aesthetic value (Ložek, 2011, P.172).

As visible from this chapter, the landscape and its history and memory reflect the values of society. Most of the European landscapes are the result of mutual evolution of society and nature. Man identifies with the landscape he shaped and co-created (identity of a landscape, cultural landscape) and conversely, the landscape influences the man's perceptions and feelings. The traces of cultural symbols create visual image of the landscape, but they carry also a hidden spiritual, historical, and cultural meanings (Vorel 2006 in Chromý, 2009, P.123). The identification of human with landscape and the shape of landscape resulting from the human actions is important topic for the landscape ecology and environmental geography studies (Chromý, 2009, P.123). But what exactly is identity and how is it formed? That will be the topic of the next chapter.

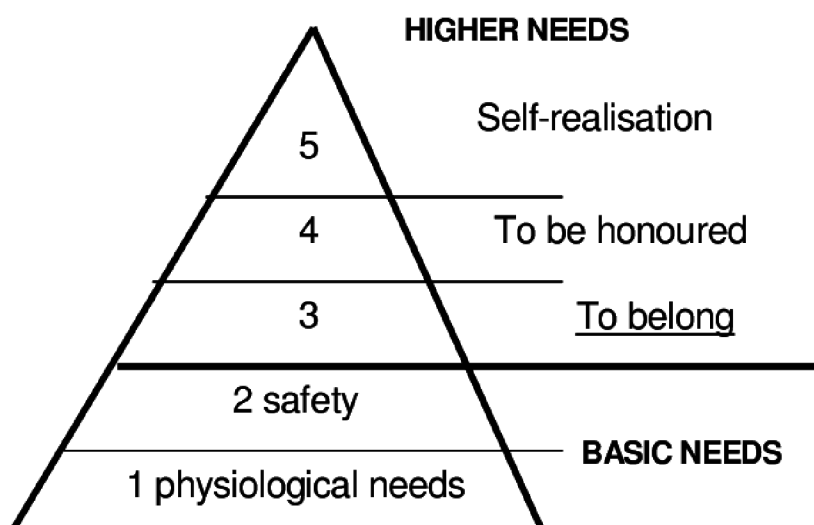
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<sup>4</sup> The soil of salt marsh needs disturbance – in the case of grazing in form of hooves of the animals - to let the salt get on the surface and create specific conditions for unique organisms. If there are no disturbances, the salt does not get on the surface and only dominant plants grow there. (RNDr. Kostkan, Ph.D., personal consultation, 25.10. 2021).

### 3. Identity

The word “identity” comes from latin *identitās* derived from latin *idem* meaning “the same”, where the *id* stands for the pronoun “it” and *-em* indicates emphasis (Rejzek, 2015, p.257). There exist numerous definitions of the term identity. For example, identity can be described as „*the way which either individual or the group of individuals define themselves, feel their existence (uniqueness) and which supports their consciousness in the relation to others*“/translation of the author/ (Euchademaïson,1995, P.246 in Chromý, 2009, p.110). Similarly, Jackson (2014) refers to identity as one's sense of self or self-concept and also mentions that through identity we define ourselves and position ourselves in the world. Moravcová and Bittnerová (2003) define identity in the context of culture as “*an autonomous concept that defines one's place within a world of social ties and positions*“/translation of the author/ (P. 244). In the forming process of identity, the individual or community tries to find the answers to the questions “who and what am I” or “who and what are we?” (Bačová, 2019, P.88). Chromý (2009) also adds questions like “where do I/we belong?” and “to whom do I/we belong?” (P.110). The last two mentioned questions correlate with the need “to belong somewhere” which corresponds to third level in the Maslow's hierarchical pyramid of needs (Figure 2) and is placed right above the basic physiological needs and need of safety (Raagmaa, 2001, P.6, Chromý 2009, P.110).

Figure 2:Maslow's pyramid of needs



Source: Raagmaa (2001, P.6), adapted from Maslow 1989

For that reason, Raagma (2001) labels the need to belong as the strongest social need and he adds: “*Afterwards, when a personality knows where he/she belongs, he/she knows who he/she is, he/she may claim for merits in the society and fulfils the need for his/her own self-realisation.*” (P.6).

According to Chromý (2009, P.111) there are two elementary types of identity – personal (individual) identity and collective identity (social, cultural, religious, etc). Prerequisite of collective identity is a social group in which the individuals share or relate to each other in some aspects of their identities. The membership in such group goes hand in hand with emotional connection to this community (Tajfel, 1981, P. 255, in Bačová, 2019, P.94). Personal identity is defined by characteristics that distinguish one individual from another (age, religion, nationality, interests, personality, etc.) As a result, the identity is composed from different layers - social identity - affected by the geographical location and corresponding cultural and social conditions (and thus different in the diverse corners of the world), and personal identity connected to the individual preferences (Jackson, 2014, P.136).

Identities are constructed from an early age through the primary socialization process. The social surrounding influences forming one's sense of self. As we observe behaviours of others and interact with people around us, we learn to identify with or relate to and also to differ from specific groups that surround us during our life. (Vygotsky, 1997 in Jackson, 2014, P.130) “*Through others we become ourselves*” (Vygotsky 1997; p.105 in Jackson, 2014, P.130).

The constructivist theory of George Kelly (1955, in Bačová 2019, P.95) indicates, that as human beings, we observe and always (re)interpret our surroundings. Based on our interpretations, we create cognitive structures (mental images or maps) that help us to understand the world and our position in it and to give/put meaning to everything. These personal constructs (ways of understanding the world and oneself) create the personality of an individual. As the process of (re)evaluating is continuous throughout the life, the identity changes and is therefore variable and dynamic. Identity can also have various forms and a person can modify the elements of their social identity depending on the social or cultural contexts and situations. This approach is also derived from social constructivism in which Harré (1983, in Bačová 2019, P.25) compares the identities to masks that are chosen to present oneself with in specific contexts. A person creates

multiple identities that are mutually overlapping and sometimes can be even contradictory and still coexist (Jackson, 2014, Chromý 2003, 2009).

Chromý (2009) presents common aspects of forming social and personal identity. At first, Chromý mentions the self-realisation through specific cultural features. Secondly, it is determination of position in relation to others (dichotomy “us” versus “them”). During this process, forming of identity is based on recognizing one's/group's characteristics in comparison with others. Another common aspect is that the process of forming identity (whether personal or collective) is continuous and in case of collective identity it comprehends also collective memory. Last common element is that this process is tied to specific space (Šindlářová, 2003 in Chromý, 2009, P.111).

The text of Chromý further develops the process of forming and reproducing of collective identity. He stresses the importance of time and space in these processes. The space is where the territorial identity is anchored to. Regarding the aspect of time, it is the past - the common history - which translates into collective memory and creates a bond between the contemporary communities and creates a base for common future, too. Thus, identity is not only created on the basis of individual's direct experiences and characteristics but also via inherited values and cultural patterns passed from generation to generation (Chromý, 2009, P.111).

It is also important to mention the notions of avowed and ascribed identity. The image that a person (or a community) wishes to project on the outside is the avowed identity. However, this image is confronted with how the others actually see us – this is called ascribed identity (Jackson, 2014, Bačová 2019, P.89). Sometimes the conflict of the intended image/identity and perceived image/identity can have important social impact (Bačová, 2019, P.89).

When it comes to scope of the identity, national identity covers the sense of belonging to a particular state or nation and is associated with specific symbols (flags, languages, ethnicity, music, cuisine, etc.). The strength of national identity may fluctuate over the course of time. On the one hand, national identity can provide sense of belonging, but on the other hand, it can also result in negative relation and behaviour against people of different nationalities (Jackson, 2014). Identity can also form on smaller-scale territories (regional identity).

### **3.1.Regional identity**

Regional identity reflects the relationship between the place and people who live or lived there, and it answers the question “where do I belong?” or “what I consider to be home?” (Anděl, Balej, Bobr, 2019, P.82). As already mentioned, based on the Maslow's pyramid of needs (Fig. 2), Raagma (2001) identifies the need to belong as the strongest social need. Chromý (2009) incorporates to this need to belong the thought of regional identity as it reflects the relation between the individual and his physical and social environment.

The territorial/regional identity develops on the basis of particular conditions that distinguish one region from other regions (Chromý 2003, Tuan 1996 in Anděl, Balej, Bobr, 2019, P.82). These might be social, economic, historical, linguistic, cultural, or natural aspects. Also, the landscape, whose form and shape are result of coexistence of man and nature, plays a role in the forming of identity (Chromý, 2003). According to Zich (in Anděl, Balej, Bobr, 2019, P.82), there are two dimensions of identification with the territory - the identification with the physical environment (example from Chromý, 2009, P.119 - aesthetical stimuli like nature, landscape or maintained historical buildings) and the identification with the social environment of the territory (ex. Chromý, 2009, P.119 - presence of the social groups with who the individual(s) identify - family, friends).

Breakwell (1992, in Gustafson, 2001, in Chromý, 2009) mentions other important principles of forming regional identity. One of them is the feeling of continuity of one's life that is connected to one specific place and lasts long time (Chromý, 2009, P.111). Feeling of continuity (and therefore the sense of belonging to the place) can be strengthened by the awareness of connection of previous generations to this place (Chromý, 2009, P.119). Another principle is fulfilled when one feels proud of the territory where he/she lives – it is the principle of self-esteem (Chromý, 2009, P.111). The feeling of pride can be boosted f.e. by significant event, person or work of art linked to the specific place (Chromý, 2009, P.119). And last but not least, is the principle of self-efficacy when the place where one lives provides good conditions and necessary facilities for living (Chromý, 2009, P.112).

The intensity of sense of identification with territory is individual and varies in time. Sometimes it can be so strong to the extent where the regional identity provides even more significant sense of belonging than national identity (Jackson, 2014). The strong regional identity is often paired with active approach to improving the territory (Kasala,

2006 in Anděl, Balej, Bobr 2019, P.82). This statement is represented also by Chromý (2003) who mentions that place identity and place attachment can play an important role in regional development of smaller territorial units. Oppositely, weak identification makes the inhabitants indifferent to the territory. They might not see the place as fixed place for their life and plan to leave it (Kasala, 2006 in Anděl, Balej, Bobr 2019, P.82). This indifference is for the regional development worse than dissatisfaction of inhabitants, the reason being that this dissatisfaction can be a stimulus to active participation on improving the territory. In this context, Vencálek in 1998 introduced the notion of creative anti-identity (in Chromý, 2009, P.119).

Territory of a region with which people identify with, may not correspond to administratively defined units and these mental maps vary in each individual's mind (Anděl, Balej, Bobr, 2019, P.82). In particular in Czechoslovakia during communist rule, the administrative regions created from above were created regardless of intrinsic links between the places that were forming over a long period (Chromý, Semian, Kučera, 2014, P.262). It suggests itself that such decisions were not random or mistakes. The totalitarian regimes seek to create uniform, conformist identity matching the ideology. This separation aimed to suppress regional identity that could pose a threat to communist regime.

The problematic of region and it's delimitation will be further developed in the next sub-chapter.

### **3.1.1. Region**

Johnston et al. (2001, in Chromý 2009, P.26) define the region as “*more or less limited territorial unit that thanks to its unity, uniformity or particular organizational principle differs from other territorial units*” /translation of the author/. However, the definition was not always the same and it changed according to geographical paradigm of the specific period. Chromý summarizes this evolution into three phases.

The first phase (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) is described as “traditional” where regions were considered as naturally existing territorial units. In this period, the accent was purely on description of specificities of a region. There was no effort to explain the phenomena and processes that happen in these territorial units or those which influence them from the outside (Chromý, 2009, P.26).

The second period dates to the 50s of 20<sup>th</sup> century when geography became “spatial science”. At that time, region was not perceived as naturally occurring territorial unit anymore but rather as a system organizing the geographical information. This period of quantitative revolution brought high-quality analytical methods. These methods, however, could not capture the complex reality and their use led to excessively technical approach and in consequence to de-socialization of a region (Chromý, 2009, P.27).

The third approach occurred in the 80s of 20<sup>th</sup> century – the new regional geography, resulting from social/cultural turn in geography. Saganová (2004, in Chromý 2009), described this turning point as “*transition from studies of territorial organization of society to studies of social organization of space*” /translation of the author/ (P.27). This approach describes a region as a social construct, formed by society who gives it a certain meaning.

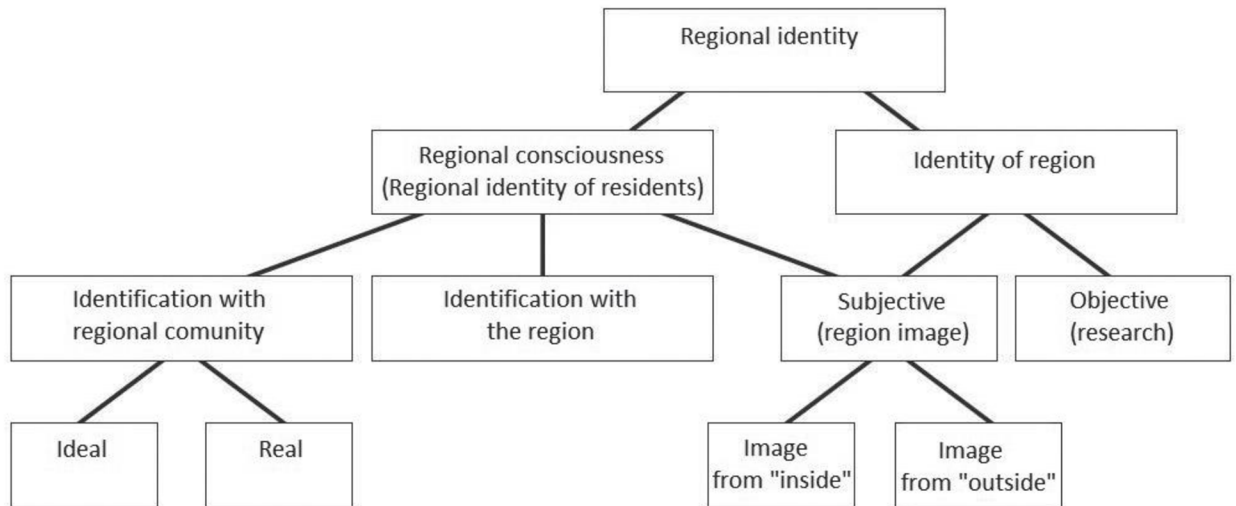
Paasi establishes the notion of “institutionalization of region” that covers the process of forming of a region to which he refers to as socio-spatial process that leads to formation of spatial unit (as a part of societal structure). This spatial unit becomes visible and can be identified in the social practice and social consciousness both outside and inside of the region (Paasi in Chromý, 2009, P.27, 115). The institutionalized region serves as setting for creation and development of cultural, economic, political and other processes (Chromý 2003, 2004 in Chromý, 2009, P.27).

Paasi also stresses the important elements of forming of a region and simultaneously of the regional identity - the initiative of individuals, image of a region (inner and outer), name of the region, forming of institutions and regional symbols, educational system, regional literature, media (daily press) and others (Anděl, Balej, Bobr, 2019, Chromý 2009, P.27, 28). The process of institutionalization of region can be divided into four steps that are mutually independent and do not happen in specific order. First is mentioned the creation of boundaries of the area of region. Then follows creation of symbolic shape and symbols of the region - name of a region, flags, etc. These symbols are often derived from the history of the region or from the current reality of region and serve as representation of the territory. Another important aspect in forming the region and reproducing the regional identity are the political, economic, cultural and educational institutions. The climax of the institutionalization is embodiment of the region in spatial structures and in consciousness of the communities inside and outside of the region (region gains autonomous position and administrative role) (Paasi, 1986 in Chromý, 2009, P.115).



Regional identity should not be reduced to the meaning of the regional consciousness of its residents. The region itself gains identity during institutionalization (identity of a region, image of a region). Hence, the notion of regional identity encompasses the regional consciousness of residents AND identity of a region (Chromý, 2009, P.113) – see Figure 3.

Figure 3: Regional identity dimensions



Source: A. Paasi (1986, p.132, in Anděl, Balej, Bobr, P.82)

The identity of region (image of the region) is subject not only to the inhabitant's perception but also to the perception of people who do not live permanently in the region but visit it (e.g. for longer periods – cottagers or shorter visits – tourists) and even those who have never visited the region may have a certain image, beliefs about it since they got at least some information from education, media, etc. (Chromý, 2009, P.114).

### 3.1.2. Place vs. region

The identity is connected to the concept of “sense of place” – way of perceiving the surroundings through our senses (Tuan, 1997 in Chromý, 2009, P.113). There are diverse approaches to the definition of difference between the notion of region and place.

According to Paasi's theory, place is often is linked to local scale and it is not clearly delimited. It is an individual concept, that originates in everyday life and experiences of an individual. In contrast, region has collective dimension and is linked to the collective history of territory (Chromý, 2003, in Chromý, 2009, P.113). Whilst the place

(constructed during lifetime in an individual's mind) ceases to exist when the individual dies, region keeps on existing because it is long-term concept, established historically and socially. The main difference between the region and place is therefore the timespan of their existence (Chromý, 2009, p.29).

However, because of its vague delimitation, place can encompass more hierarchical levels. Nevertheless, people's attachment differs depending on the hierarchical level and usually it gets weaker the higher the hierarchical level. The reason might be the lack of the personal experience which makes the higher levels abstract for the individual. Despite this statement, people identify with relatively abstract concept of national state. According to Tuan (1975) it is because of the experience created through art, education and politics (Tuan, 1975, in Chromý 2009, P.112).

Sometimes, the notions place and region are used as synonyms. Paasi (2002, in Chromý 2009, P.28) prefers the use of the notion place as the notion region is usually equated with the hierarchical level or administrative unit and not with the consciousness and sense of place (P.28). For the purpose of this work, regional identity will be used as a reference to this consciousness and sense of place.

## **3.2. Modification and loss of identity**

### **3.2.1. Modern tendencies in identity modification**

In our modern extremely globalized world one can create also a global identity - sense of belonging to worldwide culture. This identity is linked to knowledge of international language (to big extent English) which creates communication bridge between people from different countries (Arnett 2002: 777, in Jackson, 2014, P.151). Also, the digital technologies make quick long-distance communication and exchange possible.

There is a lot of positives to these advanced technologies and effortless communication between the global citizens. However, some might argue that the globalization induces tendencies to erase the cultural distinctions, notably on the lower hierarchical level. The penetration of foreign elements can weaken the local identities, modify them or even lead to the oblivion and loss of historical memory. This would lead to assumption that, because of the globalization, ethnical and cultural identity is becoming uniform (Chromý 2009, Moravcová and Bittnerová, 2003, p.243). Text of Chromý (2009) also mentions Roubal, who refers to current identity situation as postmodern crisis of identities.

The issue of uniform identity is connected to the topic of European identity and the scepticism of nations, who fear loss of regional and national identity. According to the Eurobarometer survey, 60 % of the Czech feel as citizens of European Union and 39 % do not, which positions Czech Republic in one of the last place in comparison with other EU member states (Standard Eurobarometer 93, 2020, P.14).

As Chromý (2009) writes *“the identity cannot be imposed, it is only possible to create conditions for its creation and growth”* /translation of the author/ (P.120). Another hypothesis is that globalization, fast development and fast way of living in general (high mobility, information technology etc.) contribute to feeling of being uprooted, to the extent of some individuals who never form a strong bond with any place (Chromý, 2009, P.112).

Still, most of the scientists are convinced that the territorial identity remains an important element of individual and collective identity and can help with renaissance of regionalism and local activities focused on preserving local uniqueness (Chromý, 2009, P.111).

### **3.2.2. Loss of identity due to population change**

Identity modify or even vanish as a consequence of change or disappearance of bearers of the identity. Lack of interest in legacy of precedent generations and consequent loss of a part of collective memory can cause deformations in identity or complete loss of the former identity and creation of a new one (Chromý, 2009, P.120). This work already mentioned an example of such situation from the Czech lands – the expulsion of German inhabitants from the Czech border areas after the World War II which led to elimination of cultural traditions, religious habits and ethnographic specifics. During the resettlement phase, new inhabitants from different parts of Czechoslovakia brought their own social and cultural values and experiences which differed among this new population. They did not revive the legacy of previous population and the new values were confronted with the new physical and social environment and this confrontation eventually leads to creation of new socio-cultural system (Kastner, 1999 in Chromý 2009, P.120,128).

Numerous researchers (see Chromý, 2009, P.127) point out that the consequences of changes after World War II are still noticeable e.g., lower level of education, lower participation in elections, higher unemployment (Boček, Cibulka, 2016). Even in terms of regional identity there are prevailing differences between the former Sudetenland and the inland. Although, third generation of the resettled population brings gradual stabilization of regional identification Zich (2003 in Chromý, 2009, P.127).

The socialist period also had an impact on the formation of regional identity of people in Czechoslovakia. It brought unification of the lifestyle and formalization of social life. The effects of these processes were even more pronounced in the disrupted border regions and created another barrier in creation of sense of belonging of new inhabitants of the territory (Kastner 1996, in Chromý, 2009, P.128).

In addition to that, newcomers do not necessarily have to create their own new territorial identity. Often, people who come to an area because of economic, utilitarian reasons do not create emotional bonds to this particular territory. When the economic situation of the territory is not profitable anymore, this uprooted population moves away from the area. This phenomenon leads to rapid degradation of the territory (Raagma 1998, in Chromý, 2009, P.124).

Regional consciousness is also weaker in case of people leave to other regions/places for work, education, or leisure activities. Those people create bond to these places which can

lead to relativization of the bonds to the original place. Creation of bonds away from the birthplace shifts the region to the “memory” or “relaxing” position in individual's mind (Zich 2003 in Chromý, 2009, P.124).

## 4. Area of interest

### 4.1. Geographical and facility characteristics

The area of interest – municipality Postoloprty, is located in the North-west Bohemia (which responds to the NUTS II) in the south of the Ústecký region (NUTS III) (Map 1) in the Louny district (LAU1) (Map 2). More precisely it lies between the cities Žatec and Louny, near the borders with the Central Bohemian region. Other important cities nearby are Most, Chomutov (Map 3). Žatec is most known as the city of with a long tradition of hop cultivation and beer production. The city Most is known for the coal mining.

Map 1: Picture of the map – Czech Republic is divided into 14 regions (NUTS III) within the 8 cohesion regions (NUTS II)



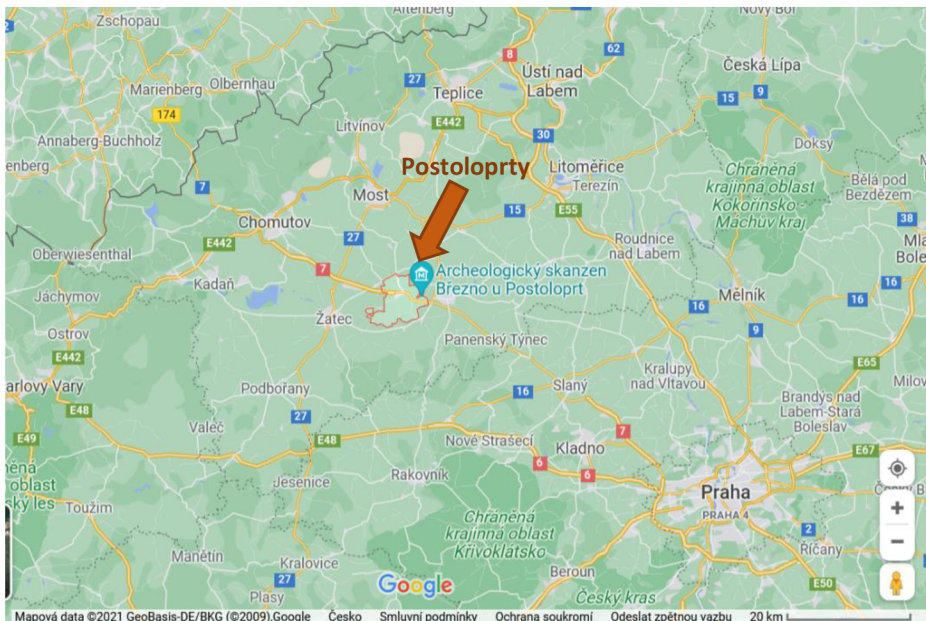
Source: Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj ČR, Dotace EU

Map 2: Regions (NUTS 3) and Districts (LAU 1) in the Czech Republic



Source: Český statistický úřad

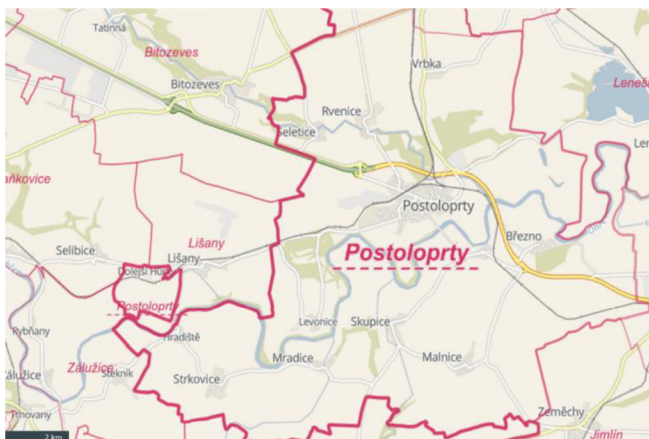
Map 3: The location of the town Postoloprty and surrounding cities



Source: Google maps

The municipality is composed of several parts/villages Březno a Dolní Březno, Dolejší Hůrky, Hradiště, Levonice, Malnice, Mradice, Rvenice, Seletice a Seménkovice, Skupice, Strkovice and Vrbka (Map 4) (M.C. TRITON, 2020a).

Map 4: Parts of the municipality Postoloprty



Source: Základní aplikace GIS Město Postoloprty

The town disposes with municipal authority, kindergarten, elementary school, artistic school, centre for the leisure-time activities for the young, health centre, shops, pubs, cinema, theatre, swimming pool. For such a small town, lot of cultural events are organized and popular is also local newspaper with actualities but also sections about the town's history. Considering nature, the former peasantry is now freely accessible forest/park in the North-west of the town with a stream Chomutovka. The forest spreads

to the East to the area of former Wineberg. On the south, the river Ohře flows through the lowland. In the near surroundings there is České Středohoří - unique highlands made up from numerous hills created by volcanic activity. The closest hills to the area of interest are Raná and Oblík (annex 3).

#### **4.2. Socio-demographic and economic characteristics**

Postoloprty has over 4 700 inhabitants. In the last 10 years, gradual decrease of population is observed. This decline is caused by the migration away from the town and the newcomers cannot compensate this decline. Therefore, the net migration is in negative figures (Český statistický úřad, 2020).

Demographic and socio-demographic development is influenced also by the so called “trade with poverty” - purposeful concentration of social groups in one territory. The presence of disadvantaged social groups (Romani community, long-term unemployed people, young people without leisure-time activities, etc.) influences the life in the town. Because of this, despite low criminality index, majority of the inhabitants (independently on social group) perceive the safety situation as problematic (M.C. TRITON, 2020a).

Considering the economic situation, the opportunity for the development is the motorway D7 that is being built in the north of the town. This motorway will connect Prague, Slaný, Louny, Chomutov and also Germany (M.C. TRITON, 2020a). The town is not very interesting for the tourists, yet. The management of the town has developed strategies on how to create better infrastructure for tourism (M.C. TRITON, 2020b). One of them being latest acquisition of local castle in dilapidated condition for a reconstruction.

#### **4.3. History**

As the town Postoloprty and its surroundings are located in fertile lowlands around the river Ohře, this area was since prehistory (Neolithic) settled. The first written mention of Postoloprty comes from the early 12th century from a collection of the oldest Czech legends - Kosmas Chronicle. One of the legends tells a story about the Bohemian tribal prince Neklan and his servant Durynk<sup>5</sup> and this legend mentions fortified settlement near village „Postolopirth“ called Drahuš (which is today part of the town Postoloprty). The

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<sup>5</sup> After the Lucian War, the winner Neklan took pity on the son of the killed enemy prince Vlastislav. The child was entrusted to the care of Durynk. Durynk, motivated by greed, murdered the child, thinking Neklan would be grateful. Neklan, however, was furious that Durynk had not fulfilled his task of caring for the child, and ordered him to kill himself too. Durynk then hanged himself on an old alder tree.



legends may not be true; however, the remains of an early medieval fortress have been actually found in the south of the town (Město Postoloprty, n.d.). Another well-known legend is the legend about Oldřich and Božena that supposedly took place in the forests surrounding Postoloprty, in the village Peruc.

Important event in the history of the town is the foundation of the monastery “Porta Apostolorum” - probably before the end of the 11th century. In the first half of the 12th century, a stone church dedicated to the Virgin Mary was built in Romanesque style. A unique six-part compound window from this period was preserved in the wall of one of the deanery buildings until today<sup>6</sup>. The monastery was burnt down by the Hussites in 1420.

In the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Weitmils supported the reclamation works and created number of ponds around Postoloprty which led to significant change in the surrounding landscape. To support the growing traffic on the road to Chomutov, a new bridge across the Ohře River was build and the in the former monastery area was constructed a late Gothic church. Later the town's skyline was enriched by another church and by a fortress that was built on the site of today's castle. The "Weitmil" 16th century in Postoloprty is also a period of economic development and rapid rise of crafts, new vineyards and orchards are planted. The manorial court farmed extensive fields and considerable profits were made from brewing beer (Město Postoloprty, n.d.). Until today, the northern part of the town is called “Na Vinici” (“Weinberg” in the past) even though the vine is not grown here anymore, and this area is now covered with forest.

In 1692, Prince Ferdinand of Schwarzenberg took over the town which was at that time indebted. Postoloprty became one of the many estates of the immense Schwarzenberg estate. This powerful and wealthy aristocratic family used their governance experiences to uplift the town. The Schwarzenberg unsuccessfully attempted to grow wine on large wine yards and to mine brown coal<sup>7</sup>. Game hunting was a popular aristocratic "sport" and therefore the Postoloprty pheasantry was growing and taken care of during the Schwarzenberg.

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<sup>6</sup> The fact that this Romanesque compound window was six-part shows how important and rich this monastery used to be. (Source: interview with Pavel Panenka) More information on the website <https://postoloprty.farnost.cz/kostely-a-kaple/kostel-nanebevzeti-panny-marie/>

<sup>7</sup> The remainders of the mining can be found in the forms of pits all around the northern parts of the town, as well as in the areas where today are houses and even railway (see Annex 5)

The town partially preserved its Baroque appearance - the castle, Marian column on the square, Marian chapel in the cemetery. In 1726, a new town hall with a tower was built because of the need for municipal self-government and the growing self-confidence of the town, people required a visible symbol of the village's growth (see Annex 1). In 1753 new dean's church of Ascension of the Virgin Mary with prismatic tower was completed and consecrated which created another a landmark in the skyline of the city (see Annex 2 and 3). In the 1820s a Jewish synagogue and cemetery in the south of the town were built. Unfortunately, neither synagogue, nor cemetery remained until today. However, one can still find lot of buildings and symbols of the Schwarzenberg influence (see Annex 4).

The First World War brought a slowdown in the development. The tense times also exacerbated relations between the Czechs and the Germans, who were gradually loosin their absolute dominance due to the arrival of other inhabitants from the surrounding Czech villages. After declaration of independent Czechoslovakia in October 1918, the German majority in was not pleased and intended to create separate province of Deutschböhmen.

Despite the national disputes, Postoloprty continued to develop during the First Republic, its population grew, and its living conditions improved. For example, the frequent spring floods and the subsequent destruction of land and fields were reduced by the ongoing regulation of the Ohře River. Interesting fact it, that the city council made long-term efforts expand green areas within the city, which was rather exceptional at that time, and indicates a balanced concept of the city's development.

However, the growth of Nazism in Germany and the subsequent rapid growth of the Henlein movement in the second half of the 1930s led to renewal of national frictions - there were constant mutual disputes and violent clashes. After the Munich Agreement in 1938 withdrawal, the town became part of the German Third Reich. The border between Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was just across the river on the road to Louny (see Annex 6).

Most of the Czech inhabitants fled the town because of the violence and therefore a strong Germanization of the town occurred. The war ended definitely with the arrival of Red Army troops on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1945. At the beginning of June 1945, local Germans were concentrated in a detention centre, some of them in the pheasantry. There were also mass executions (Postoloprty massacre). It is estimated that more than 700 people were killed.

After the gradual expulsion of the Germans during 1946, the population declined sharply, only slowly compensated by the arrival of families of Volhynian Czechs in the following years (Město Postoloprty, n.d.) As Postoloprty were on the border of Sudetenland, numerous bunkers were built in its surroundings. They are still present in the landscape today and became its part (Annex 8.).

During the communist regime the hop part-time jobs were obligatory for the students, so the hop is rather anchored in the minds of older generations. Nechranice dam was built on the river Ohře and in the 70s, there was an increase in inhabitants because of the construction of the coal power-plant (annex 9.) in the near village Počerady. For this reason, blocks of flats started to be built which changed the face of the town. But the influx of the inhabitants was not the only effect of building of the power-plant. The coal mining connected with the industrial activities in Mostecká basin influenced also the quality of environment and of course the landscape. As mentioned in Jeřábek (1994), the socialistic government aimed to create State Energy base in North-west Bohemia (especially in Mostecko and surroundings). The pursuit for more and more brown coal caused devastation of vast areas, ignoring the natural (e.g. changes in hydrology) as well as social conditions (destruction of settlements). In some cases, the exploitation was so immense that the natural self-regulating forces cannot renew the damaged areas without help of the causal agent – humans. For this reason, measures to restore these areas are planned and specifically in the Mostecký region hydrological reclamation is popular as it can create the conditions for touristic development of the region in the future (Jeřábek, 1994, P.217,218).

#### 4.4. Conclusion

The town and its surroundings went through interesting development. When comparing the maps from the first mapping in 1843 and contemporary map<sup>8</sup>, we can observe that the land use in the surroundings intensified - where there used to be wetlands near the river are now fields of hop and other crops. On the other hand, less fertile and hardly accessible areas were left for the forest (Ex. former Wineberg).

As the city was growing, the cemeteries were moved to the new margin of the town and the transport infrastructure logically also developed – the roads as well as the railroads. New buildings added to the skyline of the town (building of the elementary school) but some dominants also disappeared (barracks). Lot of the historical buildings are dilapidated. However, the town recently acquired the castle so it might become a new representative dominant of the town and consequently also source of pride of locals. New motorway is currently being build right at the edge of the town which might also help in the future development of the territory. Of course, new land use types emerged with the evolution of the society - e.g. sewage treatment plant, photovoltaic power plant, as well as two football fields emerged north from the town. Even though this area was part of the Sudeten in the past, the changes in land use around Postoloprty are not as dramatical as in other parts of the Sudeten as this region is agricultural, fertile lowlands (Lipský, 2000, P.89).

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<sup>8</sup> Because of the copyrights of the Český úřad zeměměřický a katastrální only link to the maps from 1843 can be provided in this work ( <https://ags.cuzk.cz/archiv/> ). The comparison with current state was done via [mapy.cz](https://mapy.cz) (<https://mapy.cz/zakladni?x=13.6969753&y=50.3618610&z=14&source=muni&id=2009> )

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Research questions

Based on the theory, following research questions were created.

(RQ1) *What regional specificities do the inhabitants identify and it makes them position themselves in relation to others?*

(RQ2) *Via which features do the inhabitants identify with the territory?*

(RQ3) *What are the flaws and the problems of the territory?*

(RQ4) *What are the obstacles in developing regional identity?*

(RQ5) *How to create the conditions for developing the regional identity?*

(RQ6) *How do the inhabitants perceive the cultural environment in the given territory?*

In this part, the reasons why the research questions were constructed in such way will be elaborated.

The first research question (RQ1) is based on the theory of (regional) identity of the aforementioned researchers (like Paasi, Chromý, Zich,...) who accentuate that regional identity is based on self-realisation through specific features, and afterwards comparing and finding the differences with others. This way the community can define itself, feel its existence and uniqueness and position itself in relation to others. The specific features can be social, economic, historical, linguistic, natural, etc. For this reason, the first research question is ***What regional specificities do the inhabitants identify and it makes them position themselves in relation to others?*** This question also tackles the topic of the identity of the region which is also part of the regional identity.

Since the previously mentioned specificities do not have to necessarily be positive, two other research questions were made to distinguish the positive and negative specificities. For this purpose it will be estimated that positive features serve as pillars for the identification with the territory (principle of self-esteem) and therefore the second research question (RQ2) is: ***Via which features do the inhabitants identify with the territory?*** On the other hand, research question number 3 (RQ3) is ***What are the flaws and the problems of the territory?*** These are important to ask as they might be the source of low the sense of belonging, low self-esteem and even low town self-efficacy that constitute the regional identity and they can even cause emigration from the region, or,

on the contrary, they can also serve as a stimulus to active participation with the objective for improving the territory.

Next research question (RQ4) is also connected to the topic of problems and tries to identify the main obstacles in developing the regional identity: *What are the obstacles in developing regional identity?* and following research question (RQ5) seeks possible solutions and good practice examples: *How to create the conditions for developing the regional identity?*

Last research question focused on the cultural life in the region. The cultural institutions play important part in reproducing the regional identity and therefore it is relevant to ask *How do the inhabitants perceive the cultural environment in the given territory?* (RQ6). Not only that the cultural events transmit the cultural values, but they can also constitute the self-esteem of the region.

The research questions as well as the specific questionnaire and interview questions were inspired by the diploma theses of Grusová (2015, Percepce regionální identity obyvatel Králicka) and Semian (2010, Regionální identita Českého ráje).

## 5.2. Research methods

To find the answer to research questions, combination of qualitative and quantitative research (mixed methods research) will be conducted.

**Quantitative research** is focused on scope and frequency of phenomena occurrence, and intensity of specific phenomena. The purpose of the quantitative research is measuring of these characteristics and their connections. To be able to compare qualitatively different facts, they have to be converted into homogenic group. Then this homogenic group indicate the quantity which can be expresses by a number. The quantification is therefore the conversion of diverse qualities into one measurable quality. The numerical expression of social and socio-psychological phenomena enables the use of mathematics and statistics in social science (Surynek, Komárková, Kašparová, 2001, P.26).

**Qualitative research** aims to discover unknown facts about social and socio-psychological phenomena and to reveal their content (their existence and structure, their characteristics and functions, factors that influence them or factors connected with them). Qualitative research is therefore oriented on understanding of the problematic, the aim is not measuring of individual features of the given indicators – it is rather creation of description of social and socio-psychological phenomena. Unlike quantitative research,

qualitative research does not generate mathematically and statistically processable data. The importance is given to the information that helps to understand the complicated structure and dynamics of the social and socio-psychological phenomena. The standardization of the qualitative research is not possible, nor needed, because of the variability and individuality of these phenomena (Surynek, Komárková, Kašparová, 2001, P.26, 27).

For the purpose of this work, a questionnaire (quantitative research) and questions for semi-structured interview (qualitative research) were compiled.

### **5.3. Quantitative research**

The questionnaire was made to find the answers for the research questions (RQ) 1-3 and 6. The questions are based on the relevant theory, and at the same time they were created in a way that allows the comparison with other works on this topic in different regions of Czech Republic (Grusová, Semian) which also inspired the questions.

#### **5.3.1. Operationalization of the data - creation of the questionnaire**

Platform Survio was used for creating the online version of questionnaire. This platform offers free version that was sufficient for this research and is convenient. It is very intuitive and user-friendly, as well as respondent-friendly, thanks to numerous types of questions and design possibilities. Survio also monitors the return rate, average length of filling out the questionnaire, and is able to directly create graphs from the gather data (in case of closed questions also contingency tables).

The questionnaire was meant for the inhabitants of Postoloprty. For that reason, first question was about the permanent address of the respondent. Based on this question, the irrelevant respondents could be eliminated from the evaluation. The questions like number of years spent in the municipality, the gender, age and level of education were also included in the questionnaire to create better picture about the sample of respondents. The sensitive questions like age, gender and level of education were asked at the end of the interview. More elaborate sensitive topics were addressed indirectly (e.g., “what are the problems in the region?” and not “do you find the Roma population problematic?”) (Surynek et al. P.89).

There were 21 questions in total in the questionnaire (see the paper version in annex 10). Most of them were open questions. Even though open questions are difficult for

respondents, this choice seemed as the best one as the aim was to avoid suggestive choices. Surynek et al. (2001) warns, that as these questions have qualitative character, they vary to a great extent and therefore are difficult to evaluate. Because closed questions risk inaccurate formulation of choice possibilities and also it more comfortable for the respondent to just pick something even if he/she does not relate to anything, the use of such questions was limited (used as dichotomic – man X woman, yes X no). For some questions, the closed questions were ideal, however. For example, the Likert scale, matrix questions or rating proved to be efficient for expressing the opinions and feelings. Semi-closed questions were also used. They offer multiple choices as well as option to write individual alternative (P.27,86, 88).

To make the online questionnaire interactive, it was divided into 9 segments which the respondent saw as different pages. The segment changed after every few questions in order to make the respondents have a little feeling of accomplishment and do not get bored quickly. Each segment was more or less dedicated to one subtopic.

Next paragraphs will introduce the used questions and indicate to which research question they relate.

: First 3 questions are quick identification questions, where the aim is to eliminate respondents who do not live in the area of interest. It is good to put the quick questions at the beginning so that the respondent feels good and does not get bothered with long questions right from the beginning, which could lead to loss of interest in filling up the questionnaire.

: Next segment is focused on names that the inhabitants use to call the area where they live (RQ2). Name of the region is important part of the regional identity and is also part of the outside image of the region and as a consequence, the response to question 5 refers to how they position their region in relation to others (RQ1).

: Following two segments contain questions about the region specifics and description of the region (RQ2, RQ1) and supposed reputation/outside image of the region for which the Likert scale was used where 1 = the worst 10 = the best opinion. The questions 3 and 4 are rather similar so they should have similar outcomes.

: Question n.11 is dedicated to self-esteem – feeling of pride. The respondents had to rank what aspect of the region makes them the proudest to least proud in closed question. As the regional identity develops on the basis of particular conditions that can be social,



historical, natural, landscape etc., 10 most important categories were offered - history, nature, agriculture, traditions and cultural events, landscape, local products, monuments and architecture, sport, important personalities and the character of locals. Hopefully these choices covered all the important categories (RQ2). Following question were also inspired by the research of Grusová (2015) and concerned the perception of the inhabitants about what initiatives make them feel proud (RQ6). One of the questions was filtering (dichotomic – Do you know about an initiative... yes X no) and then voluntary open question followed (if yes, please specify).

: Question about linguistic specificities was also added. As the historical development showed, there was a strong German influence in the territory so there might be interesting results. Here the tackled research questions are RQ1 and RQ2 as well as this question is put as a specificity of this region.

: Question n.16 is about cultural events in the region and aims to respond to the RQ6. Responses to this question can not only reveal which events are popular among the locals but also if they participate at all. If they do not participate in any of the events it might show (apart from their personal preferences) their indifference and low identification with the territory. Subsequent question n.18 is asking about were the respondent gain information about the region. The information might be the news, what is happening in the region, etc. or also gaining knowledge about the region. Both of those types of information can have an impact on the regional identity.

: Question n.17 is asking about the main historical events and places of the region (RQ2). Common history which translates into collective memory, creates a bond between the contemporary communities. Also, the regional symbols are often derived from the history.

: Last segment of questions that could be put together is represented by the questions focused on the problems and flaws of the region (RQ3). Perceived problems in the region and will to move away from the region are tightly connected.

: The question n.21 about citizenship was put at the end of the questionnaire as it might be sensitive topic because of the relationship of the Czechs to the EU (almost 40 % of the Czechs do not feel as citizens of the EU plus in this area the disdain for the EU is supposed to be even more intensive because of the fact that the elections in this region are usually

won by the populist, anti-EU political parties<sup>9</sup>). This question was inspired by the research of Semian (2010). The hypothesis is that large number of people will not identify as the EU citizens. This question in the form of matrix questions also enables to compare identification of the citizens with different hierarchical levels. Just like in Semian's work, it is estimated that people will identify the most with the local and national level (based on the aforementioned Tuan's theory) and therefore could refer to RQ1.

The first and of the online questionnaire introduces the purpose of the research to the respondents and assures them that their responses are anonymous, serve only for the academic purposes and that there are no wrong or right answers as the aim to capture their genuine feelings and opinions. The last page shows a short thank you note for taking the time to fill up the questionnaire.

The questions have to be clear for the majority of respondents. Also, one must be careful about sensitive questions like gender or education. In the case of gender, this question was non-obligatory and in the case of education the question was open with offered abbreviations of the educational levels and it was up to them to write. The way this question was conceived was meant to avoid possible discomfort if the question would be put as a gradual list of the levels of education.

Before public launching of the questionnaire, the respective questions were consulted with the supervisor of the thesis but also with some of the citizens to test if the questions are understandable and the length of the questionnaire is bearable. The formulation of questions and vocabulary was discussed with both mentioned parties and changes were made to avoid complicated phrases and words.

### **5.3.2. Distribution of the questionnaire and data collecting**

The survey took place during September and October 2021. The questionnaires were anonymous, and respondents were informed about this fact, so that they feel free to respond depending on how they truly feel.

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<sup>9</sup> See results of the Parliamentary elections 2021 from the municipality available here <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/p/vysledky-voleb/2021/parlamentni-volby/obec/566624-postoloprty>

The distribution of the online questionnaire was ensured via social media (Facebook). This platform was chosen as the main distribution channel because of large number of users – inhabitants of the municipality are actively using it and there are different ways how to approach them – via personal messages and via groups connected to the life in the town Postoloprty. It is also the most convenient option for the respondents (most of them are users of internet) as they can fill the questionnaire wherever and whenever they want and take as much time as needed, and also for the evaluation of results.

A post with request to fill out the questionnaire was shared in Facebook group “Postoloprty” with 3,200 members – inhabitants of the town, and in other Facebook group “Vzpomínky na Postoloprty” (Eng. “Memories from Postoloprty”). The latter is particularly interesting as it gathers current inhabitants as well as former inhabitants interested in history and development of the town and for some it is a matter of nostalgia, group where they share their memories about their childhood/life in Postoloprty. The group “Vzpomínky na Postoloprty” was created by person active in local cultural life (one of the respondents of the interview). The aim of this group was to publish old pictures and photos from the town, remember the old times, the people and history. At first, only the founder of the group published pictures from her personal archives and later also from the archives of the town. But other members started to share their pieces of memories soon after. In just two days the group gathered 1,000 members (circa 1,200 members in October 2021). One would expect that not many elderly people will join this group or Facebook at all. However, during covid pandemic, lot of elders learned how to use computers and social media to stay connected with their relatives and the world during the lockdowns (Personal consultation with the founder of the group). Because of this (or thanks to this) fact, even the older generations are actively participating in discussions and share their photos and stories. It is safe to say, that this group points out historic facts about the town and enlivens the collective memory of the members of the group (in most cases the inhabitants of the town) and therefore it can be considered at least minor stimuli of the identification.

Paper form of the questionnaire was also prepared so that older people (those without access to the internet) can participate in the survey. Those questionnaires were handed out by the owner of private café, where number of activities for the elderly people take place weekly. Around 30 printed questionnaires (modified from online version to be suitable for the hand-written responses) were handed out these ways, but only 3 filled out

questionnaires were handed back. These responses were rewritten in the online questionnaire to make the data compact and easier to evaluate.

At first, respondents themselves chose if they would participate in the survey. However, due to insufficient quantity of completed questionnaires, personal online messages and emails with the request to fill out the questionnaire were sent to friends and acquaintances of the author. Some of those addressed people gained some more respondents as well (the snow-ball method). Still, the amount of respondent is very low.

### **5.3.3. Data processing**

In case of closed questions, collected data were processed via platform Survio that creates graphs from responses automatically and can also create contingency tables if needed. But this option was not possible because of the majority of open questions. For the processing open questions Microsoft Excel was used. The responses to each open question were sorted out in categories to enable coherent comparison and analysis – E.g., responses hop, hop garden, beer, etc. were put into the category “hop cultivation”, and recorded in Excel table from which the graphs were made afterwards. If the respondent wrote more words from different categories, all the words were used for the evaluation and divided to the corresponding categories.

#### **5.4. Qualitative research**

Semi-structured personal interview was chosen as a part of qualitative research. The semi-structured interview contains prepared questions, but the order of the questions is not fixed so the interviewer can modify the order and the questions depending on the course of the interview. It also leaves more space to expression of the interviewee (unlike the structured interview) but at the same time allows not to get lost in redundant details (unlike in-depth interview).

The semi-structured interview provides deeper and broader understanding of situation/facts. When the interview is conducted in person, the advantage is that other than verbal reactions can be observed. Another advantage is that the interviewer can add notes, explain and clarify the question if it was not understood correctly.

However, the presence of the interviewer influences the responses of the interviewed. Another adverse side of personal interview is that this method is very time-consuming. Surynek et al. wrote already in 2001 that more and more often people do not have time for such interviews and that there is a lack of respondents. Today, when life got without a doubt even faster and due to pandemic more complicated at the same time, the situation is getting worse.

##### **5.4.1. Sample of respondents**

The criterion for the respondent sample in the qualitative research was that the respondents had to be stakeholders in the towns cultural and/or political life of the town. In such a small town only a few people comply with this criterion but most of them agreed to conduct an interview and actually found the time to do so in person - the mayor, the deputy mayor, the member of local theatre group (and at the same time the founder of the Facebook page “Memories about Postoloprty”, local chronicler and owner of the café that serves as a meeting point of some part of the community) and then via the snowball method were added other two participants - the chief of the cultural facility of the town (also member of many leisure-time groups) and another member of the local theatre group (and a teacher at the local school and art school).

Those people actively create and participate in the cultural life of Postoloprty, they are rather proud and optimistic, they see the meaning in the activities they do for the cultural life and thanks this they stir up the cultural life and (hopefully) also the regional identity. Except for one respondent, all the respondents live directly in the town.

#### **5.4.2. Operationalization of the data - preparation of the questions**

The questions (see Annex 11) were conceived in a way to tackle more or less all the research questions, although the focused was partly put on the RQ4: *What are the obstacles in developing stronger identity/sense of belonging?* and RQ5: *What could be done to create the conditions for the identity and what is already working out well?* These topics were reserved to these specific stakeholders as they might be too difficult to address for the average citizens.

The attention was paid to the formulation of the questions – the suggestive questions were avoided. In spite of that, the side notes were created to navigate the respondents in case if they get lost or do not quite understand the question. Order of the questions was less important as it could change during the interview but still the questions were put in preliminary order to ensure the flow of the interview.

The first question is about economic, cultural and social specificities of the region. One might suggest that the basic rule of the interviews is to ask only about the facts that cannot be found elsewhere. However, this is true only in case of looking for objective facts (Surynek, Komárková, Kašparová, 2001, P.83). In this case, the aim was to discover the subjective perception of the individuals. The topic is connected to the second question about outside image of the region. (RQ1)

The answers to the third question about historical development and its impacts on the today's structure of the town could generate information connected to the RQ1, RQ2 and even RQ3, depending on the respondent approach to this topic.

Next question about considers RQ5 and seeks the subjective answers where the stakeholder see possibility for the development of the territory. Purposely, it is not directly asking about regional identity but rather indirectly via the development of the town. For example, addressing the problems or better infrastructure of the town can lead to fulfilling the needs and the principle of self-efficacy and consequently to higher regional identity.

Subsequently the challenges and barriers of this development are questioned with a note that those derive from legislative to the level of citizens (RQ4). These stakeholders are the ones capable of the identification of these obstacles as they are confronted with them in some cases even on the daily basis.

Next question is directly asking about the regional identity and what possibilities do these stakeholders see in “reviving” the regional identity (RQ5). Following question refers to RQ1 and asks if there exists a typical inhabitants of Postoloprty (where it is estimated, based on the theory, that there will not be such occurrence). Another question concerned with RQ4 is about what is the most difficult in creating a bond with a region. And last two questions turn the interview in the direction of RQ5.

#### **5.4.3. Interviews and data collecting**

The interviews took place in the same period as the questionnaire (autumn 2021) and in total 5 people participated. Not only that it was difficult to find more respondents according to the criterion, the low number of the interviewees is also the problem of lack of time of few potential respondents. With 3 of the respondents, it was possible to make the interview face-to-face. In one case, the interview was done online via Teams application and in last case the respondent responded to the questions in written form (due to the lack of time to meet in person or virtually). Luckily, majority of the interviewees did not have problem with personal meeting.

The interviews were conducted in calm environment (private café of one of the respondents, office). The length of the interview varied between 25 minutes to 1 hour (as the participants were not interrupted in theirs talking and sharing of more experiences was welcomed). The interviews were recorded with two devices (one as a backup) – phone and notebook and then transcribed manually in Microsoft Word.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were informed about the aims of the research and conditions. The interviewees agreed with publication of the information about them, still the concrete names will be avoided in this work. It was arranged in an informed consent that parts of the transcriptions of the interviews can be used in this work, however, the complete transcriptions of the interviews will be at disposition only to the examination commission and will not be publicly accessible.

Personal interview is influenced by the personality of the interviewee as well as by the interviewer and their interaction (Surynek et al., P.84). Bearing this in mind during the interviews, as an interviewer, I tried to adapt to the other person (the way of talking and reactions) and listen and observe actively. The negative effect of my personality in the interview that I was able to capture was my tendency to sometimes explain and clarify

the questions just when I said them, not giving the respondent space to catch up on their own.

#### **5.4.4. Data processing**

The processing of data collected in interviews is inspired by the grounded theory. In grounded theory the researchers should not review literature before the research. First is the collection of data, then comparison of them back and forth and creation of codes and their comparison. On the basis of this process a theory is developed and then is put in contrasts with the review of literature to find similarities or differences (Adu, Methodology Related Presentations - TCSPP, 2017).

The data processing in this work does not completely follow the rules of it, as the literature review was a precondition to formation of research questions. It does not also follow the grounded theory in such a detailed manner (line-by-line coding). The inspiration lies in allowing the gathered data speak and creating concepts and categories and the relationship between them that enable to create a narrative complementing the quantitative study of a phenomenon of regional identity in studied area (Adu, Methodology Related Presentations - TCSPP, 2017).

The coding of the interviews will focus on important segments of transcripts of interviews. Created concepts will be compared and put into categories in order to create a narrative. To do so, each information in the transcripts will be labelled with the concept – topic. Then, similar concepts will be put together in the category representing the common topic. Most often appearing categories will then be used to create a narrative.



## **6. Results and discussion**

### **6.1. Quantitative research**

In this part, research questions considered in the questionnaire will be tackled with relevant question and the responses. In total 279 people opened the questionnaire from which 106 did fill up the questionnaire which makes the return rate of 37,6 %. Length of filling up the questionnaire was in most of the cases between 10-30 and 5-10 minutes. As respondents themselves chose if they would participate in the survey and they were not many, we cannot say that the results are representative.

The gathered data were all put into the Survio website (the paper questionnaires were manually re-written there too, to allow clear and compact evaluation) and for the open questions Excel table was made to create categories and graphs. The comparison with data from other research works proved to be in most cases irrelevant because of different location of the studied areas. However, at least partial comparison will be made if possible.

#### **6.1.1. Sample of respondents**

As it was pre-envisaged, also people who are not living in Postoloprty responded in the questionnaire. For these reasons the first question asked about their place of living – filter questions. From 105 participants in the questionnaire, 29 responded to live in another town/village than the ones connected to the municipality of Postoloprty. These responses were removed from the evaluation and therefore 76 responses were suitable for the evaluation. From those, 95% (72) live directly in the town, 4 % in Rvenice and 1% in Březno.

Most of the respondents have been living in the municipality their whole life or important part of their lives – either since they were born or more than 21 years. This leads to assumption that they could have created the sense of belonging.

The controlling question number 3 “Have you spent at least part of your life in Postoloprty or in any of the belonging villages?” revealed 2 respondents who answered that they have not spend any part of their life in the area of interest. This might be caused by inattention to read carefully that not only Postoloprty but also the villages like Rvenice count in.

Most of the respondents have graduated high school. 74 % of respondents were women, 26 % men. Concerning the age, majority of the respondents were people in active working age (31-65 years) which could lead to assumption that they are already settled down, have

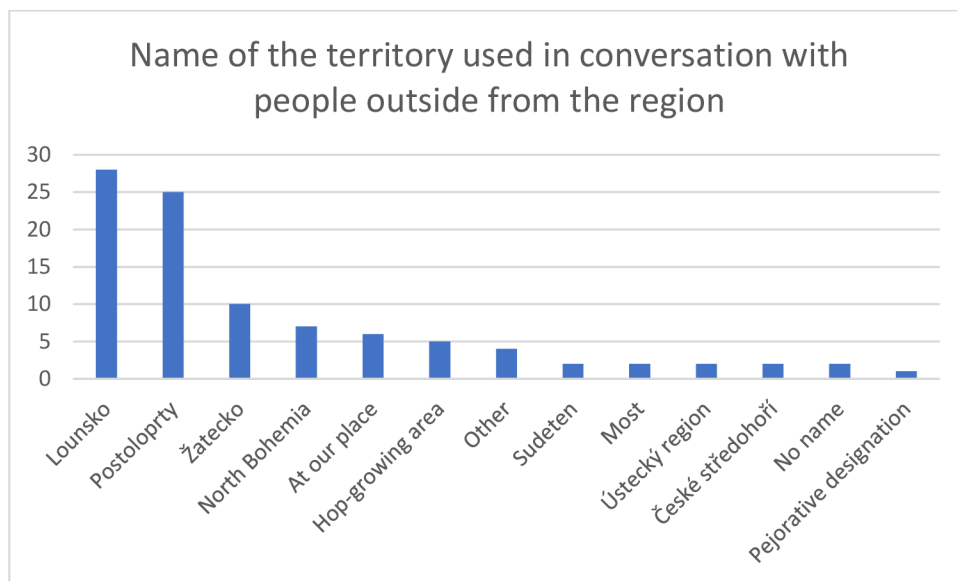
a family in the town and therefore they could have relatively strong sense of belonging here.

### 6.1.2. Evaluation

**(RQ1) *What regional specificities do the inhabitants identify and how it makes them position themselves in relation to others?***

- *Question 5 – How do you call the area where you live when you speak with someone from different part of the Czech republic?*

Graph 1 : Name of the territory used in conversation with people outside from the region



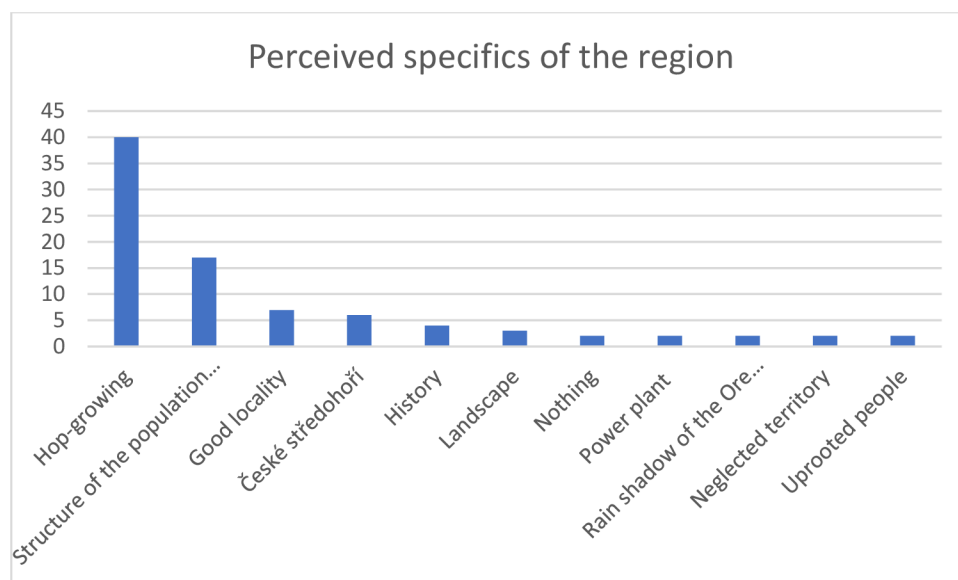
N=76 Source: Author's survey

From graph 1 it is apparent, that the inhabitants most often suppose that people from other regions will not know Postoloprty and therefore they relate to the nearest bigger city/area Lounsko, Žatecko, Most or even higher territorial unit (North Bohemia). But big part of the respondents simply uses the name of the town. Numerous respondents also replied they call the area they live in “at our place” or “at home” (put into the same category) which might illustrate the emotional attachment to the area. Other names involve reference to the hop cultivation, to the history of the area (Sudeten), near landscape dominant (České Středohoří). Some responded that they do not talk about this area at all or used pejorative/vulgar names which indicates low identification with the area.

- *Question 7 – What are the specifics of the area where you live in comparison with other parts of Czech Republic?*

The two following questions and graphs correlate with the RQ1 and also RQ2. In the specifics of the region the structure of the population (problematic topic connected to the Romani ethnicity) is at the second rank and also other negative aspects are mentioned (neglected territory, uprooted people). In the following graph 3 only a bare minimum of people identified it as something they would show to the visitors. This shows that on the outside the inhabitants might want unconsciously create a better picture about the territory than how they actually perceive it in their daily life. Interesting is also the fact, that some respondents do not see any specifics or interesting things in the region. From the positive aspects, hop-growing in both graphs indicating not only recognition of such specificity but also pride in it. From the other positive elements, the architecture and landscape dominants (river Ohře, České Středohoří) and remarks to history are also mentioned.

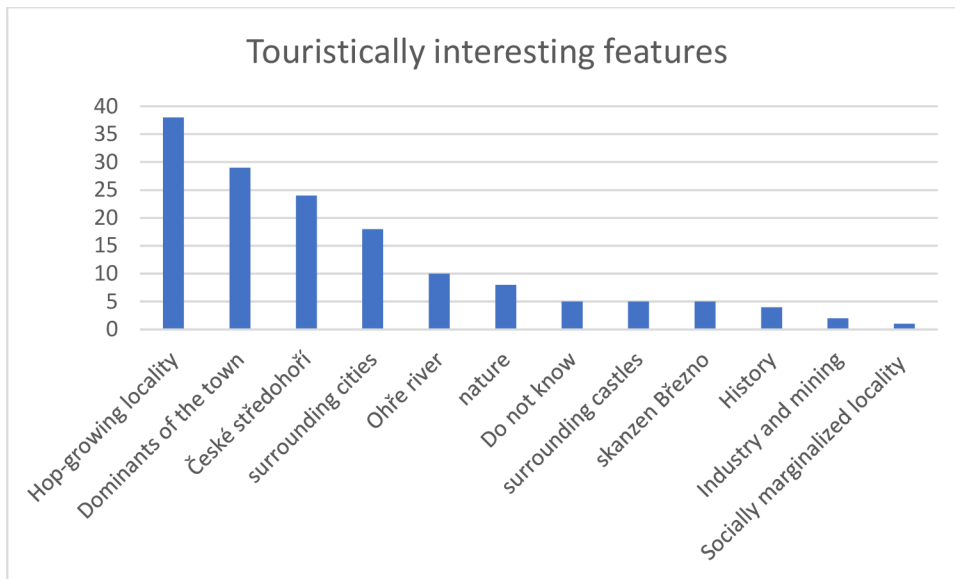
Graph 2 : Perceived specifics of the region



N=76 Source: Author's survey

- *Question 8 – What would you show as typical symbols and places to a tourist?*

Graph 3 : Touristically interesting features

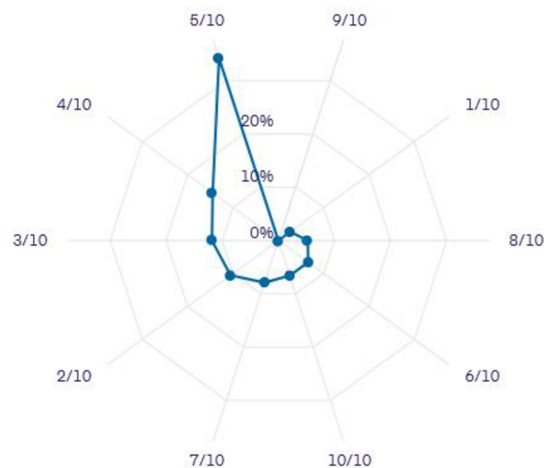


N=76 Source: Author's survey

- *Question 10 – How do you think people outside of the region view your region?*

When it comes to estimation of the outside image of the region, the inhabitants incline to neutral opinion in most of the cases, followed by rather negative opinions. This might indicate that their regional self-esteem is not very high.

Graph 4: Supposed opinion of the others about the region



N=76 Source: Author's survey

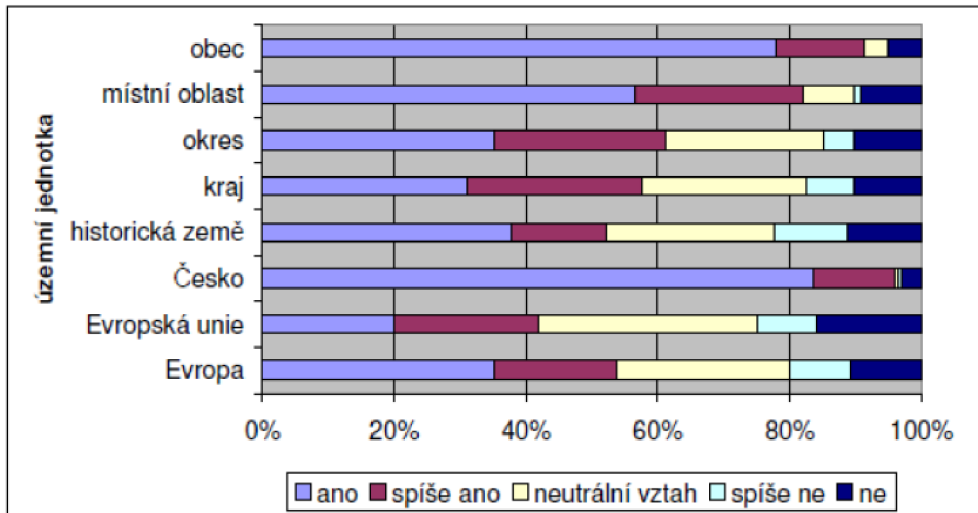
- *Question 14 – Do you use any specific local expressions?*

Most of the respondents (72,6 %) said they do not use the specific words but maybe they are not just aware of it. The remaining 27,6 % mentioned for example the abbreviation of Postoloprty “Prty”, as well as local abbreviation for the pheasantery – “Bažár” instead of “bažantnice”. Different way of saying yes – instead of “jo” – “ju”. And as expected, lot of modified Germanisms too (Vercajk, cimra, fajrák, Firhaňky, ajtrpajč, lajtna, radvanec, špajz, jít na špacír, jít na luft, posichrovat, fògl, pech, himlhergot, postlberg, šraňky + localities in the surrounding of Postoloprty: *hajšupna* - from German Heuschnupfen, *vaňperk* from German Wineberg). Also words “more” and “jaj” connected with to the Romani ethnicity were mentioned. The result shows that less than a third of the inhabitants is using specific expressions and is able to identify these linguistic differences in comparison with other part of the country. This question is also connected to RQ2.

- *Question 21 – How much do you feel as a citizen of these hierarchical levels?*

Just as expected, based on theory, the inhabitants identify the most with the local and national level and the least with the European union (graph 5 where violet = yes, very much to dark blue = not at all). In graph (5) from the research of Semian in different area 10 years ago, we can see common trend – highest identification with the country and municipality/town and lowest with the European union. However, it is not possible to compare those result as each of them is focused on different interest area in different years.

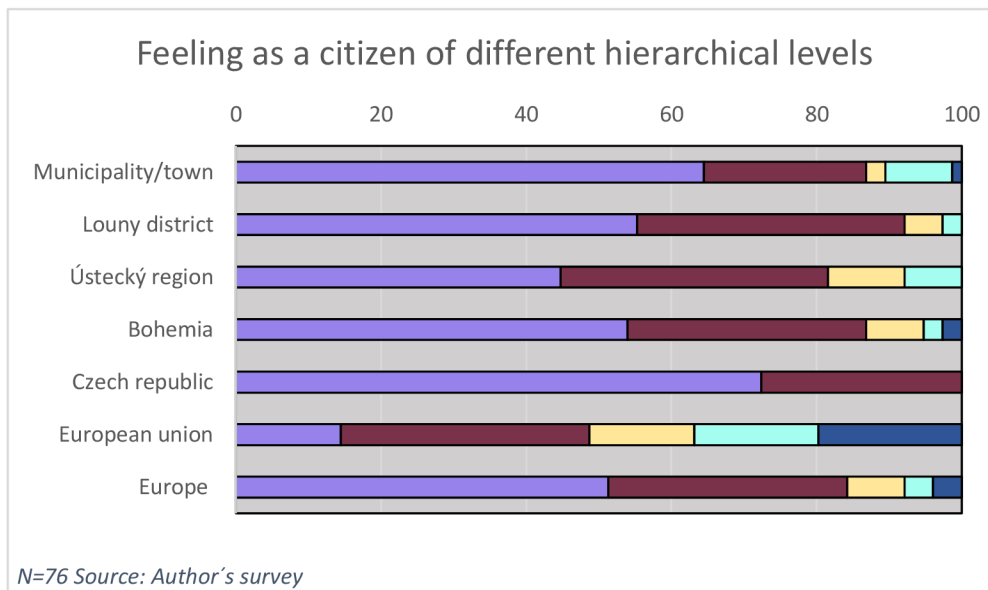
Graph 5: Relationship of inhabitants of area of interest towards individual hierarchical levels



Obr. 4.6: **Vztah obyvatel zájmového území k jednotlivým řádovostním úrovním regionů** (N=196)

Source: Research of Semian in Český ráj (2010, P.58)

Graph 6: Feeling as a citizen of different hierarchical levels



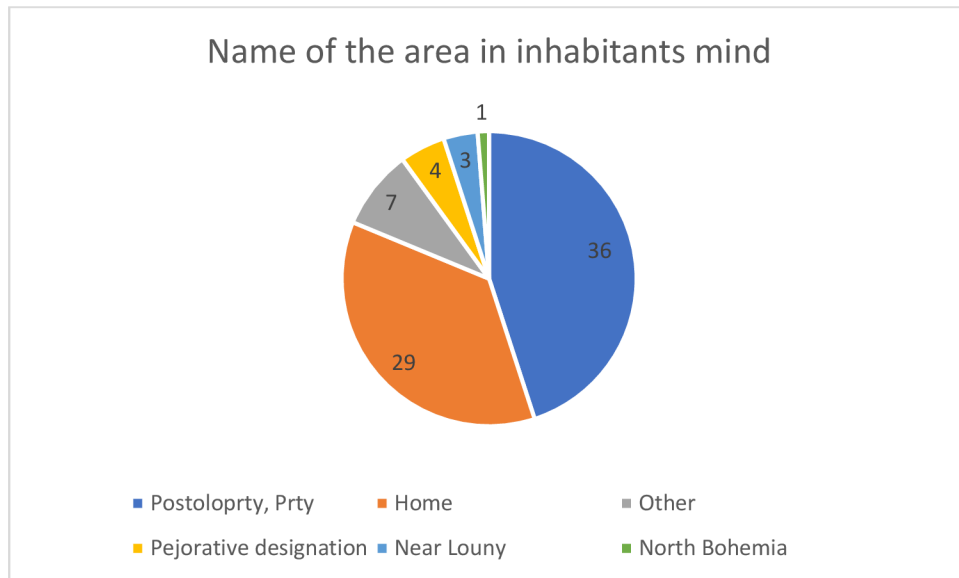
N=76 Source: Author's survey

**(RQ2) Via which features do the inhabitants identify with the territory?**

As question 7,8 and 14 are connected to both RQ1 and RQ2 and were elaborated in the precedent sub-chapter, let us jump into the rest of the results from the RQ2 category.

- *Question 4 – How do you call the area where you live to yourself?*

Graph 7: Name of the area in inhabitants mind

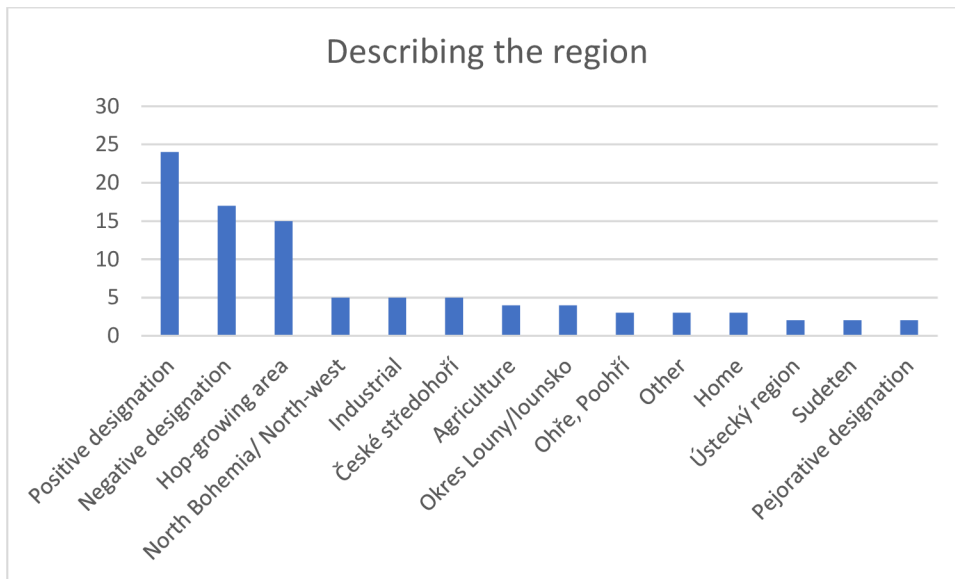


N=76 Source: Author's survey

Big part of the respondents calls their hometown by its official name or by its abbreviation “Prty”. Another important part of the respondents calls this place a “home” which again leads to assumption that they identify with the area. Some pejorative names also form a part of responses which suggests that those respondents do not identify with the territory.

- *Question 6 – Which words would you use to describe your region?*

Graph 8: Describing the region



*N=76 Source: Author's survey*

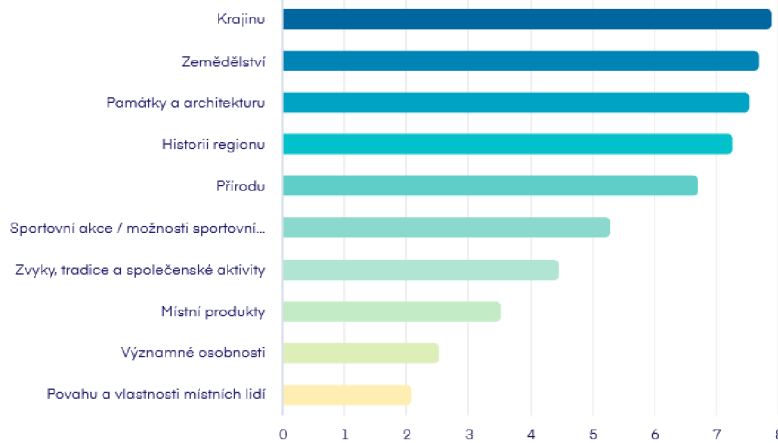
In the top ranks, the positive designations (e.g., calm, beautiful, ideal) are directly followed by negative designations (e.g., dirty, neglected, forgotten, average). Hop-growing is once again in the top ranks and the other descriptions revolve around the geographical location (in case of “Sudeten” historic geographical location), economical and natural specifics. The pejorative designations are not in the same category as the negative ones as the first mentioned are harsher and vulgar.

- *Question 11 – What are you proud of in the territory where you live?*

The inhabitants of the studied area are most proud of the landscape and agriculture (graph 9) – those two go hand in hand. The region is agricultural, and this fact is of course reflected in the structure of the landscape. Cultivation of hop plays an important role for the locals and is a great source of pride, partly maybe also because the beer is considered as national treasure. When examining the landscape from another point of view, Postoloprty is a town on elevated and outside of the city one can see the nearest hills of České Středohoří but from the other side also a coal power plant – symbol of industrial elements in the region.



Graph 9: Ranking elements according to the feeling of pride



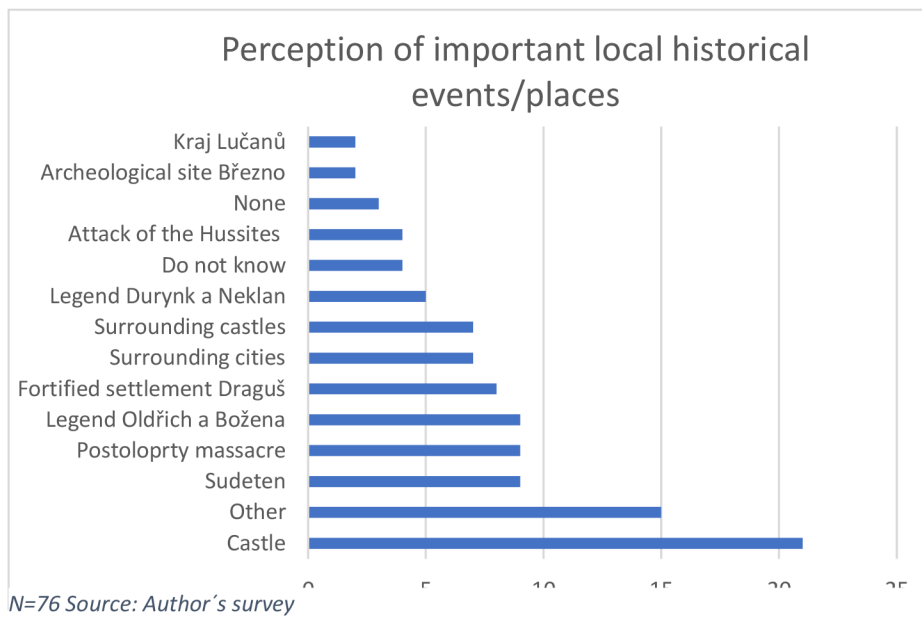
N=76 Source: Author's survey

Monuments and architecture and history follow right after. Through the monument and architecture, the intangible element of history becomes material and therefore the monuments and historical buildings can play a role in sustaining consciousness about the regional history. The nature and sports activities are also amongst the better ranked elements. Traditions and cultural events, local products (probably hop or and beer) and important personalities and the character of the locals gained lower positions. From these results it can be concluded that the local inhabitants identify themselves more with the physical environment than with the social environment.

- *Question 17 – What do you consider the most important historical events/places in the territory you live in?*

From the graph 10 we can read that the local castle plays an important role in the mind of the inhabitants. The history connected to the World War II also came up to the mind of lot of respondents. The older historical events and legends also made their place in the perception of the inhabitants. A few respondents did not identify any important historical events which might again point out low identification with the territory.

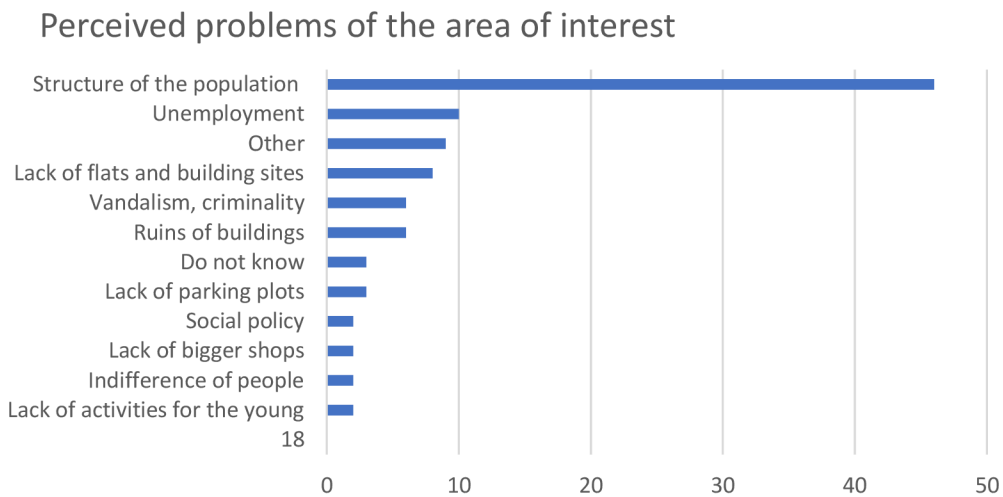
Graph 10: Perception of important local historical events/places



**RQ3) What are the flaws and the problems of the territory?**

- *Question 19 – What are the biggest problems in the area you live in?*

Graph 11: Perceived problems of the area of interest



As visible from the graph 11. the biggest perceived problem is by far the structure of population where the overwhelming majority of responses concerned the Romani population.

The responses from the category “vandalism, criminality” and “social policy” might be probably also connected to the issue of structure of the population. The second biggest problem is unemployment and often mentioned are also lack of building sites, parking plots and bigger shops. In this case, the principle of self-efficacy of the region might be threatened. Despite relatively rich program ensured by the local elementary and artistic school and the leisure-time centre for the children and young, the respondents see the lack of activities for the young as a problem, too. The indifference of the inhabitants also gained its place in the responses.

In the case of Postoloprty, the safety situation linked to the perception of social structure is apparently perceived by the inhabitants as problematic. This can represent big threat for the town as the feeling of safety is one of the basic (and therefore strongest) needs as shown in aforementioned Maslow’s pyramid of needs.

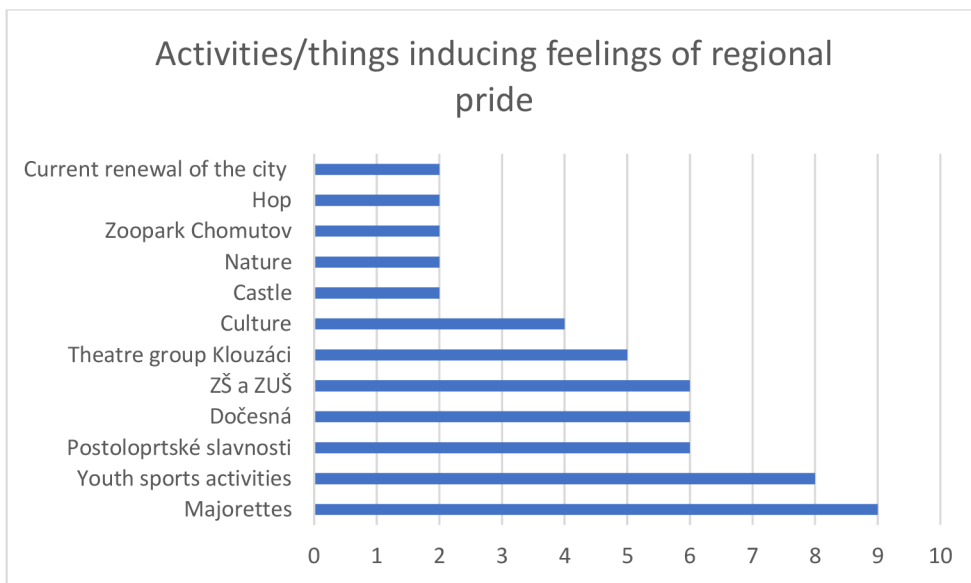
Question 20 is about whether the inhabitants plan on leaving the territory and if so what are the reasons which might also indicate what the inhabitants are missing in the town and what they find as problematic. From 76 respondents, 20 respondents plan on leaving the town, most often mentioning the reason being job opportunities (5 respondents), better life conditions (4 respondents), owning a house (3 respondents) and Romani ethnicity (2).

\*When we look at these two questions together, even though the structure of the population in Postoloprty is the biggest perceived problem, only for 2 people it is such a big problem that they might leave the area because of this. However, the unemployment and lack of job opportunities proved to be bigger motivation for the inhabitants to leave the region.

**RQ6) How do the inhabitants perceive the cultural environment in the given territory?**

To the *question 12*, whether do the inhabitants know about some activity/initiative that induces their feeling of regional pride, 56,6 % responded negatively. The remaining 43,4 % described those initiatives and the majorettes took the lead followed by other youth sport activities. Activities done by elementary and artistic school also scored relatively large number of responses. Local cultural events and initiatives (Postoloprtské slavnosti, theatre group Klouzák) and events from the near surroundings (Dočesná) gained points, too.

*Graph 12: Activities/things inducing feelings of regional pride*



*N=76 Source: Author's survey*

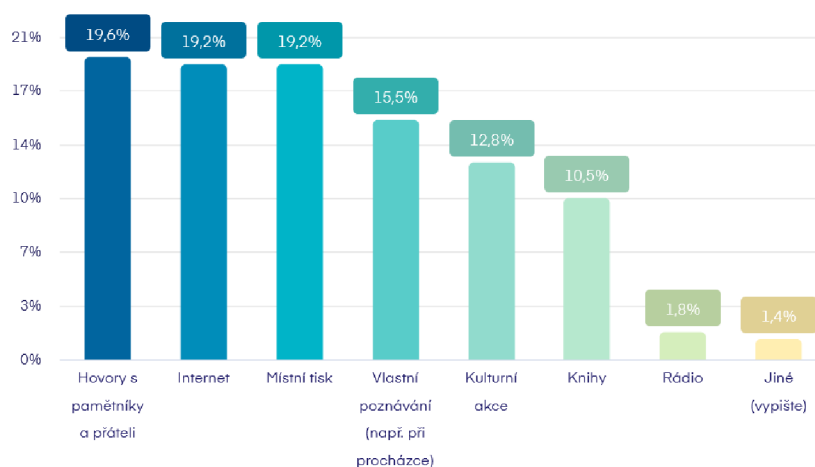
*Graph 13 : Most visited cultural events*



*N=76 Source: Author's survey*

Relatively lot of people do not attend any cultural events (graph 13). In comparison with previous results, it is visible that even though large part of respondents indicated as a source of regional pride the youth activities (sports, arts, majorettes), the majority of the respondents does not attend these events, the preference given to the cultural events like Postoloprtské slavnosti, theatre or concerts. So how comes that they can identify with such activity? The reason might be local newspaper, that informs besides other thing about the successes of the young generation. This assumption is supported by the responses to the question 18 (graph 14) where majority of the respondents marked the local newspaper as one of the most important sources of information about the region (19,2 %), other sources being conversation with the elderly and friends (19,6 %) and internet (19,2 %).

Graph 14: Where do you get the information about your region?



N=76 Source: Author's survey

### 6.1.3. Conclusion

The majority of the respondents seems to rather identify with the territory, notably via the physical environment (landscape, agriculture) where the accent is put on hop cultivation as the most important symbol and source of pride. Exception are a few respondents that seem to not to identify with the territory because of the use of pejorative designations and descriptions, no perceived specifics, or important events in the territory, etc.

Less than a half of the respondents indicated (or is aware of) using specific expressions usually coming from the German language or Romani language.

The supposed outside image of the region (ascribed identity) is rather neutral or negative and the avowed identity – image of the region that inhabitants would wish to project tends to leave out the negative aspects of the territory.

The castle has an important place in the minds of the inhabitants which in connection with planned reconstruction of this building might be opportunity to raise identification with the town.

Biggest perceived problem is population structure and other problems of the territory seem to relate to it too (unemployment, criminality).

Rather big part of the respondents does not attend any cultural events in the territory and still somehow see pride in those activities – this could be labelled as a passive identification.

## 6.2. Qualitative research

In this part, the narrative that arises from the interviews will be directly connected and compared to the results of the quantitative research. The narrative that follows from the qualitative research is following:

Postoloprty has similar characteristics and problems as the rest of the Ústecký region. In the comparison with other parts of Czech Republic, Ústecký region (and therefore Postoloprty too) are perceived as neglected territories.

Structure of the population is particular in the territory of the town but according to the majority of interviewees the situation is not so bad as often described. However, the structure of the population proved to be the most problematic issue for the inhabitants. This problematic is also connected with high unemployment rate and perceived higher criminality. In this case, some interviewees as well as questionnaire respondents indicated that the state with its social policy is the biggest obstacle in solving this issue. According to them, the problem in the social policy is that it supports the unemployment and cumulation of socially weak communities in one place.

Economic situation of the town is pretty good overall but still lot of investments is needed. Tourism is not very developed in the area right now, but the town has identified opportunities for future development (UNESCO Žatec, exhibition, reconstruction of the castle).

The education facilities in the town are seen as rather well established and important for future, because it is also in school where the citizenship is formed. In addition, raising the level of education increases the employment and economic potential of the inhabitants.

The outside image of the region differs among the Czechs depending on the location – people from further regions do not usually know anything about this area, whether people from the near areas tend to look down on Postoloprty and see it as very problematic locality because of the persisting prejudice concerning the structure of the population and criminality. As one of the interviewees (n.5) said *“The hardest part is to face these prejudices.”*

Although the town ensures all the necessary facilities (which is extraordinary for such a small town), some might still not be satisfied with the offer of the town as follows from the questionnaire. Similar situation is with the cultural environment. The culture was pointed out in all the interviews to be on very good level. Unluckily, this effort often

seems to encounter the problem of low participation of the inhabitants on the cultural events (to cite respondent 5: *“the people want interesting events, culture – but in the end, when the town organizes an event, only minimum of the inhabitants of Postoloprty come to the event.”*). Some interviewees claimed that this issue is observed not only in this area but also elsewhere in the country - something like modern trend, current way of living in the comfortable, closed apartment with the internet and TV, augmented by the covid pandemic. Indifference and negative thinking grow in the society, but the active citizens see hope in better evolution of the situation.

The development of the areas stands on these people – active citizens. Without them the town would stagnate in neutral state or degrade. To avoid this, activization of more citizens was indicated as necessary in most of the interviews. Interesting feature of the active citizens from the interviews was their mindset and focus not only on the present but also on the future: *“I do identify with this territory and big part of it are the people that live here. Usually these are people from the group Vzpomínky na Postoloprty because with these people we can share our memories but also an image of how we think Postoloprty should look like in the future”* said participant n.2. In contrast with the statement of respondent 1 who said about the general population of the town: *“That is probably the problem here, too. That people care only about the present but not about how it could look like in 5, 10 years”*. As goes from the theory, consciousness about the common history connects present communities and create a hope for common future. The active citizens also in some cases (like the cited respondent n.2) showed that they identify very much with the social environment which is the opposite of the results from the questionnaire where the social aspects of regional identity were ranked low.

In the interviews as well as in the questionnaires, there was a contradiction in the case of possibilities of leisure-time activities, where on the one hand the area is praised for nice accessible natural environment and lot of cultural events and children’s activities. On the other hand, the lack of possibilities for young people and other leisure-time activities (e.g., cycling, rollerblades) were mentioned by the interviewees. Comparing the data from the questionnaire with these statements of the interviewees, it could be said that in the case of the youth activities, the possibilities exist but the younger generation is not keen to partake in them.

In the past decades the society of the town was rather fragmented because of the newcomers. This trend is now maybe lower as current younger generation who has spent



whole life here might already identify with the territory (but at the same time they are more indifferent to the territory as a result of modern life). Also, there is a trend of temporary residence. During this phenomenon, the newcomers do not plan on staying in the place for long time and do not feel the need to create bond with this place. They are indifferent to its development and commute to other parts of the region for work, leisure time, shopping, etc.

Even though the town has developed a lot in the last few years, all the interviewees perceive that most of the inhabitants do not appreciate what is being done and what the town is offering them and criticize everything. In spite of the critical approach, those people do not participate in public life – they are never satisfied but are not willing to do something about it.

The interviewees believe that the embellishment and development of the town should lead to higher identification with the territory. Because of this, castle reconstruction is perceived by all the interviewees as an opportunity to create new dominant of the town with which the inhabitants can identify. The reconstruction was also perceived as an opportunity (by interviewee n.1) to incorporate all the social groups in the process of reconstruction, so that they all feel like they have contributed to the development of the town and start to participate and identify more. This initiative might be successful as the respondents of questionnaire identified the castle as the most important historical element of the town.

### **6.2.1. Conclusion**

The interviews also tackled the research questions. Considering the RQ1, from the interviews it is apparent that the territory is economically and culturally on a better level than most of the other similar territories. When it comes to social structure, majority of the interviewees feel certain injustice about how the territory is viewed from the outside, however, the structure is problematic indeed.

RQ2 - Historical development left traces in the town, but with the new generation these legacies are slowly falling behind and do not create such an important part of their lives as it did for the older generations.

RQ5 - *How to create the conditions for developing the regional identity?* The interviewees agreed that the embellishment of the town, rich cultural life, activation of the inhabitants and creation of community, and development of the facilities, housing and

motorway might lead to creating stronger sense of belonging and attracting new inhabitants.

*RQ4 - What are the obstacles in developing regional identity?* For most still the structure of the population was the obstacle. Some see the solution in change of the state social policy, others in activization of the inhabitants to participate on the life in the city.

## **7. Conclusion**

This work aimed to describe how do the inhabitants of Postoloprty perceive their environment and how do they identify with their region, and how could be the identification with the territory stimulated. The research questions helped to find the answers to those questions.

From the research it follows, that the physical environment plays for most inhabitants important role in the identification with the territory and the accent is put on hop cultivation. However, for the active citizens social environment plays the biggest role. This shows that if there is a strong community, it can serve as a strong identification element. Therefore, maybe the potential of strengthening the regional identity lies in creating better community life and stimulation of active participation in the public life and development of the town. This could also lead to better understanding of different social groups in the town and as they would come together to work on common interest.

The regional identity was weakened as a consequence of dynamic development of the area, but now the identity seems to stabilize, and the inhabitants are able to recognize important specifics of the region. However, the modern era and globalization and certain unification of culture or values might be a threat in such fragile area. Only future will tell, how the territory will handle its own problems and external influences.

This research may help to create a picture about the identity of inhabitants of Postoloprty. The results might be useful for the management of the town as they invest finances and energy in the development of the town and this result may at least to very small extent represent the feelings of the inhabitants and direct the management. Of course, this research is not representative and is only illustrative.

The knowledge about the inhabitant's identification with the region is not only useful for the purpose of economic development. In the hands of responsible and emphatic municipality leaders it can also serve as a base to making the living environment and everyday life of the citizens happier and maybe create good conditions for those who feel uprooted to find a new place to call home.

Interesting might be to do more vast and detailed research in this area, also in a few years to observe, how the current development of the town (reconstruction of the castle, building of motorway, development of housing) would impact the territory and the identification of the inhabitants with the territory.

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## Annex

*Annex 1: At the time (1726) new town hall (place where the town museum might be in the future)*



*Source: personal archive of the author*

*Annex 2: The church of Ascension of the Virgin Mary from 1753*



*Source: personal archive of the author*

*Annex 3: The landscape/skyline – view on the city from south-west.*



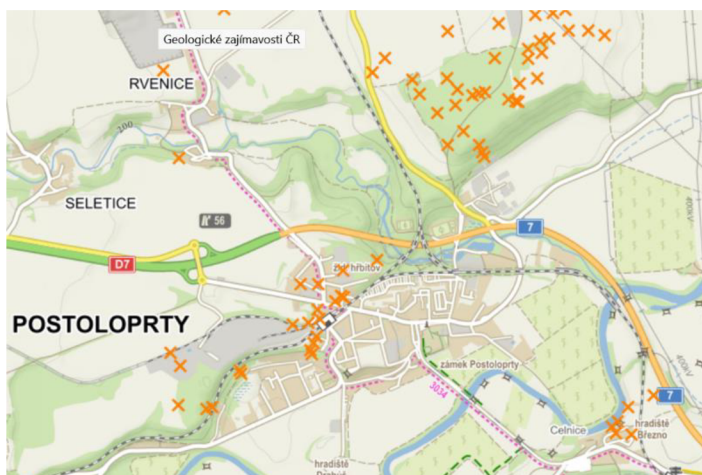
*Source: personal archive of the author*

*Annex 4: Schwarzenberg coat of arms on gateway of one of the crumbling buildings.*



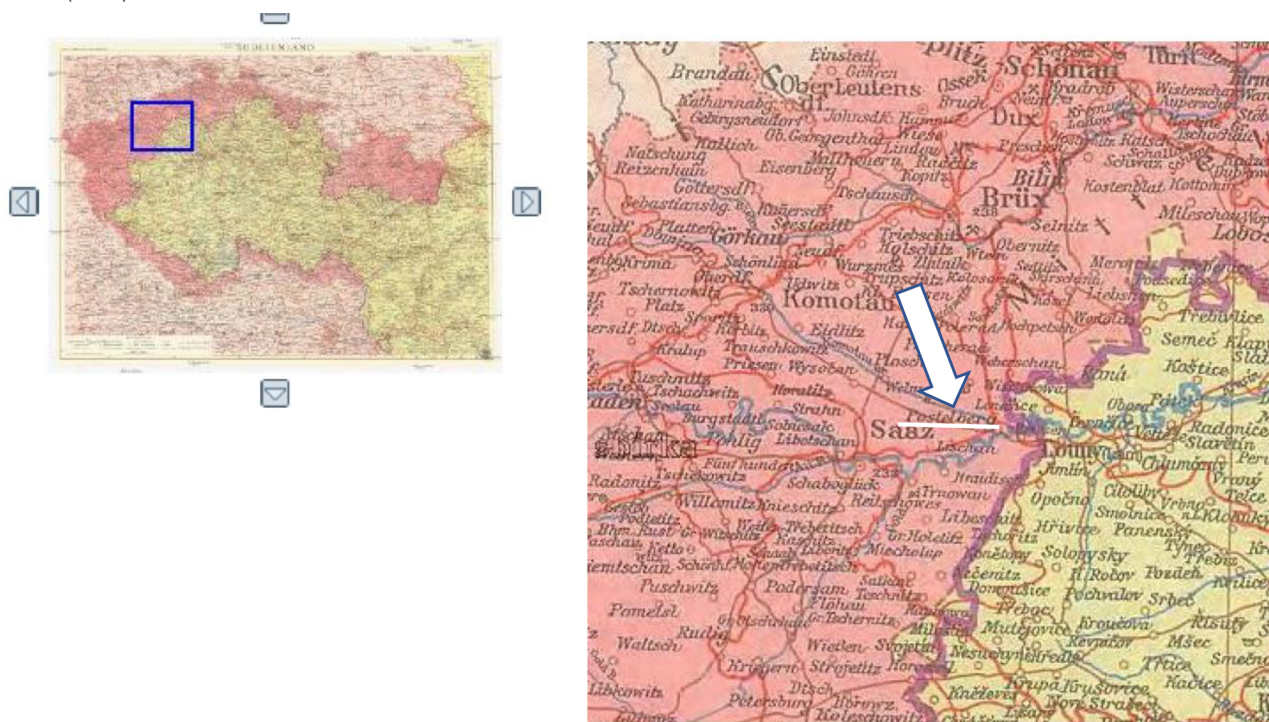
*Source: personal archive of the author*

*Annex 5: The remainders of small-scale brown coal mining in Postoloprty and its nearest surroundings*



*Source: Česká geologická služba. (2021). Geologické zajímavosti*

Annex 6: Picture of the map - The border of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia - Sudetenland / Kartogr. Anstalt G. Freytag & Berndt (1938)



Source: Digitální univerzitní repozitář, Univerzita Karlova

Annex 7: Postoloprty castle behind hop garden.



Source: personal archive of the author

*Annex 8: Bunker in the fields between Strkovice and Mradice.*



*Source: Václav Mach, Postoloprtsko, 2021, P.183*

*Annex 9: Malnice from the south with the coal power-plant Počerady and Ore mountains in the back.*



*Source: Václav Mach, Postoloprtsko, 2021, P.134*

## VÝZKUM ÚZEMNÍ IDENTITY

Vážená paní, vážený pane,

V rámci své diplomové práce se zabývám výzkumem regionální identity vybraných částí Ústeckého kraje. Proto se na Vás obracím s prosbou o spolupráci a vyplnění tohoto krátkého dotazníku.

Na níže uvedené otázky neexistuje správná nebo špatná odpověď. Cílem je získat Váš osobní názor, který umožní poznat, jak obyvatelé konkrétních lokalit vnímají své území a jeho specifika.

Dotazník je anonymní a všechny vyplněné informace budou využity pouze k výzkumným účelům.

Děkuji Vám za spolupráci!

Amálie Hrdinová

**1) Jak se jmenuje obec Vašeho trvalého bydliště?**

.....

**2) Jak dlouho v této obci žijete?**

- a) od narození
- b) 21 a více let
- c) 6 až 20 let
- d) méně než 5 let

**3) Prožili jste alespoň část života v Postoloprtech nebo v jedné z jejich spádových obcí?**

- a) Ano, 21 a více let
- b) Ano, 6 až 20 let
- c) Ano, méně než 5 let
- d) Ne

**4) Jak sami pro sebe nazýváte území, kde žijete?**

.....

**5) Jak nazýváte oblast, ve které žijete, když mluvíte s někým z jiné části ČR?**

.....

**6) Jaká slova byste použil/a k popsání Vašeho regionu?**

.....

**7) V čem je oblast, ve které žijete, specifická/jiná v porovnání se zbytkem ČR?**

.....

**8) Jak představíte návštěvníkovi Váš region? Co byste mu ukázal/a jako typické symboly tohoto území?**

.....

**9) Jaký mají podle Vaší zkušenosti lidé z jiných koutů ČR názor na místo/oblast, kde žijete?**

*Ohodnoťte počtem bodů, přičemž 1 bod = naprosto negativní názor až 10 bodů = naprosto pozitivní názor:*

.../10 bodů

**10) V oblasti, kde žijete jste hrdý/á na:**

*Určete pořadí položek dle Vašeho pocitu, přičemž 1 = nejvíce hrdý/á až 10 = nejméně nebo vůbec ne hrdý/á. Číslo napište vpravo vedle jednotlivých položek, prosím.*

Krajinu ...	Zemědělství ...
Památky a architekturu ...	Historii regionu ...
Zvyky, tradice a společenské aktivity ...	Přírodu ...
Sportovní akce/možnosti sportovního vyžití ...	Místní produkty ...
Povahu a vlastnosti místních lidí ...	Významné osobnosti ...

**11) Víte o nějaké iniciativě/aktivitě ve svém okolí, která ve Vás podporuje pocit hrdosti, že jste součástí Vašeho kraje/regionu? Pokud ano, napište ji/je.**

.....

**12) Užíváte v běžné řeči nějaké specifické místní výrazy? Pokud ano, můžete vypsát příklady.**

.....

**13) Jakých kulturních akcí se ve Vašem regionu zúčastníte?**

.....

**14) Co jsou podle Vás hlavní historické události/historická místa ve Vašem městě/regionu/kraji?**

.....

**15) Odkud získáváte znalosti o Vašem regionu?**

*(můžete zaškrtnout více možností)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hovory s pamětníky a přáteli              | <input type="checkbox"/> místní tisk         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knihy                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> rádio               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> internet                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> kulturní akce       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vlastním poznáváním (např. při procházce) | <input type="checkbox"/> jiné (vypište)..... |

**16) Jaké jsou podle Vás v současnosti největší problémy na území, kde žijete?**

.....



**17) Plánujete se odstěhovat? Pokud ano, jaký je Váš hlavní důvod?**

.....

**18) Jak moc se cítíte být obyvatelem:**

(u každé položky v řádce, prosím, zaškrtněte jednu z možností)

	Velmi	Spíše ano	Nemám názor	Spíše ne	Vůbec ne
<i>Evropy</i>					
<i>Evropské unie</i>					
<i>České republiky</i>					
<i>Historické země (Čech)</i>					
<i>Ústeckého kraje</i>					
<i>Okresu Louny</i>					
<i>Obce/města</i>					

**19) Pohlaví**

- a) Žena
- b) Muž

**20) Věk**

- a) Do 20 let
- b) 21 až 30 let
- c) 31 až 50 let
- d) 51 až 65 let
- e) 66 a více

**21) Uveďte zkratkou stupeň dosaženého vzdělání**

(BDV – bez dokončeného vzdělání, ZŠ – základní škola, SŠB – střední škola bez maturity, SŠM – střední škola s maturitou, VOŠ – vyšší odborná škola, VŠ – vysoká škola)

*Annex 11 - The interview questions*

1. Jak si území stojí v různých oblastech (ekonomická, kulturní, sociální) oproti ostatním částem ČR?
2. Jaký obrázek mají o Postoloprtech lidé zvenčí?
3. Jak se dějinné události/ historický vývoj města, regionu, propsal do dnešní podoby města?
4. V čem tkví možnosti rozvoje daného území?
5. A jaké jsou největší výzvy/bariéry rozvoje? (pozn. co nejvíce brzdí, od legislativy, státní správu až po pasivitu občanů)
6. Jak rozproutit místní identitu?
7. Dalo by se říct, že existují nějaké typické vlastnosti místních obyvatel?
8. Co je z hlediska sžívání s regionem nejhorší?
9. A jak by se to podle Vás dalo změnit? (pomoc pomoc od státu, kraje atd (paternalistický postoj), anebo si pomoci sami, s lidmi a vlastními nápady a iniciativami? (aktivistický postoj))
10. Co naopak podle vás funguje dobře?