PRACE NAUKOWE

Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu

RESEARCH PAPERS

of Wrocław University of Economics

Nr 334

Local and Regional Economy in Theory and Practice

edited by Małgorzata Markowska, Dariusz Głuszczuk, Beata Bal-Domańska Copy-editing: Elżbieta and Tim Macauley

Layout: Barbara Łopusiewicz Proof-reading: Barbara Cibis Typesetting: Adam Dębski Cover design: Beata Dębska

This publication is available at www.ibuk.pl, www.ebscohost.com, Lower Silesian Digital Library www.dbc.wroc.pl, and in The Central and Eastern European Online Library www.ceeol.com as well as in the annotated bibliography of economic issues of BazEkon http://kangur.uek.krakow.pl/bazy_ae/bazekon/nowy/index.php

Information on submitting and reviewing papers is available on the Publishing House's website www.wydawnictwo.ue.wroc.pl

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ISSN 1899-3192 ISBN 978-83-7695-496-7

The original version: printed

Printing: EXPOL, P. Rybiński, J. Dąbek, sp.j. ul. Brzeska 4, 87-800 Włocławek

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Local and Regional Economy in Theory and Practice

ISSN 1899-3192

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ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES OF THE CITY OF ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF CITIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Summary: The intention of the paper is to analyse key aspects of town development in the Czech Republic using the example of the city of Ústí nad Labem. The case of Ústí nad Labem shows the changes significant for other industrial cities in the Czech Republic. The local government and the state government implement a wide range of measures that include retaining sufficient quality of housing and the quality of public space. The revitalization of towns includes solving economic, social, urban and ecological problems and the development of technical and transport infrastructure. The improvement of quality of life and social, economic and urbanistic cohesion inside the towns is given a growing importance.

Keywords: development, urbanism, city, transformation, public space.

DOI: 10.15611/pn.2014.334.06

1. Introduction

Due to the social and economic situation in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, towns in the Czech Republic have been facing deformations of the development processes over the last twenty years when the socialistic development influenced urbanistic arrangements and the deployment of social and economic components to a dangerous levels in many towns. Often, quantity predominated over the quality aspects of the urban development. Therefore, the towns are characterized particularly by the low quality of public spaces among the prefabricated blocks, insufficiency of investment for the reconstruction of prefabricated housing, public buildings, and public space. Other specific problems may surface from insufficiently developed small and medium-sized enterprises, the limited number of cultural events and the generally low identification of the citizens with the place they live in. These problems are especially significant for cities in the old industrial regions, such as Chomutov, Most,

Ústí nad Labem in the Ústecký region and the cities of Havířov and Karviná in the Moravian-Silesian Region.

The processes of socio-economic divergence are significant in Czech regions, cities and town districts. Therefore, the towns are undergoing transformation processes in the Czech Republic in order to revitalize the environment of troublesome housing estates, to maintain and improve living quality in the residential housing in the districts endangered by physical dilapidation and social exclusion. It is expected that their revitalization will contribute to making the public areas of the housing estates more attractive, increasing the living comfort of local people and keeping the sustainable and integral development of the towns.

The intention of the paper is analysing the time and spatial aspects of the development of towns in the Czech Republic focusing on the example of the city of Ústí nad Labem. From the methodological point of view, the analysis of development processes is divided into four basic areas. The first section assesses the basic spatial arrangement of the city and its administrative arrangement. The second section includes an analysis of the basic social and demographic indicators. The third section describes the economic processes and changes that influenced the development of the city. The last section evaluates the changes of the urbanistic structure and the situation in the city districts with a higher risk level is especially evaluated. The paper is based on the database of the Czech Statistical Office and data from the Ústí nad Labem Municipality Office.

2. Characteristic features of Ústí nad Labem and the Neštěmice City District

The city of Ústí nad Labem is located in Northern Bohemia on the banks of the Labe River between the Krušné Mountains and Bohemia Central Mountains. The total area of the city is 94 km² and its altitude is 149 metres above sea level. The city has a strategic position on the junction of road, railway and traffic routes [Bartoš, Raška, Kostovič, Oršulák 2011, p. 15]. The key position of the city [Anděl, Balej, Chvátalová, Farský 2011, p. 10] is on the development axis cross line Copenhagen – Berlin – Dresden – Ústí nad Labem – Prague – Vienna and the regionally important crossroads from Bavaria to Cheb, Karlovy Vary up to Děčín.

The transport location of the city is one of the basic localization factors with a significant impact on the city and its future [Hlaváček 2001, p. 26], because it can be expected that the construction of a highway and railway corridor will make the city more attractive in competition with other cities and support its economic development.

The economic and population development of the city started roughly in the mid 19th century when many new companies in the field of chemical and metallurgical industry were incorporated [Kaiserová, Kaiser a kol, 2003, p. 150]. Also, the key

railway routes from Prague to Dresden and to other towns at the foothills of Krušné Mountains area with brown coal deposits were constructed.

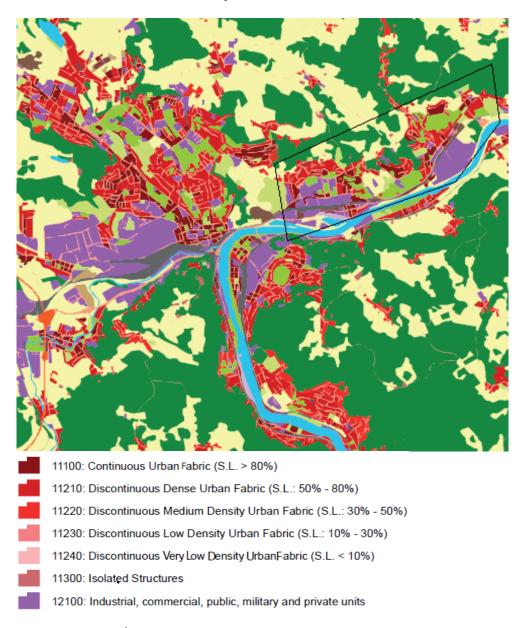


Figure 1. The city of Ústí nad Labem

Source: http://www.eea.europa.eu.

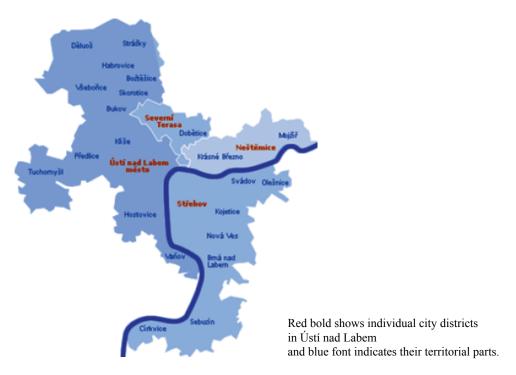


Figure 2. Territorial and administrative partition of the city of Ústí nad Labem

Source: Ústí nad Labem Municipality Office.

The city of Ústí nad Labem is divided into four territories – city districts – with local government.

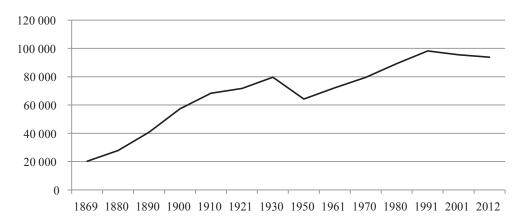
Table 1. Administrative partition of the city of Ústí nad Labem

	1991	2001					Popu-
Specification	Population (abs.)	%	Population (abs.)	%	Area (km²)	Share (%)	lation density 2001
Ústí nad Labem	98 178	100,0	95 436	100,0	94	100,0	1 015
City quarter							
Ústí n. L. – centre	36 036	36,7	35 138	36,8	48,3	51,4	727,8
Ústí n. L. – Neštěmice	25 525	26,0	24 795	26,0	10,3	10,9	2,416,0
Ústí n. L. – Severní Terasa	22 220	22,6	21 989	23,0	5,1	5,4	4,298,1
Ústí n. L. – Střekov	14 397	14,7	13 514	14,2	30,3	32,2	446,1

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.

3. Social and demographic development

The population growth of the city of Ústí nad Labem became significantly apparent at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, and the population increased until World War II, in particular due to the industrial revolution. At the end of the 1930s, the city population was 70 thousand due to administrative merging of the city with adjoining villages. Due to wartime events and the post-war resettlement of German citizens, the population dropped and the city reported 57,672 inhabitants in 1950. The 1950s were characterized by a slow increase of population up to 68,362 in 1960. Despite high rates of positive migration, the balance of the population slightly dropped in 1961



Graph 1. Population growth of Ústí nad Labem between 1869-2012 (abs.)

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.

In 1961, the city of Ústí nad Labem became the regional city of the Northern Bohemia Region, which combines the former Ústí Region and Liberec Region following the territorial and administrative reorganization. The population of Liberec almost always exceeded that of Ústí nad Labem, however, this indicator was less significant because of the location of Ústí within the Northern Bohemia Region. This development resulted in an increase of population growth until 1966 when the population first exceeded that of 1939.

The trend of increasing population continued until 1969 to 74,064 inhabitants because one year later, the number of inhabitants dropped to 72,282, which is explained by increased immigration due to the political development of that time.

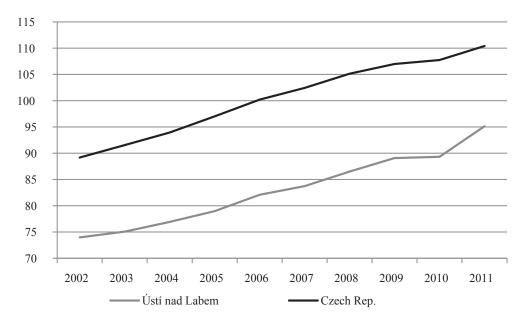
During the next decade, the population increased again and the growth of population was helped in 1976 by joining up with three more municipalities. The negative migration balance had a negative impact on the population and this was seen throughout the seventies.

The population growth in 1980 was from 80,926 to 89,371 in the next year, caused by the second wave of integration of the municipalities. In the mid 1980s, the city integrated with more surrounding villages, to reach 100,000 level. Therefore, Chlumec, Chabařovice and Neštěmice joined the city, numbering 104,472 in 1986. At the end of the eighties, Ústí nad Labem attained its biggest size in its history when 106 thousand inhabitants lived in the city. At the beginning of the nineties, the population decreased significantly because several towns and villages, which were administratively joined to Ústí nad Labem, separated [Kačírek 2003, p. 83].

Table 2. Migration, natural and total population growth in Ústí nad Labem (abs., %)

Specification	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Migration growth	-87	-66/-0,7	-570/ -5,9	311/3,3	-126/ -1,3
Natural growth	162	-18/ -0,2	-9/-0,1	128/ 1,4	113/ 1,2
Total growth	75	-84/ -0,9	-579 /-6,0	439/ 3,3	-13/-0,1

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.



Graph 2. Index of ageing (in %) in Ústí nad Labem and the Czech Republic

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.

The population development of the city and the growth or decrease of its inhabitants was also influenced by the demographic behaviour of the inhabitants and their migration. The natural increase of population did not reflect the prevailing trends; there are both positive and negative values.

The total population after the drop in the nineties showed a certain improvement in 2005, when positive natural increase was reported and the number of newly moved persons exceeded the number of persons moving from the city. Recently, there has been a slowing growth of population and the general population of Ústí nad Labem has stabilized at about 95 thousand inhabitants.

Table 3. Average age of inhabitants of Ústí nad Labem city (abs.)

Specification	1991	1995	2000	2005	2010
Men	34,1	34,9	36,4	37,5	38,4
Women	36,9	37,8	39,4	40,8	41,7
Total	35,6	36,4	37,9	39,2	40,1

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.

The rise of average age of inhabitants has been increasing over the last twenty years. This development is apparent for both male and female population. At the same time, the differences in the average age of men and women remain unchanged to a certain level. The lower values of the average age of the city's inhabitants compared to the Czech Republic data is partially influenced by the different social structure of its inhabitants from the national values. This particularly involves the lower level of education; empirical results confirm that the higher education of the population means a reduction of mortality rates. The national composition of the population plays an important role here because the Roma population has a statistically higher mortality which reduces the median age length as well as the average age of the inhabitants.

4. Economic development

The economic basis of the city were characterized by a strong focus on industrial sectors, brown coal mining and transport. The traditional industries included the production of chemical products, metallurgic and food industries. With respect to the economic structure of the city, these industries played an important role several decades ago; at present, the presence of mineral resources and the location of the chemical industry does not have any innovative potential for the economic development of the city. Since the 1990s, these industries have been undergoing long-term decline and replacement by the tertiary sector in the employment structures in successive steps. For example, in 2001 the industry and tertiary sector employed 20% and 70% of the population, respectively.

Therefore, services, transport and telecommunications dominate the economy of Ústí nad Labem. The most important employers in the territory of the city are obviously important public organizations, e.g. Krajská zdravotní a.s. (hospital), the Czech Railways and the University of J. E. Purkyně. The most important industrial

companies in Ustí nad Labem include the industrial plants of Setuza and Spolchemie. Traditionally the biggest industrial plant in Ústí nad Labem is Spolek pro chemickou a hutní výrobu, a. s. (Spolchemie), incorporated already in 1856 which was one of the most significant chemical companies in the country. The second one is SETUZA, a.s., the biggest processor of edible fats and vegetable oils in the country. The Neštěmice city district saw the development of industrial and food production, and the most important companies are the industrial premises of Solvayova továrna na sodu (TONASO) and the Zlatopramen brewery, now under the umbrella of the Heineken group. The engineering and metallurgical companies include METAL, a. s., Pierburg AG, Black&Decker, Matthey and Kone.

The favourable transport location of the city on the railway route from Prague to Dresden, as well as the development of a big port on the Labe River, significantly helped the economic development of the city district. Logistic premises were established here and are still operating today.

Generally speaking, the former dominant role of these companies is now strongly weakened [Hlaváček 2003, p. 27] and the economic structure of the city now sees increased employment in the services and new industrial companies incorporated by foreign investors. The benefit of this kind of development is the fact that traditional industrial companies which created extensive industrial areas in close neighbourhood of the residential development, contributing to the improved environment by attenuating production.

The economic transformation after 1990 was principally reflected in the increase of unemployment. In the early 1990s, the unemployment rates were significantly lower in the city, the Ústí nad Labem district as well as in the Czech Republic than today. In the course of the 1990s, the unemployment rate grew and reached its highest levels in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Table 4. Increase in the unemployment rate in Ústí nad Labem county and the Czech Republic (%)

Specification	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011
Ústi nad Labem	0,5	3,3	16,0	13,5	12,6
Czech Republic	0,7	2,9	8,9	8,9	8,6

Source: own composition based on the data of Czech Statistical Office.

In the city of Usti nad Labem alone, the unemployment rate does not differ from the district's because about 80% of all the district's population lives in the city. After 2000, the unemployment rate drop has reflected general improvement of the economic situation both at local and national level. Over the past few years, despite the impact of the global economic crisis, the unemployment rate has not significantly increased but oscillates between 12 and 13%. In fact, the inrease of the unemployment level conforms to the increase at regional and national level. In the Ústí Region and in the city of Ústí nad Labem, the impact of the economic

transformation is heavier and is reflected in the above average unemployment levels from the long term point of view.

5. Urban development

The post-war settlement development of the city can be divided into two stages: the era of post-war reconstruction and development from the 1960s to 1980s. During the first stage, the city's development was influenced by the "post-war" shock. Although Peace Square was not damaged seriously, other parts of the city suffered extensive damage resulting in the need of all the available funds [Janoš 2011, p. 151]. Among others, the reason for the stagnation was the fact that the city depopulated because of the displacement of Germans, and people from Czechoslovakia only slowly came to settle the border areas.

The city revived to a significant extent early in the 1950s when the demolition of the buildings that suffered war damage was completed. The process of regeneration was based on two trends. The first one was recovery to its original condition with updating according to the latest economic and aesthetic requirements; the second one was the brownfield construction of a new city.

The first trend was applied e.g. in post-war Warsaw in the Nowy Świat district. After the war, the completely destroyed historical centre was rebuilt according to the preserved documents. In addition to residential development, the city centre was completed by adding communal facilities according to modern housing needs.

The second trend of the development was executed in the spirit of functionalism that gives priority of pragmatics over traditional development and does not respect traditional architectural conditions (such as a street grid). Its aim is resolving the problems of the emerging crisis of inner cities: traffic jams and deteriorating environment, shortage of housing, modern office buildings and hotels. This trend prevailed in Ústí nad Labem and the nationwide urbanistic competition dated 1963-1964 resulted in the complete reconstruction of the city centre which meant its significant redevelopment. According to this concept Interhotel Bohemia and Labe Department Store were built in the 1960s.

Solving the chronic shortage of housing in the city was the task of the flat development scheme, based on which 3,219 apartments were built in 1961-1965 in Bukov, the lower part of Střekov and Hrnčířská Street. Other prefabricated settlement units were built in the 1960s in the area of Skřivánek where 1,635 flats were constructed and in the upper part of Střekov with 645 new apartments. This sub-urbanization process continued with the development of the Severní Terasa prefabricated settlement unit with 6,240 flats and civil amenities.

The concentration of the urbanistic development of the city on construction of the satellite prefabricated settlements was reflected in the successive shifting of the residential function of the city into its peripherals, which deformed the natural city environment. The mono-function settlements separated from the secondary and tertiary spheres and resulted in the depopulation of the city centre and the decay of the housing stock. Therefore the master plan of the city dated 1977 continued the started trend of the socialistic redevelopment of the city. Housing had to be moved from the centre to the newly constructed prefabricated settlements; for example a 50% reduction of inhabitants living in the centre was planned for 1990 compared to 1975.

The consequences of the 1977 master plan defined two fundamental tendencies for the city's development. The first focused on the continued development of the prefabricated estates on the city periphery. In the 1970s and 1980s, prefabricated settlements were constructed in Krásné Březno, Neštěmice, Mojžíř, Všebořice and Kamenný Vrch. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the construction of prefabricated settlements in Všebořice, Dobětice and Skalka was completed.

The second tendency of the urbanistic development continued with the total redevelopment of the city centre, which resulted in large demolition and the construction of over-sized prefabricated structures that heavily breached the original urban environment due to their volume. Upon completion of the office buildings in the city centre, this tendency in the urbanistic development of the city stagnated and in 1989 the construction of the big structures already in the pipeline stopped completely.

In the interest of keeping the social cohesion between city quarters, public funds are needed to contribute to keeping and improving the quality of the city environment [Olšová 2006, p. 131, Hlaváček 2005, p. 44] in the form of the regeneration of the residential buildings and public spaces, retaining good transport services and, first and foremost, the reduction of the presence of the socially-pathogenic phenomena, e.g. the crime rate that damages the social environment and results in the outflow of the middle class to other city districts or surrounding villages.

6. Conclusion

Over the last twenty years, the function of public spaces and buildings has not changed significantly. The development of business activities in Czech cities after 1989 and the privatization of the municipal property has led to a change in the functional use of public buildings, e.g. service centres in the prefabricated estates. The growing competition from new shopping centres and hypermarkets has created a very strong competitive pressure on these new business operators and resulted in the closing of retail shops and the abandoning of these buildings, where some of them are threatened by converting into brownfields.

The growth of the social differentiation in the Czech Republic and in Usti nad Labem will be reflected in the growth of social and economic differences within the towns and districts. The local government and the state government should implement a wide range of measures that include appropriate housing quality and public space quality, although they often involve difficult problems without easy solutions. These

problems are especially significant for cities in the old industrial regions, such as Ústecký Region and the cities of Chomutov, Most and Ústí nad Labem and the Moravian-Silesian Region and the cities of Havířov, Karviná or Ostrava. In my opinion, the transformation processes show a specific divergence trends in migration and long-term differences in the unemployment rate between successful and less successful cities. I consider as positive factors the large investment in infrastructure and the reconstruction of housing estates and town centers.

The revitalization of town periphery does not only relate to the removal of ecological problems and the development of technical and traffic infrastructure. The maintenance and improvement of quality of life and social, economic, and urbanistic cohesion inside the towns is given a growing importance. The problem of monofunctional town districts, particularly prefabricated housing estates, creates barriers for the spatial and competitive development of towns. This phenomenon of Czech towns should be solved by the support of social and economic activities (e.g. the development of retailing, centres of social services) that expand the range of services and jobs as well.

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ANALIZA PROCESÓW ROZWOJOWYCH MIASTA ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM JAKO PRZYKŁAD SPOŁECZNYCH I EKONOMICZNYCH TRANSFORMACJI ZACHODZĄCYCH W MIASTACH REPUBLIKI CZESKIEJ

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest analiza kluczowych aspektów rozwoju miast Republiki Czeskiej na przykładzie Ústí nad Labem. Przykład ten ilustruje zmiany typowe dla innych uprzemysłowionych miast czeskich. Władze lokalne i państwowe stosują szereg środków w celu podtrzymania odpowiedniej jakości gospodarki mieszkaniowej oraz przestrzeni publicznej. Rewitalizacja miast polega na rozwiązywaniu problemów ekonomicznych, społecznych, urbanistycznych i ekologicznych oraz na rozwoju infrastruktury zarówno technicznej, jak i drogowej. Coraz większego znaczenia nabiera poprawa jakości życia oraz spójności społecznej, ekonomicznej i urbanistycznej w obrębie miast.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój, urbanizacja, miasto, transformacja, przestrzeń publiczna.