

# SUSTAINABLE INNER PERIPHERIES? A CASE STUDY OF THE OLEŠNICE MICRO-REGION (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Lenka JAKEŠOVÁ, Antonín VAISHAR

## Abstract

*The Olešnice micro-region represents municipalities situated at the boundary of the South Moravian Region. These come under the inner peripheries which do not develop economically, lose their population, get older and have a lower social and economic standard and a worse infrastructure. The authors work on a hypothesis that from the natural point of view the area has a strong recreational potential. The question is how local actors contribute to its development, what their relationships to the territory are and whether they are aware of the values of the area. The study is based on results of a questionnaire with local residents and also on a comparison with other peripheral rural areas in the region. The outcomes suggest that important requirements of sustainable development are not always included in everyday life of local people.*

## Shrnutí

### Udržitelné vnitřní periferie? Příklad mikroregionu Olešnicko (Česká republika)

*Mikroregion Olešnice reprezentuje obce, nacházející se na hranicích Jihomoravského kraje. Tyto obce tvoří tzv. vnitřní periferii, která je ekonomicky méně rozvinutá, ztrácí obyvatelstvo, stárne, má nižší sociální a ekonomické standardy a horší infrastrukturu. Autoři vycházejí z hypotézy, že z přírodního hlediska má mikroregion silný potenciál cestovního ruchu. Otázka je, jak místní subjekty přispívají k jeho rozvoji, jaký je jejich vztah k území a zda jsou si vědomi hodnot daného území. Studie je založena na výsledcích dotazníkového šetření mezi místními obyvateli, a také na srovnání s jinými periferními mikroregiony v kraji. Závěry ukazují, že významné požadavky udržitelného rozvoje nejsou vždy zahrnuté do všedního života místních obyvatel.*

**Key words:** *periphery; sustainability; countryside; recreation, Olešnice micro-region, Czech Republic*

## 1. Introduction

In academic literature, a great deal of attention has been paid to the support and development of peripheral rural areas. Because of the rapid development of the society, the topic of today becomes not only the question of improvement of the situation in remote areas, but also how to use the potential of a given territory.

At present, the country has to face structural changes that significantly influence the living conditions of the local population. The loss of importance of agricultural production, unemployment, emigration of young people, and population ageing are the most significant of these changes. The remote micro-regions of the

current inland, the so-called *internal peripheries*<sup>1</sup> (Musil, Müller, 2008), suffer from these and other aspects, primarily from the absence of full-valued local urban centres as well as from worse accessibility of regional centres. Another characteristic usually is a rugged relief that puts limitations on the development of agriculture (Vaishar, Zapletalová, 2010). Due to worsened conditions, a great number of small settlements located close to one another emerged in the landscape (Perlín, 1998). Other secondary features include location characteristics and transport accessibility discussed by Čermák (2005). However, one of the main characteristics of peripheral areas is their distance from the main centres (Ferrão, Lopes, 2004). Thus in Czechia, internal peripheries are usually

<sup>1</sup> Internal peripheries in contrast to borderland peripheries; in Czechia, borderland peripheries (except for the border with Slovakia) are impacted by postwar ethnically based population exchange which has substantially modified their social milieu.

found on the margins of metropolitan regions, and to a lesser extent on the boundaries of the spheres of influence of the neighbouring regional centres (Musil, Müller, 2008). The frontier periphery differs from the inner periphery in social consequences of the post-war population exchange on ethnical and social bases.

This paper considers an analysis of the sustainability of the peripheral areas and the possibilities of improving their social situation. The study proceeds from the assumption that despite their feeble development these remote, marginal micro-regions offer a space with well-preserved nature and a strong recreational potential (Fialová, 2001). This fact is also perceived by the inhabitants of the countryside themselves, who can see the development of rural areas mainly in the promotion of tourism, development of agro-tourism or rural tourism, and thus in the adequate diversification of activities. This brings about new ways of thinking and behaviour of the rural population.

The goals of this paper are as follows: to present a brief overview of the perception and character of the countryside and its sustainability in relation to the periphery based on the analysis of expert literature, to evaluate the current status of the rural periphery in the case study area and to diagnose the perception of sustainable development from the viewpoint of their inhabitants in relation to their age, gender, education and occupation.

## 2. Theoretical background of the study

The countryside<sup>2</sup> starts to be an increasingly popular place of residence, a recreational environment, place of social contacts, a cultural and natural space, and a place of necessary relaxation (Šimková, 2008). Talking about the specificities and values of the countryside as such, we could therefore state that the sustainability of the countryside corresponds with the quality of its environment. Are we able to tell at all when the countryside is sustainable? How and by what shall we determine its sustainability? How does the sustainability manifest itself in the relation to peripheral areas?

The concept of sustainable development, on which the presented work is based, is especially significant for the development of rural areas. Development is designed as a process of positive changes. These are usually improvements of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the given area, most often natural and socio-economic (Galvasová et al., 2007).

The academic and scientific sphere has worked with the “sustainability” concept since the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1980s, yet the general public has not come across with it at all. This is to confirm the fact that to determine what is sustainable and what is no longer sustainable is a very challenging task. In the conception of the G. Brundtland Commission (1987), sustainable development means: *“Such way of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

The principal idea is to ensure a balance among three basic pillars: social, economic, and environmental. Only a balanced development of the three pillars may lead to sustainable development (WCED, 1991). In other words, this is a multi-dimensional process, which endeavours to integrate economic, socio-cultural, and environmental goals in a sustainable manner (Kearney et al., 1994). In a global concept, the goal of the development of sustainable countryside is to attain sustainable economic growth and improvement of living conditions; this will ensure that rural regions will be attractive places for living, and will be able to provide a positive contribution to the national economy (Woods, 2011). In Czechia, the questions of sustainability in relation to marginal regions were studied e.g. by Cudlínová and Těšitel (2000).

According to Leimgruber (2004) ...*“the definitions for marginal regions are vague and differ between academic disciplines. Marginal regions could however be characterized as regions lying off mainstream processes both in society and economy, but also in relation to the natural environment and geographical remoteness”*.... It is clear that such a characteristic has to be relative. On the other hand, periphery and peripheral regions relate more to the geographical distance and worse permeability of the landscape due to geomorphological or other natural conditions.

Responsible behaviour and attitude to the environment are determining for environmental sustainability (Šimková, 2008). Within environmental sustainability in the case of the countryside, it is possible to observe both a general degradation of its environment – i.e. the negative environmental dimension, and a positive environmental significance of rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Some examples are the construction of “ecological houses”, the impact of renewable energy sources on the landscape, the development of “ecotourism”, territorial systems of ecological stability realized at a high standard, protected landscape areas, the NATURA 2000 system etc.

<sup>2</sup> Communes with less than 4,000 inhabitants are classified as rural in the South Moravia Region (with some exceptions) according to the Regional Branch of the Czech Statistical Office. Areas composed of rural communes form the South Moravia countryside.

Sustainable economic development connected with the increasing income of the population, i.e. a prosperous local economy, economic cohesion, and influence on other activities in the locality, availability and quality of workforce etc. are determining for economic sustainability (Šimková, 2008). According to Zeman (2002), the basic idea is to enhance the “framework of activities” beyond the traditional economic determination. The economic pillar is focused on increasing competitiveness as well as on ensuring a sustainable growth of the governed locality (Stejskal, Kovárník, 2009). This is more easily measurable than the social sustainability as it can be defined quantitatively (Munro, 1995). According to Moldan and Braniš (2003), the economic dimension of sustainability grounds in the necessity to preserve the basic capital in all economic activities, and to utilise only the profit generated. It is often expected in the economic sphere of the post-socialist countryside that intensive agriculture will be replaced by the functions of tourism (e.g. Knappe, Benedek, Ilieva, 2011).

The peripheral rural areas, however, often lack the capital to start entrepreneurial activities. For this reason, a number of investors come from other regions, from cities, or even from abroad. In some cases, it may occur that new activities do not employ local workforce, do not cooperate with local entrepreneurs or do not purchase goods in local shops. In such cases, the benefit of business activities for the concrete rural areas is minimal, perhaps with the exception of the permanent property tax. On the other hand, the municipalities are responsible for the disposal of communal waste produced from such activities, or for the maintenance of local roads on which the transport to these activities takes place.

Social cohesion, health, education, social recognition, and quality of living are determining for social sustainability. Except from other things the quality of life includes housing, public transport, accessibility, and the level of public services (Šimková, 2008). The social dimension of sustainability applies to people as individuals on the one hand and to society on the other (Moldan, Braniš, 2003). It is important that the basic needs of all people are ensured, and that everyone has an opportunity to fulfil their desires for a better life (WCED, 1991).

Lay knowledge is of great importance for the development of a locality, especially in rural areas and small (remote) municipalities. According to Husák (2010), primarily all local actors, i.e. residents, non-residents, and old inhabitants have such knowledge. This means that the local population should have a decisive say in defining the

sustainable development of the rural landscape. The problem of peripheral municipalities, however, is the population ageing as a result of natural development and emigration of young people. As described by Majerová (2005), owing to the decrease of traditional forms of everyday communication between villagers, the social integration of aged people will become increasingly difficult. In peripheral areas, we also observe the gradual disappearance of elements that used to strengthen social coherence. An example of changes deteriorating the situation of inhabitants in peripheries is the down-scaling of public transport services, postal services, shops, pubs, the closing of schools, sports clubs etc. Thus, a part of the population living in the peripheries suffers from social isolation (Musil, Müller, 2006).

We could also speak about demographic sustainability (see e.g. Copus and Crabtree, 1996) which is considered as an aspect of social sustainability (Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh, 2010). The focus of sustainable development will be concentrated on the population. In the case of countryside, it is necessary to prevent it from depopulation. Demographic sustainability can be assessed very roughly on the basis of population migration. It is obvious that settlements showing a positive balance during the studied period are demographically sustainable. Apparently, certain settlements are approaching a certain critical boundary (the determination of which is not easy) and will not be demographically sustainable. The problem of countryside depopulation concerns a considerable part of rural micro-regions in Central and Eastern Europe (Bell et al., 2009; Fischer, 2009).

Under the conditions of globalization, the sustainability of the countryside may also be understood as maintaining its regional identity and specificities as a counterbalance to the general, levelling out patterns of production and consumption. Core areas are more developed within the globalization process, while in peripheral areas the development trends are not extended and problematic situation is deepened. Mainly the consequences of migration as a global problem are increasingly complex. It is the cause of process of decomposition of rural areas and globally uneven rural urbanization. While big cities are in favor of globalization, offering the diversity of activities and cultural life, small towns in peripheral areas are dominated by local customs and traditions that could be endangered by globalization.

Peripheral areas are valuable for their local identity (traditions, culture, and the environment), and it is primarily the specific distance that can be helpful for the survival of cultural diversity (Ferrão and

Lopes, 2004; Sedlacek et al., 2009). Due to this potential, the rural peripheral areas may boost the economic development by creating (micro) regional associations (Epps, 2002) to finance common projects and to collaborate in the fields of lobbying, advertising etc. For the development of these areas, however, cooperation among municipalities, economic organizations, and non-profit organizations, and increasing accountability of regional centres for their peripheral territories is of importance.

It can be stated that the perception of a location by local inhabitants determines to a certain extent the future possibilities of local development. The attachment to a place in natives, who have lived in a house/settlement/region for centuries, will have a different feeling of belonging from recent newcomers to the region (Stockmann, 2005). In this respect, for example, it is questionable whether a suburbanized countryside is sustainable as such, or whether it is a different type of settlement lacking a great part of rural characteristics. Additionally, Sumner (2005) puts the question whether the concept of sustainability is still suitable for analyzing the rural periphery.

A number of Czech authors occupy themselves with the research of peripheries and discuss the issues from many points of view. Havlíček, Chromý, Jančák, Marada (2005) attempted to summarize theoretical backgrounds of the research in peripheries. Another approach is the research of peripheral to marginal areas primarily at the micro-regional and local level (Vaishar et al., 2011). The development of peripheries may also be perceived in sociological terms as of areas with specific social characteristics, as is the case e.g. with Musil, Müller (2008) or Jeřábek (2006).

In the Czech literature, inner and outer peripheries are strongly distinguished. The inner periphery can be found in inland, on the boundary of influence spheres of regional centres, whereas outer periphery is situated in the borderland with neighbouring countries (the Slovak part of the borderland is sometimes not included). Remoteness from important centres is a common characteristic of both the peripheries. The main difference consists in the fact that the population of the inner periphery is relatively stable (in terms of low level of immigrants). On the other side, the majority of population of the outer periphery (a part of which was a section on the iron curtain) was changed on the ethnical basis after the WWII. It preconditioned important differences between the two peripheries, which manifest themselves even at the present time. Differences between inner and

outer periphery were documented by Havlíček et al. (2008). Czech inner periphery was delimited and characterized by Musil and Müller (2008).

In the academic literature, we find a new understanding of the periphery associated with the interconnection of information and communication technologies, mainly the Internet and mobile communications, which bring an opportunity for the sustainable development of rural or peripheral areas (Reinöhlová, 2005; Harvey, 1989). In many cases, peripheries are compared to the synonymous "underdeveloped regions", and the removal of peripheries is the main task of the government that tries to fight against regional disparities (Ferrão and Lopes, 2004). On the other hand, the peripheral countryside is often understood as a territory, which is capable of preserving greater biodiversity (O'Rourke, Kramm, 2009), thus contributing to ecological sustainability in general. Foreign authors studying the countryside, sustainable development, and marginality were e.g. Woods (2011), Tryzna (1995), Bowler, Bryant and Cocklin (2002), Moseley (2003), Labrianidis (2004) and others. Jenkins (2000) points out that the sustainability of marginal rural regions relates to the integration of local traditions into imperatives of post-modern world.

We have to point that in geographical literature, periphery is a consequence of space polarization within the core-periphery concept (e.g. Borgatti, Everett, 2000). From it follows that under conditions of market economy, it is not possible to overcome the periphery; it is only possible to moderate its consequences. The periphery exists in a dichotomist relation to the core. It means that characteristics of the periphery are necessary to be looked for in a comparison to the core.

### 3. Characteristics of the Olešnice Micro-Region

#### 3.1 General characteristics of the territory

According to the Strategy of Regional Development of the Czech Republic<sup>3</sup>, in the territory of the South Moravia Region, some parts of the Bohemian-Moravian Uplands, and mainly a part of the northern border of the region opposite the Vysočina Region and the Pardubice Region in the Blansko district can be considered internal peripheries. A relatively large and rugged territory is not entirely integrated into the gravitation field of Boskovice, the closest sub-regional centre. On the other side, the local centres Olešnice, Kunštát, and Velké Opatovice are too weak to fulfil central functions

<sup>3</sup> Strategie regionálního rozvoje České republiky (2006) /Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic/

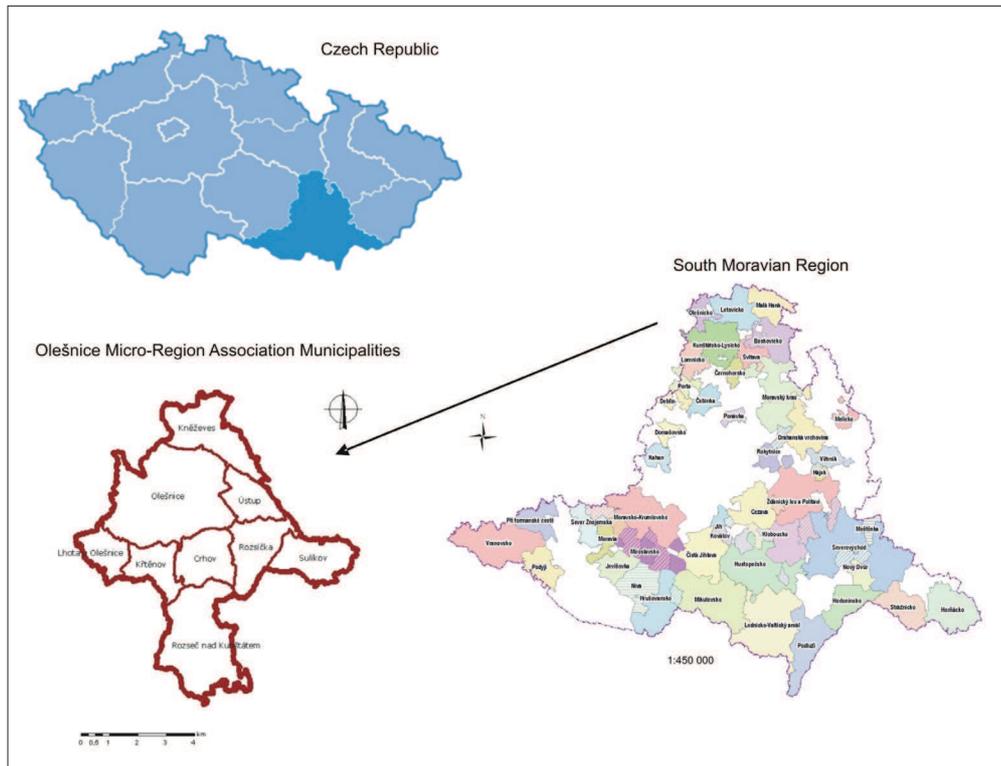


Fig. 1: Olešnice Micro-Region Association of Municipalities. Source: <http://www.uur.cz/default.asp?ID=3779> (Mikroregiony Jihomoravského kraje. Ústav územního rozvoje Brno, květen 2003)

adequately. Important centres are not available either on the other side of the regional boundary, in the regions of Pardubice and Vysočina (Fig. 1).

Association of Municipalities is a voluntary alliance of communes, which was established to meet individual and common interests of its members. It includes the communes of Crhov, Kněževy (with local parts of Jobova Lhota and Veselka), Křtěnov, Louka, Lhota u Olešnice, Olešnice, Rozsíčka, and Ústup on an area of 4,540 ha. Olešnice is a natural centre of the area. The territory is situated in the Nedvědicáká vrchovina Upland, at the boundary of three districts (Blansko, Žďár nad Sázavou, and Svitavy) of three regions (South Moravia, Pardubice, and Vysočina), and the historic lands of Moravia and Bohemia. The town Olešnice (Fig. 2. – see cover p. 4) is at a distance of 23 km from Boskovice, the superior sub-regional centre. The nearest sub-regional centres of neighbouring regions are at a distance of 21 km (Bystřice nad Pernštejnem) and 23 km (Polička). In all mentioned directions, it is necessary to pass over rugged terrains (Peša, 2005).

As of 1 January 2010, the micro-region had totally 2,814 inhabitants, of whom 62% lived in the town Olešnice, the micro-region's centre. The settlement structure of the micro-region is fragmented, three communes have less than 100 inhabitants, and the population of other three communes is 100–200 inhabitants. Approximately 26% of the

population lives in these communes. This settlement structure corresponds with the relief ruggedness. The population density in the micro-region amounts roughly to 65 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, which is just a half of the national average.

### 3.2 Economy

Although the Olešnice area is not very productive, local people have been living on agriculture since time immemorial (Peša, 2000). AGROSPOL Ltd. agricultural enterprise that also farms the agricultural land in Kněževy and Ústup is the most prominent company in Olešnice. Other agricultural enterprises are CORPO Louka Ltd., Agricultural cooperative Mír (Peace), and the farm AGRON Sulíkov s.r.o. in Rozsíčka. There are about 10 family farms in the territory, cultivating only a very small part of the land.

Food processing followed by metalworking remain the main industries in the Olešnice area. Currently, Mlékárna RMD Olešnice (agrarian dairy cooperative – Fig. 3 – see cover p. 4) with approx. 160 employees is the most important industrial enterprise (Fig. 2). It is one of the largest milk processing factories in Moravia. MORAVIAFLOR with 100 employees, a traditional producer of artificial flowers, today for decorative purposes is the second biggest enterprise. The Agroplast metal-working company employs 60 people. Other job opportunities can be found in smaller companies and with some individual tradesmen.

Results of the 2001 census show that the Olešnice micro-region has a great number of commuters as 60% of the workforce travel for work out of the micro-region. Most job opportunities for the population exist in Olešnice from where only 47% of the working population commutes to work while the remaining part finds local employment. The most frequent destinations for commuters are the towns of Boskovice and Letovice (Peša, 2005).

### 3.3 Attributes of Olešnice peripherality

Theoretically speaking, the Olešnice area is a rural micro-region with limited outlooks for prosperity. The surroundings are only attractive for their natural beauty; there are no architectural places of interest in the area. The micro-region faces problems both in the economic and social respect. It is very difficult to find work nearby. The existing jobs are usually very poorly paid, which results in a greater share of population commuting for work. There are neither adequate economic opportunities nor a social life to fulfil the needs of today's generation. For these reasons, the area becomes depopulated and young qualified people leave for towns and cities.

The micro-region's remoteness concerning transport is another characteristic. The territory is not far from the second largest city of the Czech Republic (Brno) but in spite of that, it is not very attractive for recreation. The problem is a missing railway link, which makes the area less attractive for the development of tourism. Another disadvantage hampering the development of tourism is the small number of accommodation facilities, which would make a so-called "weekend tourism" possible (Moseley, 2003). Second homes are the main form of recreation in this area. In a number of rural municipalities, cottages owned primarily by Brno inhabitants account for a major part of the building stock.

Nevertheless, "inner distinction" that is largely favourable for the development of rural tourism and local traditions could be an advantage of the peripheral areas. In the municipalities of the micro-region, a relatively rich traditional social life prevails. Some traditional cultural and social events have been successfully preserved; other traditions have been rediscovered by the locals and are being developed. The Olešnice micro-region is very valuable from the perspective of natural and aesthetic values. The entire area belongs to the Svratecká hornatina Hilly Land nature park (Peša, 2005). This fact can be built upon, and the development strategy of the Olešnice micro-region periphery should be directed from the traditional forms of farming (agriculture) to the promotion of rural tourism and the promotion of local cultural events (Woods, 2011; Strategie rozvoje Jihomoravského kraje).

## 4. Questionnaire survey: methodological considerations

The aim of the paper is to assess the sustainability of peripheral countryside in the Olešnice micro-region in terms of natural resources, social capital and economic efficiency. The first step was a choice of the regional level for research. The Olešnice micro-region is integrated by functions of its central place – the small town Olešnice (Fig. 3). Thus it can be regarded as a representative peripheral countryside area and is a suitable object for the research of local people's perception.

The study is based on the results of a questionnaire survey with local inhabitants, which was focused on the investigation of public perception of the geographical position (i.e. peripheral position within the South Moravia Region), development potential of the area (including tourism potential and local business environment) and their residential satisfaction and attachment to the place.

The sample of respondents included inhabitants of the Olešnice municipality. Collaboration with local grammar schools was established to address a sufficient number of respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to families by school pupils. The process of responding the questions was voluntary and confidential. The biggest disadvantage of the adopted method was that the questionnaire concerned only the population recruited of parents or grandparents of pupils in the schools. It means that not all the age and family status categories were included in the sample and the research was not representative. On the other hand, the inhabitants with children of school age form a very expressive social group in the town, which is relatively stabilized there and mostly interested in the future.

We presuppose that sustainability is perceived differently and is preconditioned by the system of values differing in specific population groups (according to age, gender, education, profession, etc.). That is why not only the complete set of respondents was evaluated but also individual age, gender, education and professional groups. The data were elaborated by basic statistical analysis and correlation analysis. The data analysis process commences with the calculation of basic descriptive characteristics (tables of frequencies, calculations of mean value, median, mode, spreads, variances, normality of distribution etc.). For the sake of clearness, the results were translated into a graphic format.

Together 137 questionnaire forms were distributed. Of them, 110 were completed by parents of school pupils, 20 by the local administration and seven were

completed on site. Of them, 104 forms were returned completed, which represents 76% return. The questionnaire consisted of 7 identification questions (e.g. age, gender, profession, education etc.). Other questions were directed to business and tourism potentials, ecological life style demand and social background of the population in the territory under investigation.

The answers were evaluated according to a 4-point scale. In our case, point 1 means "fully agreed", point 4 means "fully disagreed". We avoided the neutral decision (so-called semantic zero), which is not a part of even point scales. The results were statistically elaborated by means of codes which were allocated to individual answers. Further we worked only with the set of codes. The data were digitalized in MS Excel and transformed into the Statistica Base 10 software. The level of significance was in all tests of parametrical statistics defined always as max.  $P \leq 0.05$ . Incomplete answers were not included in the analyses.

The research premise was as follows: The perception of geographical position within the South Moravia region, recreational activities in the area, satisfaction with the environmental situation, suitability of territory for business, sufficiency of cultural life is different regarding to gender, age, education and profession of the population.

The research questions were defined as follows:

- Question 1: How do local people perceive their geographical position (peripherality) within a region?
- Question 2: How strong is their relationship to the territory? (measured as a rate of satisfaction and social cohesion of residents)
- Question 3: How do local people value the quality of life and the development potential of the area? (measured as a rate of satisfaction with living environment, interpersonal relations, tourism potential, conditions for business and enterprising, etc.)

## **5. Analysis of the perception of sustainable development and social relations of inhabitants living in the inner periphery of the Olešnice micro-region**

Females (72%) were the prevailing group of respondents who returned the completed questionnaires. The age category of 36–50 years was the most numerous group (38%). People with the vocational education without the school-leaving examination (38%) dominated the category of education and as to occupation, a greater part of respondents fell in the category "other" (29%).

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the locality of their residence (57%). They live a long time in the territory or even were born there. The respondents were connected with the area through contacts with their family members, the house of their dwelling and social relations (friends, neighbours). Besides of these social reasons, the respondents considered for important quiet milieu and healthy environment. Profession, customs and tradition followed. Sport activities were less important as to relation to the territory.

The perception of geographical position was the next question. Most respondents considered the position on the regional border rather disadvantageous and next 22% greatly inconvenient. Mostly young mobile people with university education did not think that the position of the micro-region is unfavourable. They probably purposely stay in the area combining the living in rural milieu with employment in urban businesses. Poor technical a transport infrastructure, insufficient services, health care of lower quality and cultural opportunities were criticized more. Also higher prices of food and other basic goods (evoked by lower competition in the rural space) represent a certain problem. It showed once again that people prefer rural milieu but ask for urban quality of services.

The territory of the Olešnice micro-region was evaluated by almost 80% of respondents as strongly attractive for tourism. Mostly the respondents employed in services held the opinion. In fact, the tourism potential is not better than in the neighbouring regions. Additionally, the tourist infrastructure (e.g. accommodation services) is insufficient. The micro-region is sought mostly as a place of second living and by undemanding tourist (hikers, bikers, family holiday).

Satisfaction with the condition of the environment was expressed by 3/4 of respondents, mainly by people aged 36–50 years (higher working age) employed in public administration and services. Only a scant share of people found some problems in this field. This finding corresponds also with the situation in other peripheral territories, e.g. in the borderland territory of Sušice micro-region (Chromý, Skála, 2010).

About 75% of the population did not agree with the verdict that the commune has favourable conditions for business. People with stable families and economic position employed in services, transport and industry formed the rest.

Interpersonal relations were investigated too. The respondents selected mostly the answer mildly satisfied with the relations (57%) or mildly unsatisfied (32%). It shows that the rural idyll is more a matter

of the past. Though the people are not fully satisfied with interpersonal relations, they feel safe and keep contacts with their neighbours.

Seeking answers to the hypothesis, we tested the following independent variables (Sustainable Rural Development): gender, age, education and profession. Statistical tests of independence chi-squared test for the contingency table were used to test the hypothesis. The hypothesis could be answered by the selected test corresponding to the variable of gender. The variables of age, education and profession did not comply with the conditions for being used in the test and the hypothesis could not be answered.

The results of the summary table (shown in Tab. 1.) show that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in the perception of positional location along the South Moravia Region border (critical value of test criterion for the level of significance is 0.05, where  $P = 0.960893$ ). It is clear that the calculated value of test criterion is greater than the critical value, i.e. males and females value the positional location of the community similarly. It turned out that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in perceptions of recreational attractions, satisfaction with the state of the environment, suitability of areas for business development, abundance of cultural activities in the community, i.e. males and females are similarly satisfied.

Sex	q1 (1)	q1 (2)	q1 (3)	q1 (4)	Total
1	6.41346	<b>11.99038</b>	8.92308	1.673077	29.0000
2	<b>16.58654</b>	<b>31.00962</b>	<b>23.07692</b>	4.326923	75.0000
<b>Total</b>	23.00000	43.00000	32.00000	6.000000	104.0000

Tab. 1: Summary Table: Expected frequency (Olešnice micro-region)

Frequency of labeled cells > 10; Pearson's chi-squared test: ,295390,  $sv = 3$ ,  $p = ,960893$ ; 1 – male; 2 – female

(albeit with high emigration). The micro-region exhibits the second lowest unemployment, the second most favourable educational structure of inhabitants, and the second youngest population (all this after the sub-urbanized countryside). This is entirely contrary to the expectations suggested in the introduction of this paper.

For the analysis, we used the following indicators: Natural increase and migration balance were calculated from the population balances (Czech Statistical Office; further CSO) for the five-year period 2006–2010. The index of age, i.e. the ratio of people aged 0–14 to people aged 65 and older was taken from urban and municipal statistics (CSO) as at the end of 2010. The ratio of people with post-GCE education (i.e. the ratio of people with advanced vocational training and university education to the

The results of the subjective evaluation show some disturbance of sustainable development equilibrium in the peripheral Olešnice micro-region. The geographical position was evaluated as disadvantageous. The ecological pillar reached the highest value. The territory has a well-preserved landscape with small-scale nature protection. Low business activities are the most problematic. It means that the economic pillar is the weakest segment of sustainability. The perception of periphery as a territory with natural capital but low economic development is strongly rooted among the people. Interpersonal contacts (social pillar) are not bad but they could improve.

## 6. Comparison of demographic and social indicators with other types of rural areas

In the analysis of the Olešnice micro-region, we departed from a general presumption that it is a territory with a disadvantaged social structure of the population. However, our comparison of selected social indicators of the Olešnice micro-region as an internal periphery with other micro-regions of the South Moravia Region (representing a sub-urbanized countryside, a well accessible inland countryside, and borderland micro-regions on the border with Slovakia, Austria, and on the highly permeable transit border) shows that the Olešnice micro-region appears as an area with the highest natural increase of inhabitants

number of inhabitants older than 15) was calculated from the results of the 2001 census, as the results of the 2011 census were not available yet. Therefore, the absolute figures for education are already out of date but we still believe the ratios between the individual types of micro-regions are more or less stable. The unemployment data used in this paper were borrowed from the server of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic for July 2011.

The sub-urbanized rural areas were represented by the Ponávka micro-region (Association of municipalities), the well accessible fertile countryside was represented by the micro-region of Nový Dvůr, the internal periphery was represented by the Olešnice micro-region, and the borderlands were represented by the area of Hornácko (situated on the

Micro-region	Natural increase	Migration balance	Index of age	Education	Unemployment
Ponávka	+4.0 ‰	+158.9	1.05	18.3	7.2
Nový Dvůr	-0.1 ‰	+9.2	0.97	5.6	13.9
Olešnice	+5.2 ‰	-7.6	1.01	7.5	8.9
Podluží	-6.1 ‰	+18.7	0.92	6.7	12.8
Hornácko	-16.2 ‰	-9.3	0.81	7.1	13.1
Vranov n.D.	-10.6 ‰	-13.6	0.87	5.2	12.8

Tab. 2: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the selected micro-regions of the South Moravia Region from 2006 to 2010

Czech-Slovak border), by the micro-region of Vranov nad Dyjí (situated on the Czech-Austrian border), and by the Podluží micro-region (well-accessible triangle borderland). A comparison of the micro-regions is presented in the Tab. 2.

It is a question why the social characteristics of this South Moravia inner periphery are markedly better than e.g. those of the highly permeable, traditionally rich and fertile countryside of the Nový Dvůr micro-region. In our opinion, the reasons have to be sought in the population, its stability, motivation, and relation to their micro-region. If we carry this thought further, the support of the inner periphery makes sense, as there is probably an inner potential capable of maintaining the started activities even after the end of subsidies provided by the government or by the European Union. Obviously this is only a hypothesis that would require corroboration by further research. Nevertheless, it seems that the sustainability of rural areas is not only a question of "objective" indicators but also a subject of motivation of the local population (Jančák et al., 2010).

## 7. Development potential

The natural conditions of the micro-region represent a potential for a healthy lifestyle and sports. The scenic landscape with far and wide views but mild slopes is suitable for less demanding kinds of tourism such as biking, hiking, and winter sports, especially cross-country skiing. The slowly developing rural tourism would also have some opportunities there, unlike agro-tourism for which there are no favourable conditions in the area. Other products of the tourist industry with a potential for development are folklore and gastronomic events. Tourism is seen as being of considerable economic and social benefit to rural areas through the income and infrastructural developments it may bring to marginal and less developed regions (Hall, 2005).

In this micro-region, an obstacle to the development of commercial tourism can be seen mainly in the missing accommodation and other infrastructure. The number

of family boarding houses and guesthouses is minimal as well as hotel-type accommodation facilities that could cater for tourists with modest requirements.

At the same time, the perspective for Olešnice is associated with the traditional industrial production in small and medium-sized businesses. This production should be supplemented with services in centres (including services for seniors), and possibly also with tourism and agro-tourism. Creating concrete conditions for entrepreneurs only comes after that; it may be an initiative to build the deficient services, an offer of non-residential premises or land for business activities, assistance in dealing with authorities etc. In the conditions of rural areas, the support of small and medium-sized businesses is an important route to the improvement of the situation on the labour market, as the conditions of the location are not favourable for acquiring large investments.

However, it is necessary to take into account the difference between Olešnice itself and the surrounding small villages that usually rely on their centre both in the sphere of job opportunities and services including the lowest hierarchic level.

## 8. Conclusion

The scientific study of the sustainable development conditions in an area is a basic prerequisite for better knowledge about the possible development of marginalized rural areas. These areas have many functions and many meanings. Since the beginning of time, they have been sources of food, material, and energy. They are places of relaxation, tranquillity and are sought for sports activities. Rural areas are valued because of their scenic landscape and natural environment (Woods, 2011). However, will the countryside, as we know it, be sustainable in the future? The answer to the question when the three pillars of sustainability are in equilibrium is rather complex.

In geography, the question of the relation between common and special is always in the play. Of course, all villages, their inhabitants and activities are specific.

But it is evident that the Olešnice micro-region does not have any substantial peculiarity in terms of natural, economic or social features. It means that the results could serve as a comparative basis also for other micro-regions on the inner periphery.

This paper presents an example of a survey in the peripheral area at the northern margin of the South Moravia Region. With the exception of the comparison with other micro-regions, no hard data were used in the study but we purposely focused ourselves on the differentiation of the subjective perception of some aspects of the local life. The focus of interest is set on the examination of sustainability, on studying the character of the Olešnice micro-region inner periphery, and the potential for the development of tourism in the territory. The difference of the marginal area is tested from the perspective of three pillars of the sustainable development, i.e. environmental, economic, and social. We believe that sustainability can only be achieved if the three pillars are in balance. Markedly worse state of one of the pillars is dangerous regardless of the quality of the other two. We are also interested in the perception of the typical characteristics of peripheral areas by local people.

In their statements, the respondents confirmed the characteristics of the periphery. In the evaluation of their perception of the location, 63% of the respondents agreed that the situation of the municipality near the boundary of the South Moravia Region is handicapped (geographical relations) as it is distant from the main centres and has a bad transport and technical infrastructure. The responses also suggested the fact that the area faces problems both in the economic and social sphere. Its disadvantage is a low level of entrepreneurial activities (economic relations). Most of the respondents feel safe in the area, maintain friendly relations with their neighbours, but the interpersonal relations could be generally better (social relations).

The question aimed at identifying what is often specific and sought in the periphery (nature conservation and quiet environment) reflected positive answers. It proves that a healthy environment largely contributes to stabilize the local population, as it is one of the dominant factors to tie the inhabitants to the territory. For this reason, many inhabitants prefer living in the remote corners of Moravia.

According to the respondents, the Olešnice micro-region is often sought for recreation. The area is an outstanding example of how the recreational potential

of peripheries can be utilized. A winter ski-area was constructed in Olešnice, and in 2007, an integrated transport system was introduced to enable a more frequent connection with larger cities on the main route. Transport between the main municipalities and Olešnice is still poor. A disadvantage is a missing connection of the area by railway, which makes it less attractive for other potential visitors. It is also appropriate to take into account the problem of rural tourism sustainability.

Nevertheless, Dávid (2010) points out that ...*“a sustainable and responsible tourism is not imaginable without an application of ecological thinking. Sustainability of tourism is a double task: it is necessary to implement a long-term protection, and at the same time to guarantee economic return of the invested means. Sustainable tourism must be economically efficient on a long-term basis and at the same time socially and ethically equitable in relation to local people”*.<sup>4</sup> Apart from other things, this means that tourist attractions should neither damage or destroy natural, architectural riches of the micro-region in question, nor the profits from tourism in such areas should flow away into distant cities or even abroad. Sharpley (2005) documents on the example of foot and mouth disease in Great Britain that rural tourism is relatively fragile and could be easily impacted by unexpected events (not speaking about the fashion).

The model territory is lacking a sufficient amount of accommodation facilities. For the sustainable development of the municipality it is necessary to resolve the situation in the sphere of housing and in finding such forms of development, which will support the development of low-impact tourism with the related cultural life and improved infrastructure – all this to such an extent that the significant values, both natural and cultural, are preserved for the future generations.

The focus on the support of sustainability is another important aspect of the development and quality of life in the peripheral micro-regions without prerequisites for development. This sustainability has to be based on a diversified economy, usually maintained by the primary production, basic processing of primary products, communal economy and services for local inhabitants without ambitions for growth. However, it is logical that, given the character of the periphery, with respect to the ageing population such a development is somewhat difficult. Therefore, it is a rather challenging task, which needs a supply of “energy” from elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Lenka Jakešová

It may be assumed with a high probability (almost certainty) that some rural micro-regions do not have prerequisites for the development in the quantitative sense – if there is no continuous supply of incentives from outside. This status is a logical outcome of economic and social differentiation under the conditions of the market economy. Thus, it is obvious that the development in the quantitative sense meets a number of obstacles, i.e. the lack of objective prerequisites, the negative perception of development on the part of the local population, insufficient actual benefits for the micro-region in question, or the protection of nature concerns. In such cases, the concentration on the conditions of sustainability is a logical focus of the activity of municipal and regional authorities. However, to be able to assess the sustainability of the development of the territory it is important to be aware of the interests advocated not only by the representatives of the local administration, but also by the inhabitants themselves. Active support and mutual cooperation by the local community count among the basic prerequisites of the transformation of the society towards sustainability.

In foreign literature (McGranahan, Wojan, Lambert, 2011) we may encounter observations that the rural periphery may attract creative inhabitants involved in the knowledge economy provided that it could offer distinctive natural attractions. Can a prerequisite like this be related to the Olešnice micro-region? There are also findings that the area of available open landscape decreases with the development of urbanization (including suburbanization) (Walter, Schläpfer, 2010). Can this be a strong card for micro-regions like Olešnice? Can a rural periphery become a destination for amenity migrants (Bartoš, Kušová, Těšitel, 2009)?

## References:

- BELL, S., MONTARZINO, A., ASPINALL, P., PENEZE, Z., NIKODEMUS, O. (2009): Rural society, social inclusion and landscape change in Central and Eastern Europe: A case study of Latvia. *Sociologia Ruralis*, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 295–326.
- BINEK, J. et al. (2011): Synergie ve venkovském prostoru – Paradoxy rozvoje venkova. Brno, GaREP, 64 pp.
- BARTOŠ, M., KUŠOVÁ, D., TĚŠITEL, J. (2009): Motivation and life style of the Czech amenity migrants (case study). *European Countryside*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 164–179.
- BORGATTI, S. P., EVERETT, M. G. (2000): Models of core/periphery structures. *Social Network*, Vol. 21, No. 4, p. 376–395.
- CAMARINHA-MATOS, L. M., AFSARMANESH, H. (2010): Active ageing road map - a collaborative networks contribution to demographic sustainability. *IFIP Advances in Information and Communication Technology*, Vol. 336, p. 46–59.
- ČERMÁK, L. (2005): Hodnocení vztahu dopravní dostupnosti a exponovanosti území. In: Novotná, M. [ed.]: *Problémy periferních oblastí*. Praha, Karlova univerzita, p. 44–53.
- CHROMÝ, P., SKÁLA, J. (2010): Kulturně-geografické aspekty rozvoje příhraničních periférií: Analýza vybraných složek územní identity obyvatelstva Sušicka. *Geografie*, Vol. 115, No. 2, p. 223–246.
- COPUS, A. K., CRABTREE, J. R. (1996): Indicators of socio-economic sustainability. An application to remote rural Scotland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 41–54.

In conclusion, we may just state that actual stimulation of the Olešnice micro-region depends primarily on its inhabitants, their activity and their entrepreneurial spirit, on the abilities and enthusiasm of municipal authorities and their representatives, on the common effort of all entities in this rural area. In other words, it depends on citizens, on the non-profit sector, entrepreneurs, municipal authorities and regionalists cooperating with the municipal authorities in the area development. A similar finding presents the work dealing with the opinions of experts in the development of rural areas (Binek et al., 2011). It is necessary to support small and medium-sized businesses in the municipality with a possible increase of job opportunities as well as the improvement of necessary services and municipal amenities in both cultural and technical respect. A municipality can hardly be developed from outside if it cannot start to develop itself by mobilizing internal resources and utilising external support. Despite all disadvantages, the Olešnice micro-region is the area of great vitality and deep inner strength that will help to overcome the challenging period. It is the territory that will keep its rural character, the main resource of which is the local population.

## Acknowledgements

*The research is part of the doctoral thesis (Jakešová, 2011) and it was supported by the Internal Grant Agency of the Faculty of Agronomy, Mendel University in Brno scholarship fund No. TP6/2010 for 2010 within the project “Current Status and Development Trends of the South Moravia Countryside”, and it also links up with the project of the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme “Development of Europe’s Rural Region in the Era of Globalization (DERREG)” from 2009 to 2011.*

- CUDLÍNOVÁ, E., TĚŠITEL, J. (2000): Marginální oblasti - indikátor trvale udržitelného rozvoje. *Životné prostredie*, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 10–14.
- DÁVID, L. (2010): A turizmus ökológiai szempontú fejlesztésének lehetőségei és területei. *Tájökológiai Lapok*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 47–56.
- EPPS, R. (2002): Sustainable rural communities and rural development In: Bowler, I. R. et al. [eds.]: *The Sustainability of Rural Systems*. Dordrecht, Kluwer, p. 225–246.
- FERRÃO, J., LOPES, R. (2004): Understanding Peripheral Rural Areas as Contexts for Economic Development. In: Labrianidis L. [ed.], *Future of Europe's Rural Peripheries*. Farnham, Ashgate, p. 31–61.
- FIALOVÁ, D. (2001): Druhé bydlení a jeho vztah k periferním oblastem. *Geografie*, Vol. 106, No. 1, p. 36–47.
- FISCHER, T. (2009): Aging in rural areas in Austria. On the interrelations of spatial aspects and the quality of life of today's older generation. *European Countryside*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 153–163.
- GALVASOVÁ, I. et al. (2007): *Spolupráce obcí jako faktor rozvoje*. Brno, Georgetown, 140 pp.
- HARVEY, D. (1989): *The condition of postmodernity*. Oxford, Blackwell, 392 pp.
- HAVLÍČEK, T., CHROMÝ, P., JANČÁK, V., MARADA, M. (2005): Vybrané teoreticko-metodologické aspekty a trendy geografického výzkumu periferních oblastí. In: Novotná, M., [ed.]: *Problémy periferních oblastí*. Praha, Karlova univerzita, p. 6–25.
- HAVLÍČEK, T., CHROMÝ, P., JANČÁK, V., MARADA, M. (2005): Innere und äußere Peripherie am Beispiel Tschechiens. *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen geographischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 150, p. 299–316.
- HALL, D. (2005): Sustainable Rural Tourism and Rural Change. In: Schmied D. [ed.]: *Winning and Losing. The Changing Geography of Europe's Rural Areas*. Farnham, Ashgate, p. 72–89.
- HUSÁK, J. (2010): Znalosti a jejich aplikace při realizaci trvale udržitelného rozvoje venkovských oblastí. In: *Regióny – vidiek – životné prostredie*. Nitra, Slovenská Poľnohospodárska Univerzita, p. 160–164.
- JAKEŠOVÁ, L. (2011): *Udržitelný rozvoj venkova v Jihomoravském kraji* [Ph.D. thesis]. Mendelova univerzita in Brno, 272 pp.
- JANČÁK, V., CHROMÝ, P., MARADA, M., HAVLÍČEK, T., VONDRÁČKOVÁ, P. (2010): Sociální kapitál jako faktor rozvoje periferních oblastí: analýza vybraných složek sociálního kapitálu v typově odlišných periferiích Česka. *Geografie*, Vol. 115, No. 2, p. 207–222.
- JENKINS, T. N. (2000): Putting postmodernity into practice: endogenous development and the role of traditional cultures in the rural development of marginal regions. *Ecological Economics* Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 301–313.
- JEŘÁBEK, M. (2006): Reserch into peripheral areas in the Czech Republic – changes in the landscape and land use in the model regions. *Europa XXI*, Vol. 15, No. 171–184.
- KEARNEY, B., BOYLE, G., WALSH, J. A. (1994): *EU LEADER Initiative in Ireland: Evaluation and recommendations*. Dublin, Stationery Office, 137 pp.
- KNAPPE, E., BENEDEK, J., ILIEVA, M. (2011): Periphere Regionen in Südosteuropa und ihr Potenzial. *Geographische Rundschau*, Vol. 63, No. 4, p. 28–33.
- LABRIANIDIS, L. (2004): *Future of Europe's Rural Peripheries*. Farnham, Ashgate, 312 pp.
- LEIMGRUBER, W. (2004): Between global and local. Marginality and marginal regions in the context of globalization a deregulation. Aldershot, Ashgate, 331 pp.
- MAJEROVÁ, V. et al. (2005): *Český venkov 2005. Rozvoj venkovské společnosti*. Praha, Czech University of Life Sciences, 163 pp.
- McGRANAHAN, D. A., WOJAN, T. R., LAMBERT, D. M. (2011): The rural growth trifecta: Outdoor amenities, creative class and entrepreneurial context. *Journal of Economic Geography* Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 529–557.
- MOLDAN, B., BRANIŠ, M. (2003): Globální problémy životního prostředí. In: Metrický, V. et al. [eds.]: *Globalizace*. Praha, Portál, p. 31–69.
- MOSELEY, M. J. (2003): *Rural Development. Principles and Practice*. Sage, London, 227 pp.
- MUNRO, D. A. (1995): Sustainability: Rhetoric or Reality? In: Tryzna T. C. [ed.]: *A Sustainable World: Defining and measuring sustainable development*. Sacramento, International Centre for the Environment and Public Policy, p. 27–35.
- MUSIL, J., MÜLLER, J. (2006): Vnitřní periférie České republiky, sociální soudržnost a sociální vyloučení. Praha, Karlova univerzita, 52 pp.
- MUSIL, J., MÜLLER, J. (2008): Vnitřní periférie v České republice jako mechanismus sociální exkluze. *Sociologický časopis*, Vol. 44, No. 2, p. 321–348.

- PERLÍN, R. (1998): Venkov, typologie venkovského prostoru. Praha, Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, 21 pp.
- PEŠA, Z. (2000): Čítanka vlastivědy Olešnicka. MU Olešnice. 43 pp.
- PEŠA Z. (2005): Mikroregion Olešnicko. Olešnice: Dobrovolný svazek obcí Olešnicko. 73 pp.
- Regional Development Strategy. South Moravian Region. Concise Version for General Public (2007). Brno, The Authority of South Moravian Region, 62 pp.
- REINÖHLOVÁ, E. (2005): Informační a komunikační technologie pro rozvoj periferních oblastí – zkušenosti ze zahraničí. In: Novotná, M. [ed.]: Problémy periferních oblastí. Praha, Karlova univerzita, p. 36–44.
- O'ROURKE, E., KRAMM, N. (2009): Changes in the management of Irish uplands: a case study from the Iveragh peninsula. *European Countryside*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 53–66.
- SEDLACEK, S., KURKA, B., MAIER, G. (2009): Regional identity: a key to overcome structural weaknesses in peripheral rural regions? *European Countryside*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 180–201.
- SHARPLEY, R. (2005): Rural tourism and sustainability – a critique. In: Hall, D., Roberts, L., Mitchell, M. [eds.]: *New directions of rural tourism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ashgate, Aldershot, p. 38–53.
- STEJSKAL, J., KOVÁRNÍK, J. (2009): Regionální politika a její nástroje. Praha, Portál, 216 pp.
- STOCKMANN, J. (2005): Moravské Kopenice: identita na periferii. In: Novotná, M. [ed.]: *Problémy periferních oblastí*. Praha, Karlova univerzita, p. 161–167.
- Strategie regionálního rozvoje České republiky (2006). Praha, Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj ČR, 109 pp.
- SUMNER, J. (2005): Value wars in the new periphery. *Sustainability, rural communities and agriculture. Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 303–312.
- ŠIMKOVÁ, E. (2008): Udržitelný rozvoj venkova a role venkovské turistiky. *Ekonomie a Management*, No. 1, p. 26–32.
- TRYZNA, T.C. [ed.] (1995): *A Sustainable World: Defining and measuring sustainable development*. Sacramento, International Centre for the Environment and Public Policy, 272 pp.
- VAISHAR, A., ZAPLETALOVÁ, J. (2010): Sustainable development of the Moravian countryside. *Revija za geografijo*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 43–54.
- VASHAR, A., DVOŘÁK, P., HUBAČÍKOVÁ, V., NOSKOVÁ, H., NOVÁKOVÁ, E., ZAPLETALOVÁ, J. (2011): *Regiony v pohraničí*. Brno, Ústav geoniky Akademie věd ČR, 133 pp.
- WALTER, F., SCHLÄPFER, F. (2010): Landscape amenities and local development: A review of migration, regional economic and hedonic pricing studies. *Ecological Economics*, Vol. 70, No. 2, p. 141–152.
- WOODS, M. (2011): *Rural*. London/New York, Routledge, 336 pp.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (1991): *Naše společná budoucnost* [Translated by P. Korčák]. Praha, Academia, 297 pp.
- ZEMAN, J. (2002): *Ekonomické základy trvale udržitelného rozvoje*. Olomouc, Univerzita Palackého, 171 pp.

### Authors' addresses:

Ing. Lenka JAKEŠOVÁ, Ph.D., e-mail: [lenka.jakesova@ipm.cz](mailto:lenka.jakesova@ipm.cz)  
 Assoc. Prof. RNDr. Antonín VAISHAR, CSc., e-mail: [antonin.vaishar@mendelu.cz](mailto:antonin.vaishar@mendelu.cz)  
 Department of Applied and Landscape Ecology, Mendel University in Brno  
 Zemědělská 1, 61300 Brno, Czech Republic

**Initial submission** 13. December 2011, **final acceptance** 15 November 2012

**Please cite this article as:** JAKEŠOVÁ, L., VAISHAR, A., (2012): Sustainable inner peripheries? A case study of the Olešnice micro-region (Czech Republic). *Moravian Geographical Reports*, Vol. 20, No. 4, p. 13–25.