Transformation of the identity of a region: Theory and the empirical case of the perceptual regions of Bohemia and Moravia, Czech Republic

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Abstract

By using the concept of perceptual region – an essential part of the identity of a region and a part of every person's mental map – this paper demonstrates a way to examine the understudied transformation of (the identity of) a region and, specifically, its territorial shape (boundaries). This concept effectively fuses the "institutionalisation of regions" theory and the methodologies of behavioural geography. This case study of the perceptual regions of Bohemia and Moravia shows how and why these historical regions and their boundary/boundaries developed, after a significant deinstitutionalisation by splitting into smaller regions in an administrative reform. Many people now perceive the Bohemian-Moravian boundary according to the newly-emerged regional boundaries, which often ignore old (historical) boundaries. Thus, the territorial shape of Bohemia and Moravia is transformed, with the Vysočina Region emerging as one of the new regions to witness the most eroded consciousness concerning these historical regions and their boundaries. The impact of administrative reforms on the perception and thus also the transformation of regions and boundaries is obvious, but the results also suggest that the more radical the administrative changes (in terms of toponyms and boundary mismatches), the fuzzier the collective perceptions of historical boundaries become, as well as peoples' consciousness of historical regions.

Keywords: perceptual region; transformation of the identity of a region; administrative reform; mental maps; Bohemian-Moravian boundary; Czech Republic

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1. Introduction

The Czech Lands have been important territorial units since the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, with an administrative reform in 1948, they were abolished de jure and split into smaller regions. In comparison to some other then-socialist countries where similar reforms took place, the historical regions in the Czech Republic were not restored after the fall of the totalitarian regime. Yet, Bohemia, Moravia, and (Czech) Silesia have remained part of the everydayness of the country until today. Their delimitation is problematic, nonetheless. People perceive historical land boundaries very differently – a transformation of their territorial shape has occurred. Some authors (Marek, 2015; Siwek and Kaňok, 2000a, 2000b; Vaishar and Zapletalová, 2016) attribute these effects to the administrative reforms after 1948. But is the extent of the transformation the same along the length of the historical land boundaries? Or does it somehow differ? And if so, how and why?

Although the need for theorising regions has already become a "mantra" (Van Langenhove, 2013, p. 476) within new regional geography, Paasi (2011b, p. 11) notes that "[r]elatively little attention has been paid to such major questions as what is a region [and] how it 'becomes'". It is necessary to examine regions as social constructs (Paasi, 2010) and dynamic processes (Paasi and Metzger, 2017), because it can develop not only knowledge of the concept of region but also the concepts of regional identity of people and regionalism (Marek, 2020a). "Understanding the region then is a means to understanding society itself" (Tomaney, 2009, p. 140), and uncovering the nature of regions as social constructs and dynamic processes can be seen as a "major goal of geography" (Johnston and Sidaway, 2016, p. 216).

This article draws on the institutionalisation of regions theory of Anssi Paasi (1986a) and deals mainly with one of Paasi's dimensions of regional identity – subjective images of a region. These can be identified with perceptual regions,

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implying the existence of a region (Marek, 2020b), which allows us to also use them in researching the region's subsequent development – for example, its transformation (Marek, 2020a). In this paper, the perceptual regions of Bohemia and Moravia lingering in the minds of Bohemian-Moravian borderland inhabitants, are used to study the transformation of (the identity of) a region.

The main aim is to contribute to the discussion of the region as a social construct and a dynamic process, and it encompasses two secondary goals: (1) to demonstrate the usability of perceptual regions in researching the transformation of (the identity of) a region and, specifically, its territorial shape (boundaries); and (2) to explore the nature of the perception and transformation of historical regions/boundaries in areas with a diverse history of administrative regions/boundaries. The above questions will be examined using the example of the Bohemian-Moravian boundary.

Zimmerbauer et al. (2017) stressed the necessity for research into an insufficiently-studied region's deinstitutionalisation and one of its forms based on administrative reforms – regional amalgamation (Zimmerbauer and Paasi, 2013). This article, by focusing on an "Eastern-Bloc case", suggests studying a second deinstitutionalisation form – regional splitting – which can contribute to the development of scientific knowledge as well.

2. Theoretical and methodological background

2.1 Region as a social construct

As Cresswell (2013, p. 71) puts it: "Central to new regional geographies was the belief that regions are social constructs." Among geographers, this belief is increasingly apparent (Paasi, 2002a, 2010, 2011b; Paasi and Metzger, 2017) and some authors state that regions "are not 'out there' waiting to be discovered; they are our (and others') constructions" (e.g. Allen et al., 1998, p. 2).

The majority of works on the new regional geography, however, lack the theme of the existence of region as a social construct. Based on the theory of the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1971), it can be argued that if we know about some social fact – that is, we have knowledge or consciousness about it – this fact is real, existing (Marek, 2020b). As the region is also a social fact (Paasi, 2002a, 2002b, 2009a), we can say that "regions exist (as social constructions) only if they are in people's consciousness" (Zimmerbauer, 2011, p. 256). Hence, their existence depends on people and their communications about regions: regions "are talked and written into existence" (Neumann, 1994, p. 59; Van Langenhove, 2013). A region emerges or rather arises – it starts to exist – when it comes into a human's knowledge/consciousness, typically through the process of perception (Marek, 2020b).

There is a close two-way relationship between knowledge and perception. On the one hand, because of perception through our senses, our knowledge is being built (Lynch, 1960; Rose, 2001; Siwek, 2011; Tuan, 1975b), or as Tuan (1979, p. 410) put it: "To sense is to know." On the other hand, such knowledge influences our perception as "perceptions are based on our accumulated knowledge", and therefore, "[w]hat we know shapes our perceptions" (Fouberg et al., 2012, p. 26 and p. 13).

When thinking about regions as social constructions, emphasis needs to be given to the fact that regions are not arbitrarily created mental abstractions without a connection to the "real world" (de Blij et al., 2010; Fouberg and Moseley, 2015; Kasala and Šifta, 2017; Paasi, 1986a, 1986b, 1991, 2009b, 2010; Roth, 2007). According to critical realist philosophy, regions as constructs are always based on "materials – not only physical materials in this case, like concrete, but ideational materials like people's beliefs and habits" (Sayer, 2006, p. 99). Thus, the significant role of communication between people and the perception associated with such interchanges, is evident.

2.2 Region as a dynamic process

Seeing regions as spatial structures (Giddens, 1984) and as historically contingent dynamic processes (Pred, 1984), were other important developments in establishing the new regional geography (Gilbert, 1988). Particularly due to Pred's incorporation of time, the region is no longer seen as static but as "constantly becoming" (Pred, 1984, p. 279). Paasi (1986a, 1986b, 1991, 2001, 2002a, 2009b, 2011b) developed these ideas in his institutionalisation of regions theory, where he outlined four stages in the process of regional formation: the emergence of (I) territorial shape (boundaries), (II) symbols, (III) institutions, and (IV) regional identity. The fourth stage permeates all three previous stages (Paasi, 1986a, 1986b, 1991); thus, regional identity emerges because of boundaries, symbols, and institutions. These are also three key features of every region, consisting of various characteristics of the region, its inhabitants, and so on (Marek, 2020b).

Although Paasi's theory focuses mainly on the emergence of regions, the subsequent development of a region (or an identity of region: see below) is also designed: "region […], once established, is continually reproduced and gradually transformed in individual and institutional practices" (Paasi, 1986a, p. 110), "that is in the spheres of economics, politics, legislation, administration, culture, etc." (Paasi, 1991, p. 244). Paasi (1986a, 1991, 2001, 2010) also mentions that a region may disappear or deinstitutionalise. Raagmaa (2002, pp. 58–60) outlines two main variations in a region's subsequent development: (I) continuous renewal and (II) disappearance. The former contains, among other elements, a process of re-institutionalisation, which can be seen, however, as part of an ongoing institutionalisation process during which new institutions of the region concerned emerge (Marek, 2020a). To Raagmaa (2002), the region can disappear due to (1) a radical transformation of population or (2) an administrative reform. Paasi (2009b, 2011b), Zimmerbauer et al. (2012) and Zimmerbauer and Paasi (2013) distinguish two forms of deinstitutionalisation based on administrative reforms:

a. amalgamation of several regions, and

b. splitting of a region.

With respect to the concrete processes extant during a region's existence, based on the previously-quoted researchers and several others (e.g. Chromý, 2003; Chromý et al., 2014; Kasala and Šifta, 2017; Semian, 2015, 2016; Šerý and Šimáček, 2013; Tomaney, 2009), it can be concluded that a region (I) emerges/arises, and is subsequently (II) reproduced, (III) transformed, and (IV) may disappear. The institutionalisation of a region concerns primarily its emergence, reproduction, and transformation, while the deinstitutionalisation of a region involves especially its reproduction, transformation, and disappearance. Therefore, region's reproduction and transformation may be studied from the perspective of both an institutionalising and deinstitutionalising region (Marek, 2020a).

2.3 Conceptualising perceptual region

In his influential theoretical framework, Paasi (1986a, 1986b, 2002a, 2003, 2009b, 2011b, 2013) explicitly links old concepts of region and the boundary/border with a new concept of regional identity, while distinguishing several dimensions of this identity: (I) identity of a region and (II) regional identity (or regional consciousness) of people – referring to (1) identification with a region or (2) identification with a regional community. The identity of a region can be divided, according to Paasi (1986a), into (1) "objective" classifications and (2) subjective images of a region. This author's subsequent works (Paasi, 2001, 2002a, 2003, 2009b, 2011b), however, lack this distinction by omitting the subjective dimension. Hence, in these texts "the identity of a region refers to those features of nature, culture and inhabitants that distinguish […] a region from others" and that are used in various regional classifications (Paasi, 2002a, p. 140; 2003). When treating regions as social constructs, which exist as both (collective) objective reality and (personal/individual) subjective reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1971), this neglect is problematic. Moreover, Paasi (2002a, p. 139) himself perceives it a problem, in that "the link between the personal and collective dimensions of identity remains unclear" – and something similar can be said about region as well.

In addition, in Paasi's later works, there is an inconsistency regarding other previously-defined dimensions of regional identity and even their designations[1]. All of these aspects make it difficult to develop knowledge of the key concepts, such as region and regional identity (Marek, 2020b). Thus, it is hardly surprising that, even after many years of dealing with this topic, Paasi says: "While regional identity has been for a long time an important category in geographical research, its meanings are still vague" (Paasi, 2002a, p. 138). It "has remained thinly theorised – a sort of enigma" (Paasi, 2011b, p. 12).

In his critical discussion of Paasi's conceptualisation of regional identity, Marek (2020b) focuses on the identity of a region, which – unlike the regional consciousness of people – is much less considered by various authors, including Paasi. After all, it is the identity of a region which can be seen as a primary dimension of regional identity, whilst "the regional consciousness of people is a mere 'superstructure' of region, for people must first know about region in order to identify with it" (Marek, 2020b, p. 67). Marek (2020b) also points out that the terms 'consciousness' and 'regional consciousness' must not be confused. The former means knowledge referring to the identity of region and implies the existence of region as a social fact (see above). The latter points to the regional identity of people associated with an identification or the sense of relationship (feeling) with a region or regional community. Even Paasi (2009b, p. 139) suggests that identification should refer to a feeling rather than to knowledge.

The identity of a region is thus a prerequisite for the emergence of the regional identity of people. As well, this is apparent from Keating's three elements for an analysis of the relationship between regional identity and political action: the first element is 'cognitive' ("people must be aware of […] a region"); the second is 'affective' ("how people feel about the region"); and the third is 'instrumental' ("whether the region is used as a basis for mobilisation and collective action") (Keating, 1998, p. 86). Similarly, according to Zimmerbauer (2011, p. 245):

> "A sense of identification with a region is fundamentally based on consciousness of the existence of that regional entity […], and it becomes evident in inhabitants' awareness, feelings and actions and can eventually even lead to regional activism."

Regional activism may be comprehended as regionalism, as for example in Soja (2009, p. 260), who defines regionalism as "the active promotion of regional perspectives" or "an actively practiced belief that regions are useful concepts for achieving a wide range of objectives". In this respect, regional activists (regionalists) are, among others, politicians as well as voters in regionalist parties. Hence, we have the following argument: (I) the identity of a region based on knowledge/consciousness closely related to perception precedes (II) the regional consciousness of people, and the regional identity of people is a condition for (III) regional activism or regionalism (Marek, 2020b). In short, 'to know about the region' may be followed by 'to feel with the region' and this can manifest itself in 'to do something regarding the region'. It should, however, be mentioned that besides 'activists' there is also another type of regional actor – these are the 'advocates' (Paasi, 2010; Paasi and Zimmerbauer, 2011). Advocates, such as planners, are often crucial in disseminating the identities of regions and in fostering the regional consciousness of people (thus they definitely "do something regarding the region") but regional identity for them, personally, may in fact be unimportant (Paasi, 2013). Likely, then, they may have different motives for their agency.

As for the neglected subjective images of region, one of the few things Paasi (1986a, p. 123) mentions about them is that "[b]ehavioral geographers have been studying the images of regions for a long time". He also states that "behavioural geographers began to study perceptual regions" (Paasi, 2011a, p. 169). This, among other things, suggests the possibility to identify subjective images of a region with perceptual regions (Marek, 2020b). According to Šerý and Šimáček (2012, p. 39), for instance, the "subjective images are the results of processes of perception", and Siwek (2011, p. 70) describes perception as a "process during which the image of reality arises in human consciousness".

In accordance with several authors (Dokoupil, 2004; Fellmann et al., 2003; Fouberg and Moseley, 2015; Hobbs, 2016; Klapka and Tonev, 2008; Kuby et al., 2013; Lynch, 1960; Paasi, 1986a; Relph, 1976; Roth, 2007; Siwek, 2011; Šerý and Šimáček, 2012, 2013; Tuan, 1991), it is fruitful to distinguish three dimensions of the identity of a region, that is, three regional types[2]:

1. 'objective types': (a) 'a homogeneous/formal region' delimited by consensus in agreeing to a particular criterion or criteria, and (b) 'a functional region' delimited on the basis of relations typically between a core and its surroundings; and

2. the 'subjective' image of region, in other words, 'a perceptual region' whose delimitation is based on the subjective perception of an individual person (Marek, 2020a, 2020b).

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[1] Often is unclear whether it is, for example, the identity of the region, the regional consciousness of people, or both, which are being discussed.

[2] Indeed, it seems that the identity of region represents the region itself (Marek, 2020).

But, of course, not only delimitation/boundaries set the identity of a region apart, but also regions consist of symbols and institutions.

It needs to be stressed that the perceptual region is the most important dimension/type. "We now recognise that all humans relate not to some real physical or social environment but rather to their perception of that environment" (Norton, 2004, p. 63). As mentioned above, knowledge/consciousness about a region typically based on perception is a condition for the existence of region as a social fact/construct. Region does not exist without persistence in a person's mind (people's minds) in the form of perceptual region(s). That means every region is at least a perceptual region lingering in at least one person's knowledge or consciousness. The same cannot be said for formal nor for functional regions, because not every region can also be seen as formal (e.g. urban areas are typically not homogenous in any respect) or as functional (e.g. geomorphological regions mostly lack relations between their parts) (Marek, 2020b).

Furthermore, as perceptual regions reflect "images rather than objective data", they "may be more meaningful in individuals' daily lives than the more objective regions of geographers" (Getis et al., 2014, p. 14). It is the subjective dimension of (the identity of) region which is the basis for the regional consciousness of people (Marek, 2020b; Paasi, 1986a), and for regional activism / regionalism as well. For example, as Siwek (2011, p. 49 and p. 88) puts it:

"Subjective perception is an important factor which determines how a certain person behaves in a particular situation in space. [...] Each person decides according to his/her subjective knowledge and the images he/she holds in his/her head – that is, on the basis of his/her mental map and not on the basis of objective reality."

Formal, functional and perceptual regions are included in the American national geography standards (Heffron and Downs, 2012), which is probably why they all are described in many English-language textbooks (e.g. de Blij and Murphy, 1999; Fellmann et al., 2003; Fouberg and Moseley, 2015; Fouberg et al., 2012; Getis et al., 2014; Hobbs, 2016; Kuby et al., 2013; Rubenstein, 2014), whose authors agree that perceptual regions persist in people's minds. Some authors (e.g. Fouberg et al., 2012; Getis et al., 2014), however, see the perceptual region rather as a collective than an individual/personal/subjective entity. Even Jordan, the author of the perceptual region definition, which has been used in some form by others[3] (e.g. Getis et al., 2014; Shortridge, 1980; Zelinsky, 1980), sees them as "composites of mental maps of the population" (Jordan, 1978, p. 293). If we assume that the region is both an objective and subjective reality, it is beneficial to treat perceptual regions as subjective. Only a combination of several perceptual regions creates an "objective" formal region (based on a consensus in perception). But because the term "objective" has several meanings (e.g. Searle, 1995; Williams, 2015), it would be misleading to see all "objective" (formal and functional) regions as collective objective realities – hence the quotation marks (Marek, 2020a; 2020b).

As they are based on perception, an important research interest in geography since the 1960s (Gould and White, 1986; Lynch, 1960; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1975a), perceptual regions can be linked with the concept of the mental map. Perceptual region can then be seen as part of a mental map just like a "real region" is part of a "real map" (Marek, 2020a). According to Rubenstein (2014, p. 17): "A useful way to identify a perceptual region is to get someone to draw a mental map." It must, however, be a mental map in Lynch's (1960) sense, which demonstrates the identity of region and is comparative. Thus, for example, a deviation in one's perception (subjective reality) from the historical boundary (objective reality) of a particular region can be revealed (Marek, 2020a; Siwek, 2011; Siwek and Bogdová, 2007; Siwek and Kaňok, 2000b).

It is interesting to think again about the previously-made distinction for the identity of a region into three types of region (formal, functional, perceptual), where each region type consists of three features (bounded territory, symbols, institutions) and, after its emergence, undergoes subsequent development (reproduction, transformation, eventual disappearance). As the development of the concepts of a region, but also of regional identity and regionalism, is required, these analytical distinctions are very fruitful because they enable detailed investigation of some of the "basic components" in their combinations.

2.4 Transformation of (the identity of) region

As the recognised institutionalisation of regions theory enables a straightforward connection with empirical data (Paasi, 1986b), there is extensive use of this theory in the research of various regions, as shown in many case studies (e.g. Chromý, 2003; Frisvoll and Rye, 2009; Hammarlund, 2004; Jones and MacLeod, 2004; Kašková and Chromý, 2014; MacLeod and Jones, 2001; Paasi, 2002a, 2013; Semian, 2015; Sepp and Veemaa, 2010; Šifta and Chromý, 2017; Zimmerbauer, 2011; Zimmerbauer et al., 2017). As indicated above, Paasi's theory deals especially with the emergence of regions; therefore, naturally, many subsequent researchers study this process in particular. On the other hand, as "region" has been seen as a dynamic process since the 1980s, it is fairly surprising that analyses of a region's subsequent development are still rare. Moreover, Paasi's theory can be used for the study of such subsequent developments (Marek, 2020a). Hence, this paper aims to fill in this gap by focusing on the transformation of (the identity of) a region and, specifically, its territorial shape (boundaries).

Such a transformation is tightly bound with the reproduction of the identity of a region where institutions, in particular and in the broadest sense, play a crucial role (Paasi, 1986a, 1991, 2001, 2002a, 2009b, 2011b). Institutions constantly remind people of a given region, so they can perceive it. This ensures a region's existence into the future. Depending on the nature of particular institutions, however, a region's transformation can occur. The processes of the region's transformation and reproduction are two sides of the same coin, but for analytical purposes, they can be dealt with in separate ways (Marek, 2020a).

Among those studies focusing on the transformation of region(s), we note the following features:

1. some concentrate on the transformation of administrative regional systems (e.g. Paasi and Zimmerbauer, 2011), rather than on the transformation of subjective images of particular region(s);

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[3] Some of them (e.g. Zelinsky, 1980), however, write about "vernacular regions" and use other delimitation methods beyond asking people's perceptions.

2. some deal also with the transformation of the regional consciousness of people (Melnychuk and Gnatiuk, 2018), which obscures an understanding of the transformation of (the identity of) region[4];

3. some are concerned more with institutions and symbols than with territories/boundaries (see Zimmerbauer et al., 2017); and

4. some do not demonstrate the discussed territorial change or boundary transformations through empirical data grounded in the perceptions of ordinary people (Ambinakudige, 2009; Gnatiuk and Melnychuk, 2019; Paasi, 2001; Reed et al., 1990; Vukosav and Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2016).

On the other hand, there are many empirical works which, for the most part, touch on this issue: e.g. Brownell, 1960; Didelon-Loiseau et al., 2018; Good, 1981; Hale, 1984; Holmén, 2017; Homanyuk, 2019; Jordan, 1978; Lamme and Oldakowski, 2007; Lowry, 2013; Lowry et al., 2008; Shortridge, 1980, 1985, 1987; Siwek and Bogdová, 2007; Siwek and Kaňok 2000a, 2000b; Ulack and Raitz, 1981, 1982; Zdorkowski and Carney, 1985. The purpose of such studies, however, is mostly to delimit regions existing in people's minds – thus, the theory of regions is of little relevance to them. Others do care about the theory, but their contribution to the discussion of a region's transformation is rather limited (Heath, 1993; Semian, 2012a, 2012b; Šerý and Šimáček, 2012, 2013; Vaishar and Zapletalová, 2016, Vukosav, 2011).

To better understand not only the concept of a region (but also the concepts of the regional identity of people, and of regionalism), delimitation must be a means, not a goal. Subsequently, the transformation (and other processes in a region's subsequent development) must be handled explicitly and in great depth. The extreme usefulness of the perceptual region presented above can be seen here – as it is both an essential part of the identity of a region and a part of every person's mental map, it efficiently fuses the theory (of Paasi, especially) and the methodology (of behavioural geography) (Marek, 2020a).

The above-quoted empirical studies indicate that delimitation based on perception is widespread particularly for regions without administrative or de jure status, such as Asia or the US Middle West. Regions with a "lost" official (administrative / de jure) status (e.g. Moravia, Podolia [UKR]) are also appropriate in this respect. Although the perception-based delimitation can be applied to all regions (Marek, 2020a), such delimitations of administrative regions or states are almost always not conducted because these regions are typically perceived on the basis of their official boundaries. Perception of today's Poland, for example, is usually bound to contemporary official boundaries, but a century ago this region was undoubtedly perceived as partly "elsewhere". This "simple" transformation would not have occurred without Poland's official status, as indicated by regions with a lost administrative / de jure status whose current perception-based delimitations are rather problematic. Nevertheless, focusing on regions without official status can help to reveal how and why people construct their perceptual regions, and how and why these subjective images develop over time.

The Czech Lands are very suitable regions for studying the transformation of (the identity of) regions. Moreover, some authors have already partly researched this theme. The perception of Silesia, Moravia, their boundary, and de facto also their transformation is described by Siwek and Kaňok (2000a, 2000b) and Šerý and Šimáček (2012, 2013). The first researchers to deal in part with the perception of the Bohemian-Moravian historical land boundary were Toušek et al. (1991), who mapped the inhabitants' opinions of which land they would like to live in, given the land restoration. In addition, Vaishar and Zapletalová (2016) outlined the role of administrative reforms on the perception of this boundary, but they also dealt with many other factors such that attention to the regions' transformation is overshadowed. The perception of the boundary between Bohemia and Moravia was examined using mental maps for the first time by Chalupa (2015), focusing on knowledge of the boundary's historical location, and by Marek (2015), who was more interested in present-day perceptions. The latter work constitutes the initial research phase of this article.

3. Case study regions

The development of the administrative regional system in what is the present-day Czech Republic has been described by many authors (e.g. Burda, 2014; Daněk, 1993; Hledíková et al., 2005; Jordan, 2001; Munzar and Drápela, 1999; Semian, 2015; Siwek and Kaňok, 2000a, 2000b; Yoder, 2003). These accounts include Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, whose emergence dates back to the first millennium AD. In the 9th century, Moravia became a core of the Great Moravian Empire, the first predominantly West Slavic state, which ruled also several neighbouring areas, including Bohemia. After its fall early in the 10th century, however, the political centre moved to the Duchy of Bohemia. Since then, except for several interruptions, Bohemia (as the Kingdom of Bohemia since 1198) and Moravia (as the Margraviate of Moravia since 1182), and later also Silesia or at least its part, have formed the Czech state, with a dominant role for Bohemia. In spite of being part of the same state, the Czech Lands retained, due to various activists (e.g. some noblemen) and advocates (e.g. the Holy Roman Emperors), a relatively high level of autonomy – including their own legislatures – until the emergence of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. As a result, a strong identity and exclusiveness of these historical lands, as well as a strong rootedness of their boundaries (which had almost not changed for centuries), formed in people's consciousness.

For this research paper, administrative reforms of the last century are the most important – for the evolution of Czech regions, see Figure 1. Ten years after Czechoslovakia was created, the Czechoslovak/Czech part of Silesia[5] was amalgamated with Moravia in 1928. Moravia and (Czechoslovak/Czech) Silesia did not disappear, however. According to Paasi (1986a; 2002b; 2009a; 2009b), regions can exist on various spatial scales, and more importantly, a single region is not inevitably bound to one specific scale. Thus, because of a toponym, the newly-formed Moravia-Silesia continued to reproduce both historical lands for they were deinstitutionalised and (re)institutionalised at the same time. Moreover, many municipal names, among other things, continued to reproduce Moravia and Silesia.

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[4] Texts emphasising the transformation of the regional consciousness of people do exist as well (e.g. Terlouw, 2017), but many authors do not distinguish between these two dimensions of regional identity.
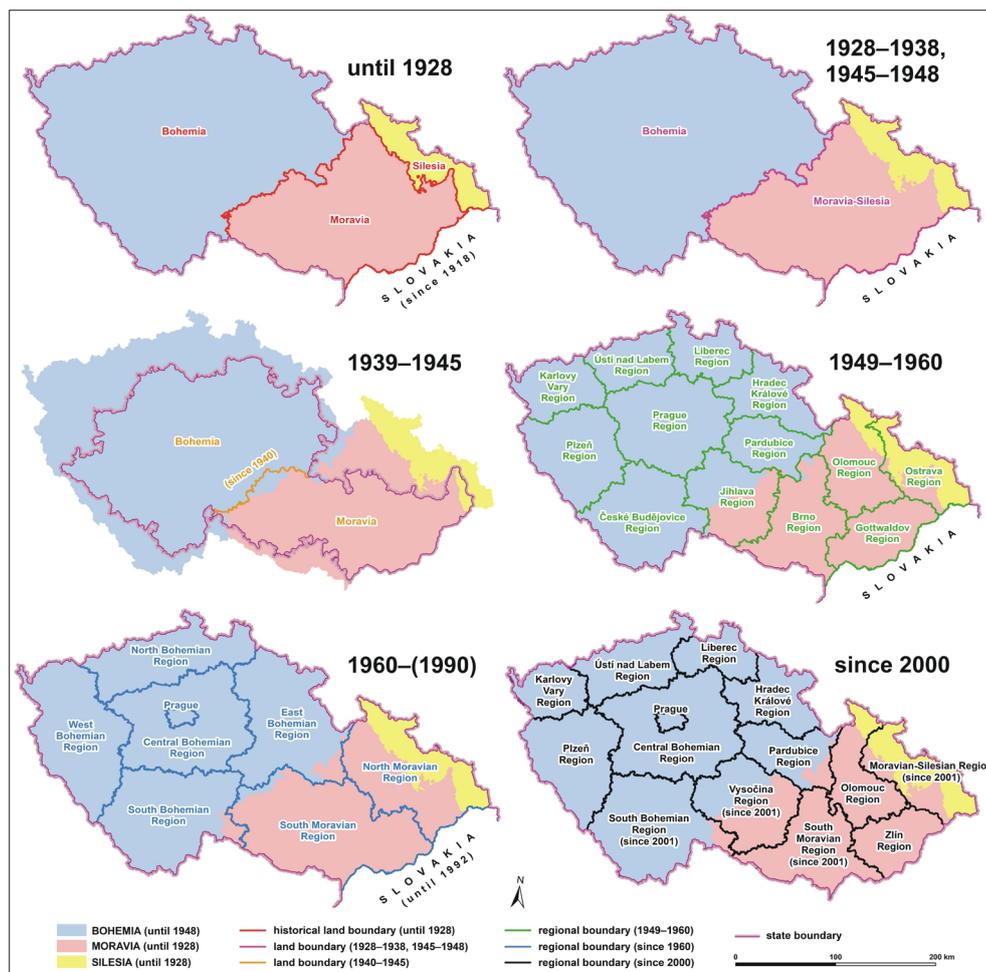
[5] The major part of Silesia is now located in Poland.

Fig. 1: Development of the highest-level de jure administrative regions in the area of the Czech Lands during the last century (except for the war-years 1939–1945, Slovakia and the present-day Czech Republic formed one state – Czechoslovakia, which emerged in 1918 and was split at the end of 1992).
Source: author's reconstruction based on Růžková and Škrabal (2006), Štůla and Semík (1941), and ArcČR® 500 Geographic Database

During the German occupation, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established, and an ephemeral change in the Bohemian-Moravian boundary also occurred. After World War II, the two pre-war lands were restored – but they were abolished by the new communist government at the end of 1948. From 1st January 1949, the administrative layer of the Czech Lands was split into thirteen newly-formed regions (kraje in Czech) named after their capitals – and they did not respect historical land boundaries. This represents a significant deinstitutionalisation of the Czech Lands. Even so, they still persist.

Another administrative reform took place in 1960, during which eight new regions (kraje) were formed replacing the previous ones. These regions also did not respect the historical land boundaries, but seven of them referred to Bohemia or Moravia in their names, meaning a (re)institutionalisation of Bohemia and Moravia as the new regions began to reproduce previously (and partly) deinstitutionalised historical lands.

A year after the 1989 "Velvet Revolution", regional committees were abolished, but this was not the case for the regions in their entirety, as they persisted in some agendas (e.g. the judiciary) to this day. Their boundaries are also adhered to by districts created during the same 1960 reform and replacing previous districts. During a subsequent debate about future administrative division, the restoration of

the Czech Lands as administrative units seemed logical. Political parties – mainly in Moravia – seeking restoration, initially succeeded in the elections but the dissolution of Czechoslovakia raised concerns about a further possible disintegration of the state. This led to a rejection of the restoration of large historical lands. Instead, fourteen much smaller regions (kraje still) emerged in 2000. Because of the renaming some of them in 2001, Bohemia, Moravia, and this time also Silesia, became (re)institutionalised and reproduced by four regions. The new regional boundaries ignored the historical land boundaries again, however.

In other states of the "Eastern Bloc", centralised communist regimes also frequently changed administrative divisions in which historical regions were typically ignored and often split (Jordan, 2001; Melnychuk and Gnatiuk, 2018; Roth, 2007; Sepp and Veemaa, 2010; Yoder, 2003). Unlike some of them, in the Czech Republic historical regions (lands) were not restored as administrative units after the collapse of the socialist regime. They have no official status even in the European Union NUTS system.

4. Data and methods

In the author's initial research (Marek, 2015), a significant role of the 1960/2000 administrative regions in the perception and transformation of Bohemia, Moravia,

and their boundary/boundaries was revealed. Therefore, subsequent research into two qualitatively different areas of the Bohemian-Moravian borderland was conducted, to further unravel the nature of these regions' perception and transformation. The location of the three study areas within the Czech Republic is shown in Figure 4.

The name of a region, a toponym, needs emphasis here. It is the most important regional symbol (Paasi, 1986a, 1986b, 1991; Raagmaa, 2002; Semian, 2012a; Simon et al., 2010) necessary for the existence of a region. According to Tuan (1991, p. 688): "Naming is power – the creative power to call something into being"; thus, there is "no region without a name" (Simon et al., 2010, p. 413). Regional names can then be used as a tool to study the territorial shapes of the regions in people's minds (Semian, 2012a, 2012b). In other words, thanks to toponyms, perceptual regions and their boundaries can be investigated.

The transformation will be studied following a comparison of perceptions:

1. "in time", as we can assume that, until the Czech Lands lost their official status, their perceived delimitation roughly coincided with then-official land boundaries; and

2. in three study areas where diverse administrative regions/boundaries emerged after 1948. The former focuses mainly on boundaries, the latter on territories.

In the first study area (hereinafter referred to as SA1) in the northern part of the Bohemian-Moravian borderland, a part of Moravia was inserted into the East Bohemian Region in 1960. The regions from 2000 are named after their capitals here. On the contrary, in the second study area (SA2), around the regional capital of Jihlava, a portion of Bohemia was inserted into the South Moravian Region in 1960. This whole area belongs to the current Vysočina Region[6], making

the present-day regional boundary far from the historical one. The third study area (SA3) in the southern part of the borderland in question is similar to SA1, as the South Bohemian Region has included a part of Moravia since 1960. There are two differences, however: the course of regional boundaries (1960/2000) in the north of SA3 diverges, and one of the current regions still bears Bohemia in its name.

The necessary data were gathered during three field research activities. The first (initial) research was conducted in thirty-three municipalities of SA1 and took place in the period August – October, 2014. The other two field research projects, which took place in twenty-four municipalities in both SA2 and SA3, were carried out in July 2016 and September 2016, respectively. Altogether, 454 residents aged 15–88 were interviewed face-to-face: 240 in SA1, 107 in SA2, and 107 in SA3. The respondents were chosen by the author searching through all eighty-one municipalities on foot or by bicycle to conduct an interview with at least 1 per cent of permanent inhabitants aged fifteen and older in each researched municipality and, especially, to make a proper quota sampling according to sex, age, and place of residence to fit the requirement of a representative sample. In each study area, all requirements were met using data from the last census (CZSO, 2014, 2016a, 2016b).

Each field research activity used a questionnaire survey whose content is described by Marek (2015). In this article, only responses to one task have been employed – the only one respondents drew/wrote themselves. Each respondent was given a sufficiently large (approximately 16 × 18 cm) study area map with basic elements, particularly all the municipalities, their names, and also the main roads, needed for orientation and was asked to draw the Bohemian-Moravian boundary and to mark each historical land where she/he currently perceives it (see Fig. 2). To correctly
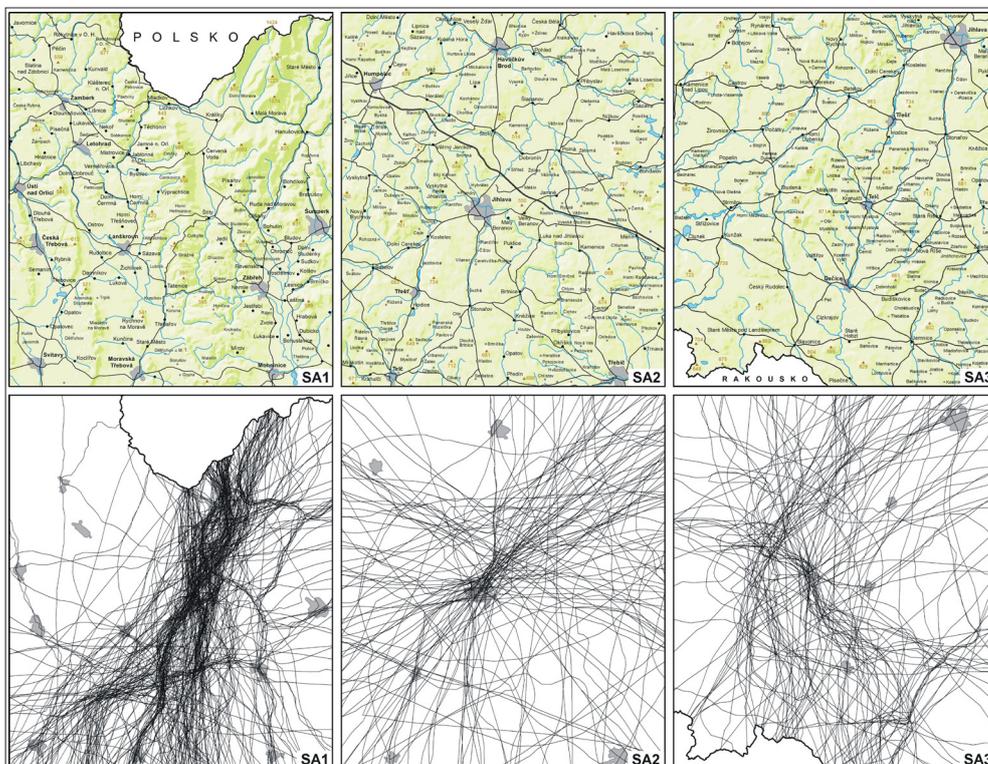

Fig. 2: Maps of the three study areas (top), and all perceptual region boundaries drawn by respondents (240 in SA1, 107 in SA2, and 107 in SA3: bottom). Source: author's field research, 2014–2016

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[6] Vysočina means highlands.

interpret the data, various field notes written by the author-interviewer (usually during conversations with respondents) have also been taken into account.

All Lynch-type mental maps were analysed using a method introduced by Šerý and Šimáček (2012, 2013), which also offers the possibility of data presentation. In order to be more illustrative of the regions' transformations, however, it was partly modified. After these authors' stage of counting raster layers, the resulting clusters were simply categorised into ten classes and visualised to indicate the percentage of respondents who perceive a particular area in the respective historical land (see Fig. 4).

5. Results and discussion

According to the perceptual regions and their boundaries drawn by the respondents, the administrative reforms of 1960 and 2000 seem to be crucial in the transformation of (the identity of) Bohemia and Moravia. Right after the interview assignment, several interviewees asked, in the words of one of them: "Should I draw a historical boundary or a current one?" It was repeated to them to draw the Bohemian-Moravian boundary where they perceive it now. In all three study areas, though often conscious of the current regions, many people drew it in a similar way to the historical land boundary (1928). As one respondent said: "I still perceive it as it was historically." Others drew the "current" boundary, i.e. the regional boundary from 1960 or 2000. In all study areas, many respondents understood that the historical land boundary had changed with the reform in 1960 – some explicitly mentioned this year – and/or with the later reform in 2000. "Today, I comprehend it by the regions [kraje]", stated one of them. This corresponds to the assertion by Vaishar and Zapletalová (2016, p. 20): "The borderline [of historical regions] is often equated with administrative boundaries."

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to think that respondents perceive the Bohemian-Moravian boundary either in conformity with the historical land boundary or the regional boundaries. There are no such distinct groups of people. Rather interviewees drew their perceptual regions diversely – for example, partly along the 1928 historical land boundary, partly according to the regional boundary (1960 and/or 2000), and partly in keeping with something else (e.g. local specifics). As already stated, people's perceptions are based on their knowledge that, in turn, is highly dependent on distance (from place of residence, specifically), but also on various mediated representations. Perceptions/knowledge can be dependent also on a person's sex/gender, age, educational level, nativity, nationality, and so forth (Chalupa, 2015; Good, 1981; Gould and White, 1986; Lowry, 2013; Lowry et al., 2008; Lynch, 1960; Marek, 2015; Relph, 1976; Shortridge, 1985; Siwek, 2011; Šerý and Šimáček, 2012, 2013; Ulack and Raitz, 1982). Also, the power of institutions reproducing the regions and imprinting themselves into people's perceptual regions vary contextually (Marek, 2020a). Further discussion of these influences on respondents' perceptions, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

According to some residents of SA1, Moravia in the East Bohemian Region, which is often regarded as East Bohemia, is no longer Moravia, but Bohemia – even the whole current Pardubice Region is perceived as Bohemian by some interviewees, since it is often considered a successor to the East Bohemian Region (which is probably supported by the coincidence of their boundaries)[7]. Thus, for example, even the former district town of Moravská Třebová (*Moravská* meaning Moravian) is now perceived by them to be located in Bohemia: "Moravská Třebová is today Bohemian and previously Moravian". Others would disagree, however. Although they are aware of the East Bohemian Region and/or the Pardubice Region, they still think/perceive that this town is located in Moravia. Moreover, some respondents, living further away and without knowledge of the regions to which this town belongs, drew it through common sense into Moravia: "Moravská Třebová – so it will probably be in Moravia". In this study area, interviewees were "confused" mainly in the south, where the historical land and regional boundaries diverge the most; therefore, subjective images of Bohemia and Moravia vary considerably here (see Fig. 2). On the contrary, in the middle of SA1, the respondents' perceptual regions mostly agree with one another, which can be elucidated through the accordance of the historical land and regional boundaries, although these results are partly influenced by the selection of researched municipalities (see below).

Similarly, in SA3, Moravia in the South Bohemian Region is perceived as Bohemia by some respondents because the South Bohemian Region is often identified with South Bohemia[8]. Thus, for instance, the former district town of Dačice is described by some people as having "used to belong to Moravia, now it is in Bohemia". Also, in this case, some would not agree because for them Dačice still lies in Moravia. Respondents in this study area were confused in the south while being in relative accordance in the middle (Fig. 2) for similar reasons to SA1. The northern part of SA3, where all three monitored boundaries diverge, causes the greatest confusion. Hence, before interviewees finally drew the borderline, though often by just guessing, some were refusing to complete this task for some time. Interestingly, several respondents talked about the Vysočina Region as if it was neither Bohemian nor Moravian. This may be explained by the strong identity of the Vysočina Region since its emergence (Chromý, 2004, 2009), as well as the partial deinstitutionalisation of the South Moravian Region and the South Bohemian Region in the Vysočina Region area, as they de jure "shrank" in 2001 (see Fig. 1). Therefore, the terms "South Moravia" and "South Bohemia" seem to be currently less used for this area, and the identity of the Vysočina Region somehow replaces the identities of the historical lands. Some interviewees also mentioned they perceived the Vysočina Region either as Bohemian or Moravian, instead of Bohemian-Moravian.

On the contrary, but similarly at the same time, in SA2 a part of Bohemia inserted into the South Moravian Region is seen as Moravia by some interviewees, as the South Moravian Region can be considered as South Moravia. Although, as outlined above, the identity of South Moravia

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[7] Furthermore, the neighbouring Olomouc Region is typically perceived as Moravian, since Olomouc is one of two historical Moravian capitals (together with Brno).

[8] As seen from some interviews with the SA3 respondents, however, it is more complicated. Some people do not perceive a mutual exclusiveness between South Bohemia and Moravia; they have no problem stating that Dačice, for instance, is located in South Bohemia and in Moravia, at the same time. For them, the South Bohemian identity does not struggle with nor contest the Moravian identity. Thus, seeing South Bohemia as a part of Bohemia, which then eliminates Moravia in the minds of all people, would be too simplistic.

(and South Bohemia) has been weakened here, and according to many residents of SA2, their municipalities lie primarily in the Vysočina Region rather than in Moravia or Bohemia. Previous examples focused on towns beyond the researched municipalities, but of course, the 1960 administrative regions influence the perception of historical lands even inside the researched areas. For instance, a resident of Dobronín, the most populated researched Bohemian municipality in the South Moravian Region, described her village as follows: "Now it is the Vysočina Region but, previously, the South Moravian Region, therefore, Moravia". Likewise, in other study areas, respondents typically began to draw in a familiar place. In SA2, it was in Jihlava in particular where many people perceived the Bohemian-Moravian boundary thanks to large boundary stones. This rare congruence on the course of the historical land boundary in the middle of the study area (Fig. 2) can also be explained by both the selection of studied municipalities (see below) and the absence of the Vysočina Region boundary in SA2. On the other hand, this absence of the most recent administrative boundary, as well as the existence of the Vysočina Region itself, contributes to the extreme confusion as to where the studied boundary leads. After drawing a point in Jihlava, one interviewee sighed: "I don't know on which side to draw at all". Thus, the interviewer had a difficult job in persuading many to finish the task. Of all three study areas, SA2 seems to possess the most eroded consciousness about Bohemia, Moravia, and their boundary.

As for the other administrative reforms, the 1949 regions are not imprinted in the respondents' perceptual regions. It is probably because their names did not resemble historical lands and, moreover, they only functioned for eleven years. In addition, no one mentioned Moravia-Silesia while drawing the borderline. This land has presumably always been seen as artificial, serving as an administrative unit for only a limited time, unlike Moravia and Silesia, each with more than a millennium of history. On the contrary, ephemeral changes during World War II still influence people's perceptions of the Bohemian-Moravian boundary in particular localities. Some interviewees were confused by the former affiliation to Moravia (in SA2 and SA3) and even by the Protectorate border (in SA1 and SA3). These influences are far less significant than those of 1960/2000, however.

It is possible to put forward examples of perceptual regions based on the 1928 historical land boundary or the 1960/2000 regional boundaries across the whole of

their documented courses (see Fig. 3), though the number is low – mainly in SA2 and SA3 where the monitored boundaries greatly diverge. It is worthless to count them because many others also drew the borderline according to these boundaries but, as indicated above, only partly. If, for example, an area of five kilometres from a certain boundary is considered, there are some people who fit within the tolerance accidentally, while others who perceive Bohemia and Moravia according to that boundary are just outside of it, since the knowledge of an area decreases with increasing distance (Gould and White, 1986). Or, they were partly confused by another administrative boundary or something else. Furthermore, the selected method has undisputed limitations as mental maps cannot be regarded as universal spatial representations; thus, it is not suitable for everyone (Mulíček et al., 2013; Tuan, 1975a). There is a difference in what some people draw and what they think they draw. For instance, some interviewees mistook Králický Sněžník, the northernmost point of the historical land boundary, for a hill nearer to the town of Králíky, which distorts the results (see below). Another problem is that some stated what historical land a certain municipality was located in but drew the borderline through it. Some perceptual regions are also biased by elements indicated in the questionnaire maps (e.g. some respondents drew the boundary along the roads as seen in Fig. 2). Yet, it is obvious that the respondents' perceptions of Bohemia and Moravia are highly structured by knowledge of the administrative regions/boundaries from 1928/1960/2000, and that the mental maps method is a satisfactory tool to illustrate where the Bohemian-Moravian boundary is perceived to be.

A mean boundary of Bohemia and Moravia – 50 per cent of all interviewees of the respective study area placed Bohemia on one side of this borderline with Moravia on the other – is approaching the 1960 regional boundaries in most places, except for the Králíky area, for instance (see Fig. 4). Towns between the boundaries from 1928 and 1960 are clear evidence of the impact that the 1960 reform had on the transformation of Bohemia and Moravia. All of them (or at least their parts) were drawn by no less than half of the respondents in the historical land opposite to that which would correspond to the 1928 boundary. Regarding this reform, the toponyms (of new administrative regions), in particular, seem to have played a crucial role in the historical lands' transformation. The (non-)usage of toponyms can also explain the "retreat" of Silesia (towards the Polish border)
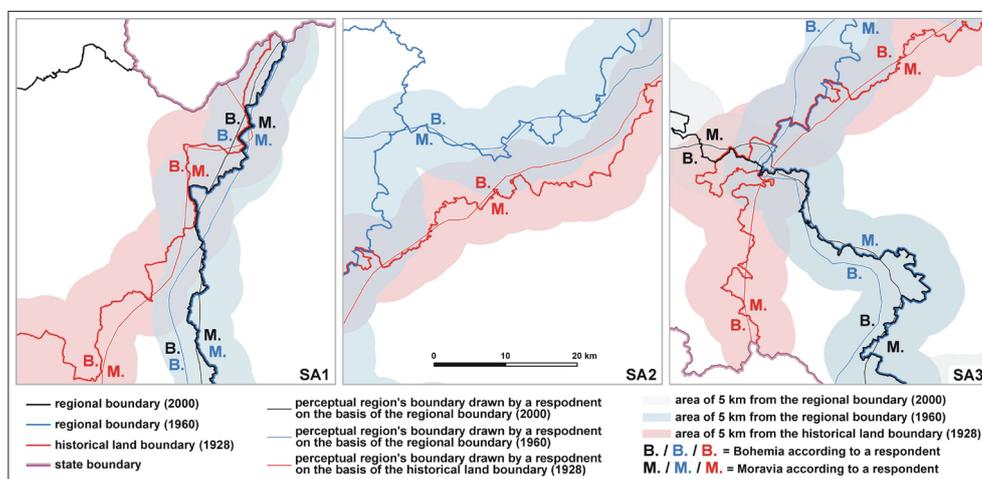

Fig. 3: Examples of respondents' subjective images of Bohemia and Moravia based on the historical land boundary (1928) or the regional boundaries (1960/2000). Source: author's field research, 2014–2016
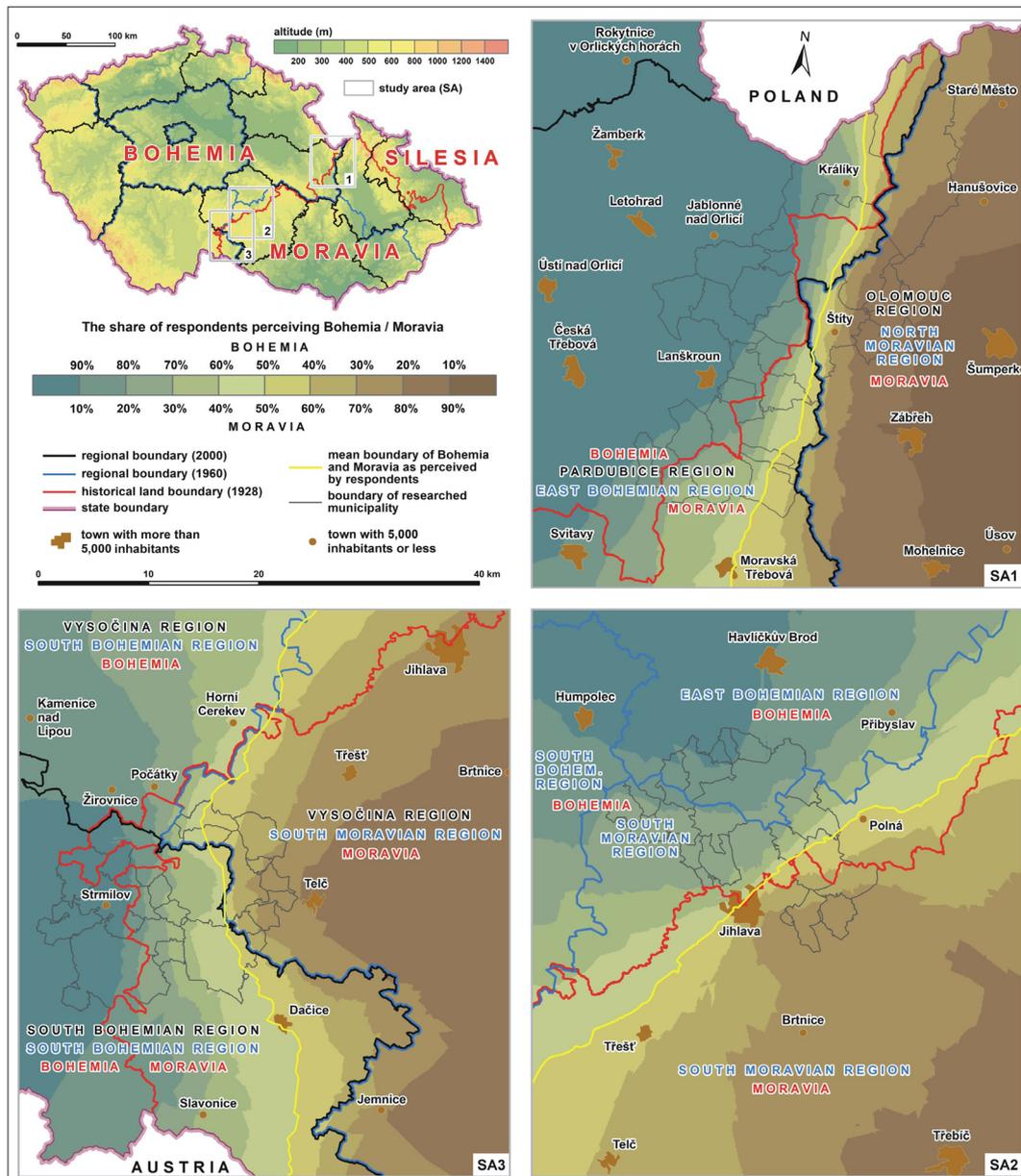
Fig. 4: Collective perception of Bohemia, Moravia, and their boundary by all interviewees of the three respective study areas. Source: author's field research, 2014–2016

in favour of Moravia, as recorded by Siwek and Kaňok (2000a; 2000b) and by Šerý and Šimáček (2012, 2013). For example, Siwek and Kaňok (2000a, p. 197) interpret the weak Silesian identity in the Czech Republic as "a consequence of the long-term marginalisation of the name of Silesia during the communist period" (see Fig. 1). Since 1960, the Czech part of Silesia has often been labelled as North Moravia.

The on-going transformation of Bohemia and Moravia associated with the administrative reforms (of 1960 as well as 2000) is also evident from the mapped "isolines"/"isopercepts", as some of them strikingly resemble the 1960/2000 regional boundaries (see Fig. 4). The more the respondents' perceptual regions differ (Fig. 2), the more blurred the resulting map is (Fig. 4), and vice versa. Thus, a collective image of Bohemia and Moravia is the sharpest in the middle of SA1, while the most unclear is in the Vysočina Region. The Bohemian-Moravian boundary, whose course was already stabilised in some locations in the Middle Ages (Schulz, 1970), used to be one of the most stable administrative boundaries in East-Central and South-

East Europe over the last millennium (Gurňák, 2003). Presumably no later than 1960, however, it became fuzzy in people's perceptions, though naturally it could have been perceived slightly differently due to knowledge/distance also before that point in time. Contemporarily, the boundary is perceived by respondents in all study areas more or less fuzzily, particularly because of both the 1960/2000 administrative regions/boundaries, which are very actual in people's daily lives, and of the 1928 historical regions/boundaries still lingering in people's consciousness.

The research results thus correspond with two seemingly contradictory arguments. On the one hand, it was suggested that regions with official status in the past (historical regions) "are very durable in the minds of people" (Chromý et al., 2009, p. 18; Melnychuk and Gnatiuk, 2018; Vukosav, 2011; Vukosav and Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2016), and "administrative boundaries or political frontiers, once marked out, have substantial inertia and thus a tendency to persist" (Zimmerbauer et al., 2017, p. 12). On the other hand, the crucial role of administrative reforms – connected mainly with both the names and the

boundaries of the new regions – in the transformation of historical regions/boundaries was observed (Gnatiuk and Melnychuk, 2019; Melnychuk and Gnatiuk, 2018; Siwek and Kaňok, 2000a, 2000b; Vaishar and Zapletalová, 2016). Although, the transformation of historical regions/boundaries may occur (or actually be facilitated) even if they are not reflected in the later administrative divisions, as was illustrated in the example of Zagora (Vukosav and Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2016) or Tavria/Tauride (Homanyuk, 2019). Even in such cases, however, the role of toponyms (in various informal usages) is crucial.

In addition to these findings, the comparison of the three study areas shows how and why the transformation extent of historical regions/boundaries differs: Where the new regions' names and/or boundaries agree with the names/boundaries of historical regions, a collective perception of historical regions and historical boundaries is the sharpest[9]. On the contrary, where the most radical reforms took place (in terms of toponyms and boundary mismatches), the fuzziest collective perception of the Bohemian-Moravian historical land boundary, as well as the most eroded consciousness about Bohemia and Moravia, was documented. The absence of 90 per cent of Moravia in SA2 and SA3 is an excellent example of this (Fig. 4).

According to Gnatiuk and Melnychuk (2019, pp. 185–186), all Ukrainian modern administrative regions (*oblasti*), which do not respect historical boundaries as well, may be classified either as "anchor regions", where unification/homogenisation process leads to a dominance of one historical identity in a given administrative region, or as "swing regions", where several historical identities persist. In this respect, mainly thanks to its name, the South Bohemian Region seems to be an example of the former. In the Pardubice Region, however, the unification/homogenisation process is weaker – not only because of the region's name but also some other toponyms, such as Moravská Třebová, for instance. The Vysočina Region might be comprehended rather as a swing region, although in the minds of some people, it seems to be more a region with a lost historical (land) identity.

Bohemia and Moravia could be delimited not only on the basis of the 50% isoline but also by a consensus of say 60% or 80% of respondents, while creating a residual transitional or boundary zone between them. Nevertheless, the "objective" formal regions created this way are mere scientific constructs. Their objectivity is not ontological but epistemological, which means they contain the subjectivity of their creator(s) (Marek, 2020b; Paasi, 1986a; Searle, 1995). The author is well aware of this, particularly with respect to the chosen study areas and researched municipalities. The results are representative only for residents of these municipalities; they would differ if other municipalities were involved because

the perceptions depend strongly on knowledge/distance. For example, people from SA3 have much lower knowledge of the Jihlava boundary stones; therefore, a mean boundary of Bohemia and Moravia according to them does not lead through this city (instead in the north, it leads, quite accidentally, near the 1960 regional boundary). More importantly, the above-described results revealing the sharpest collective perception in the middle of all study areas, are partly influenced by the location of researched municipalities just in these middle zones. But still, the comparison of the study areas clearly illustrates the crucial role of the 1928/1960/2000 regions/boundaries in people's perceptions: in SA1, where all three monitored boundaries converge on the longest section, 90 per cent Bohemia and 90 per cent Moravia are the closest; while in SA2, where only two monitored boundaries approach, 90 per cent Bohemia and 80 per cent Moravia are the most distant from each other.

With an increase in distance from the studied municipalities, the collective image of Bohemia and Moravia is increasingly blurry. Yet, in SA1, the Olomouc Region, for example, is relatively clearly perceived as Moravian, while in SA2 and SA3 the Vysočina Region disturbs the perception of historical lands to the greatest degree. In addition to this, the content of the questionnaire maps, as well as their extent, were suggestive. Five interviewees in SA2 (and one each in SA1 and SA3) initially did not want to draw the borderline, as they did not perceive Moravia to be in the respective study area[10]. Geographers may indeed delimit "objective" regions, but these may be very distant from ordinary people's perceptions (Tuan, 1975b), even though such criteria are used in drawing these "objective" regions.

Although "objective" regions (collective perceptions) allowed us to assess the regions' transformation, it seems preferable to focus on individual subjective images of regions, for, as stated above, perceptual regions are a basis for regionalism. Some respondents felt "injustice" because of the perceived Bohemian-Moravian boundary change in 1960. "They stole us from Moravia", as one said. Another commented that "Dačice residents are still angry that they are now in Bohemia". According to Chromý (2004, p. 68): "Moravism […] 'survives' in the local conditions of the Brno centre and in the areas 'annexed by Bohemians/Czechs'[11] (e.g. in the Dačice area)". This clearly illustrates that some people possess a resistance identity which may manifest in regionalism (Castells, 2010; Zimmerbauer and Paasi, 2013; Zimmerbauer et al., 2012). One of the most recent examples of such a resistance identity is the formation of the Moravian Land Movement (a political party) in 2018, symbolically based in Dačice, fighting against the above-outlined unification/homogenisation process and striving to restore the Czech Lands[12] (MZH, 2020).

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[9] Additionally, if the two different historical regions are divided by a state border (for example, Bohemia and neighbouring German Saxony), their perceived delimitation may really be very sharp. Hence, one of the arguments of Vaishar and Zapletalová (2016, p. 20) that "the centres of historical regions are clear, while the borderline is fuzzy", may not always be completely true. The context matters.

[10] For many respondents, the "real Moravia" is South Moravia, with its wine and hearty people (Marek, 2015), and therefore far from their homes. On the contrary, nobody refused to draw Bohemia, presumably because the term often serves as a synonym for the whole Czech Republic (Jeleček and Rubín, 1998). This, in fact, contributes to the fuzziness of the Bohemian-Moravian boundary as well. It then resembles the above-mentioned "retreat" of Silesia due to the usage of the term North Moravia, accompanied by the blurred perceptions of the Moravian-Silesian boundary (Siwek and Kaňok, 2000a; 2000b; Šerý and Šimáček, 2012; 2013).

[11] In Czech, there is only one expression (*Češi*) to describe the inhabitants of both Bohemia and the Czech Republic.

[12] The unification/homogenisation process in the South Bohemian Region is led by various activists (for example, there is a political party called *Jihočeši*, meaning South Bohemians) and advocates (for instance, the whole South Bohemian Region is officially propagated in tourism as South Bohemia). In its first elections (the 2018 elections to local/municipal councils), the Moravian Land Movement was supported by 15.7 per cent of Dačice voters, making it the third most successful party in this town (CZSO, 2018).

The most "problematic" in this respect are certain "schizophrenic regions" (Chromý, 2003; Marek, 2015) – areas between the 1928 historical land boundary and the 1960 regional boundary – where, due to toponyms, the identity of both Bohemia and Moravia is essentially reproduced and perceived to the present-day. Even then, the resistance identity and associated regionalism seem to concern only people from the historical land of Moravia, not Bohemia. It should also be noted that for the majority of our respondents it is not important whether they live in Bohemia or Moravia (which is basically understandable in the borderland), and thus these people often identify rather/more with other regions (e.g. municipalities or the state). For others, however, it is a significant topic. Therefore, regional consciousness of these people regarding the Czech Lands is more or less present. But only several of them – mainly in the Moravian municipalities of the Dačice area – mentioned they would support the restoration of the historical lands (the motive often seems to be both their resistance identity and regional consciousness). In general, land restoration is a marginal problem in the contemporary Czech Republic (cf. Siwek and Kaňok, 2000a). Hence, the politicians and other regionalists wishing to renew the "faded glory" of the historical lands face a huge challenge.

6. Conclusions

The perceptual region conceptualised in this paper as the subjective image of region is both an essential part of the identity of region and a part of every person's mental map. This concept is employed to examine the understudied transformation of (the identity of) region and specifically its territorial shape (boundaries). In agreement with previous research, it can be concluded that the durability/persistence of historical regions and boundaries in people's minds is strong. People are more or less influenced, however, by the new/later administrative regions and boundaries which emerged due to the split of old (historical) region(s). Historical boundaries are then often identified with the new regional boundaries, notwithstanding that their courses may diverge. This results in the transformation of historical regions/boundaries. But, as several "time layers" may persist and thus imprint themselves into people's perceptual regions, the extent of the transformation may differ. For example, where the historical regions' and the new regions' names and boundaries agree the most, we find that the sharpest collective perception of historical regions/boundaries occurs. Conversely, the more radical the administrative changes (in terms of toponyms and boundary mismatches), the fuzzier the collective perception of historical boundaries, as well as the more eroded the consciousness about historical regions.

New regions, with their names and boundaries (among other less important institutions), may thus cause the transformation of historical regions – but they also reproduce them. In particular, the toponyms are significant. We see this effect when the new region's name refers to the historical region: together with the deinstitutionalisation of the historical region, its significant re-institutionalisation takes place. This may happen regardless of the particular spatial scale, since regions are social constructs often institutionalised across scales. Nevertheless, the institutions as such are not enough for the existence of regions – in order for regions to exist as social facts, two conditions must be met: regions have names, and they "linger" (through the imprints of institutions) in people's consciousness as perceptual regions. Regions are thus ideas about certain geographical areas,

while the toponyms are tools to handle such ideas. These ideas (regions) are dynamic processes that develop as our thinking about the areas in question change. In particular, the administrative reforms have a crucial impact on people's perceptions of regions/boundaries and, therefore, also on the development of these regions and their boundaries – including their transformation. In particular, official (administrative or de jure) status seems to be an extremely powerful instrument. Before all administrative reforms, it is thus advisable to consider the perceptions of ordinary people, because later changes, potentially perceived by some as unjust, may feed into resistance identity manifesting in regionalism.

Such developments were illustrated in this case study of the Czech Lands and their boundaries, which have undergone several different administrative reforms over the last century – but did not disappear. Although significantly deinstitutionalised by abolishing de jure and splitting at the end of 1948, they were later (re)institutionalised by the new regions (kraje) and, presumably, mainly by some of their names. As these kraje started to reproduce Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, people can perceive the historical lands because of them. Presumably, every administrative reform in the last century created a certain new layer of historical land identity, but the 1960 and 2000 administrative regions/boundaries especially influenced respondents' perceptual regions of Bohemia and Moravia. As the historical land boundaries are not respected by these new regions/boundaries, however, the above-mentioned transformation occurs, with the Vysočina Region being the region which has witnessed the most eroded consciousness about Bohemia, Moravia, and their boundary. Hence, the kraje can probably be considered the most important institutions for both the reproduction and transformation of the Czech Lands. But still, some interviewees "perceive it as it was historically", though there are no distinct groups of people preferring a particular "time layer".

From this research project, further work will be published in forthcoming articles, dealing mainly with the transformation of the regional identity of people, which occurs as well, and with the differences in perceptions based on respondents' sex/gender, age, educational level, nativity, nationality, and place of residence. First of all, however, other institutions reproducing Bohemia and Moravia, besides the kraje as such and their names, must be explored to further explain the outlined transformation. Future research needs to focus on the kraje and their role not only in the reproduction/transformation of the Czech Lands, but also in Moravian (and eventually Silesian) regionalism. The question also remains as to where the Bohemian-Moravian boundary was perceived right after 1948, that is, whether it had already become fuzzy in 1949.

In addition, research into ordinary people's perceptions of other (partly) deinstitutionalised – whether split or amalgamated – historical regions, as well as various other regions, is strongly suggested. It is possible to deal with the emergence, reproduction, transformation, and disappearance of both subjective perceptual regions and collective "objective" formal regions based upon the perceptual ones, while the focus may be placed more on their territories (boundaries, but also centres/cores), symbols, or institutions. All such research efforts will help us to understand regions as social constructs, and also the dynamic processes more profoundly. Knowledge of both the regional consciousness of people and regionalism can also be expanded as a result of such empirical research.

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