

# RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DISCUSSION ON THE FINAL DELIMITATION OF REGIONS IN THE YEAR 1949: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE CZECH LANDS

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## Abstract

The paper deals with the re-enactment of the discussion on the final version of the Czechoslovak regional reform of 1949. On the basis of the archival research, we can conclude that the original idea of the delimitation of the regions is fundamentally different from the final version, in terms of both the number of regions and the selection of the regional centres, as well as regarding the definition of the regional boundaries. This article briefly introduces seven basic working definitions of the delimitation of the regions that were evaluated prior to the approval of the final version. The first three variants (the so-called Plan A, the larger regions plan, and Plan B) were based on different theoretical and methodological foundations and represent different concepts of the delimitation of the regions. The subsequent variants were created by successive corrections to Plan B. The approval process itself can be simply divided into two main phases. During the first phase the discussions on Plans A to D took place and resulted in a rough framework for the delimitation of the regions that was based on the final determination of the regional capitals and an approximate delimitation of the regional borders. In the second phase, the partial territories that were subject to dispute, mainly situated on the borders of regions, were discussed.

**Key words:** regional administrative division, 1949 regional reform, archival research, Czech lands.

## INTRODUCTION

The regional administrative division is one of the most important forms of comprehensive organisation of a society (Hámp 1990: 248). For this reason, the regional administrative division is one of the traditional issues addressed within the geographical professional community. The increased interest in this issue is, for logical reasons, mainly connected with the period of reforms, when geographers were actively involved in the discussion of various aspects of the establishment and functioning of the new regional administrative division (from among a wide range of publications we can mention Hámp 1990, 1992; Toušek et al. 1991, 1993; Bennett 1997; Řehák 2000; Dostál and Hámp 2007).

The issues related to the territorial regional administrative division are not addressed only in the period when this topic is popular, as the regional administrative division can also be perceived in terms of historical geography. Historically, the interest of geographers in the regional administrative division is mostly focused on basic description of the development (cf. e.g. Eberhardt 2001; Burda 2010) or on the cartographic analysis of the stability of the boundaries of the administrative units (e.g. Gurnák 2000, 2002 or Gurnák and Lauko 2007).

The historical-geographical works dealing with the regional administrative division of the territory mostly have two common features. First, they are limited to a relatively brief chronological

description of the individual reforms and second, they work with the final definition of administrative units, as adopted by particular laws. In our opinion, this approach is inadequate for an overall understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the regional administrative division. First, it is important to understand any reform within a larger contemporary context. A detailed evaluation must be based on the fact that each territorial administrative reform originated in a given historical situation and was motivated by specific political, economic, social, and cultural factors which had a significant impact on the overall concept and design of the new regional administrative division. In addition, it is necessary to emphasise that in historical-geographical terms, it is not only the final form of the administrative territorial reform which is important, but also the very process of the approval of this new state. Following the research on the approval process we can reveal the reasons which led to the establishment of the final form of the new regional administrative division.

In our view, it is desirable to leave the question of what the regional administrative division looked like and start asking why it looked this way and not otherwise. This approach can help us to link the research on the regional administrative division with two major historical-geographical topics. Any reform was based on specific geographic principles. The study and interpretation of these principles can help us to describe the development of geographical thinking. At the same time, the regional administrative division is very important for the operation of a modern state and is closely linked with the efforts of the modern state to control the state's territory and the population living there. For this reason, the regional administrative division can serve as a tool for the analysis of the relationship between state power and space.

In our research, we attempt to apply this approach to the regional reform in 1949. The paper that is submitted is intended as a basic outline that is required for the subsequent phases of the research, when more detailed interpretations will be carried out. The main aim of this paper is to collect archival sources and re-enact the course of the negotiations

on the final arrangement of the regions within the territorial administrative reform in 1949. The paper does not and cannot have the ambition to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic. Our evaluation will primarily focus on the geographical boundaries of the regions and any other issues related to the regional reform (e.g. the abolition of local self-government authorities or related property, organisational, or legal matters) remain outside the attention of the authors.

## **NOTES ON THE SOURCES, SPATIAL DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY**

The following text is based on studies of archival sources of the Ministry of the Interior, which are stored in the National Archives in Prague, and specifically on the materials from the resources called "Ministerstvo vnitra – nova registratura" and "Ministerstvo vnitra – Noskûv archiv". Considering this fact, the re-enactment of the discussion on the final form of the regions is performed solely from the perspective of the Ministry of the Interior, which was primarily responsible for the reform.

As far as the nature of the source material is concerned, it must be noted that the archival materials that were studied are highly selective and do not cover all aspects of the decision-making process in full. For this reason, it is not possible to re-enact the discussion at all stages uniformly, nor to assess the circumstances of the origin of each variant of the delimitation of the regions in the same way. In rare cases, the information is completely lacking and the re-enactment can be performed only through indirect information, on the basis of which we can only guess how the negotiations actually took place. Despite these complications, the archival resources that were studied are unique and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, untapped material that can clarify a number of important facts about the origin of the regional reform of 1949.

In terms of spatial delimitation, the paper will not pay attention to the whole of Czechoslovakia, but it will focus only on the territory of today's Czech Republic. Although the paper does not cover the regional reform in its entire spatial framework, this

decision is historically justifiable. The Ministry of the Interior created the basic vision and the rules for the whole state, but discussions on the actual arrangement of the regions were conducted separately in the Czech lands and in Slovakia and subsequently both parts were connected together to get the final arrangement.

As far as the names of the regions are concerned, we have adhered to the usage of the time, as described in the preamble to the particular law (Sněmovní tisk 163/1948). The regions are named according to the regional capitals. In the case of the Zlín region, considering the planned renaming of Zlín to Gottwaldov, the preamble uses the term “Gottwaldov region”. Our paper deals with the period before the renaming, so we adhere to the original name. If any other territorial units are discussed in the paper, their names are in accordance with those used in the sources, and the regional capital is given in parentheses for an unambiguous identification.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE REGIONAL REFORM

The reform in 1949 represents a major milestone in the development of the regional administrative division of the Czech lands (cf. e.g. Hledíková et al. 2005 or Schelle 2005). The reform changed the arrangement which, with some modifications, had been in operation in the Czech lands since the rise of the modern administration in the middle of the 19th century. On the lower level there was a reorganisation of districts and a dissolution of the model of judicial and political districts which was built up during the Hapsburg monarchy. In terms of higher territorial administrative units, the major change was the dissolution of the former Czech crown lands and their replacement by a regional system. While these historical lands formed a traditional part of the administrative division of the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, in the case of regions, there was quite a paradoxical situation. Although the beginnings of the formation of regions as territorial units go back to the 13th century, the Czech lands had not, with the exception of a short period in the 1850s, had any real experience with the establishment of regions as a modern tool

of state government. Therefore, the reform introduced a new model of organisation of the regional administrative division and a disruption of the continuity of development, both in terms of territorial limitations and of the tasks and responsibilities of the state government.

The reasons for such a significant change in the regional administrative division may be sought in the post-war political situation. With a certain degree of simplification, we can say that after the restoration of Czechoslovakia after World War II, there was a general cross-party consensus on the need for a reform of the regional administrative division, but any practical efforts to define the reform resulted in serious disputes. In the course of time, the issue of territorial administrative reform became a part of the knife-edge political struggle and two groups with different visions were established. One group was represented by the communists, who sought the abolition of lands as administrative units and called for their replacement by regions. The second group, formed of the representatives of a majority of non-communist parties in the so-called National Front, demanded only a reform of the current system based on historical lands (Kozák 2000). The communists tried to dissolve the lands as local units because for them the lands' authorities represented an obstacle to their attempt to seize power in Czechoslovakia (for the assessments of the situation from the communist perspective at that time see Sněmovní tisk 163/1948; Moravec 1971). The reform itself took place shortly after the communist coup in February 1948 and it is generally accepted that it was abused to enhance the power of the emerging communist dictatorship (cf. e.g. Illner 1999).

## DISCUSSIONS ON THE TERRITORIAL DELIMITATION OF REGIONS

Although the preparatory work preceding the territorial delimitation of regions had already taken place earlier,<sup>1</sup> the beginning of the intensive negotiations on the final arrangement of the regional reform can be dated back to the turn of August and September

<sup>1</sup> Conf. e.g. Národní archiv (NA), fond (f.) Ministerstvo vnitra – Noskův archiv (MV – N), box number (box). 161, inventory number (inv. n.) 93, Číselný a grafický rozbor 5 krajů.

1948.<sup>2</sup> The discussion ends with the adoption of the Regional Act (Zákon 280/1948 Sb.) on December 21, 1948. On the basis of the archival sources studied, we can say that seven basic working variants of the territorial delimitation of regions were gradually created before the final version was approved.

The first three variants (the so-called Plan A, Larger Regions Plan<sup>3</sup>, and Plan B) were based on different theoretical and methodological foundations and represent different concepts in the delimitation of the regions. The subsequent variants were created by successive corrections to Plan B. The approval process itself can be roughly divided into two main phases. During the first phase (Plans A to D) the discussion resulted in a rough framework for defining the regions on the basis of the final determination of the regional capitals and the general delimitation of the regional borders. In the second phase, the partial territories that were subject to dispute, mainly situated on the borders of regions, were discussed.

### Plan A

Plan A originated in the Central Committee of People's Administration (Ústřední komise lidové zprávy) in collaboration with the Planning Division of the National Economic Committee (Plánovací sekce Národohospodářské komise).<sup>4</sup> In the Czech lands, sixteen regions were established (eleven in Bohemia and five in Moravia and Silesia – see Figure 1). Plan A was based on a concept of so-called medium-sized regions. These regions consisted of ten to twelve districts and their area was about 5,000 square kilometres and the average population was about 500,000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> NA, f. Ministerstvo vnitra I – Nová registratura (MV I – NR), box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Příkaz k přípravě návrhu zákona o krajském zřízení.

<sup>3</sup> This variant is not marked unambiguously in the archival materials that were studied. In some materials it is known as Plan B, which is rather confusing as in the next phase of the negotiations a completely different design of the administrative division was identified as Plan B. For this reason and for unambiguous identification the term “larger regions option” is used to identify this variant.

<sup>4</sup> NA, f. MV – N, box 161, inv. no. 93, Kraje podle varianty A.

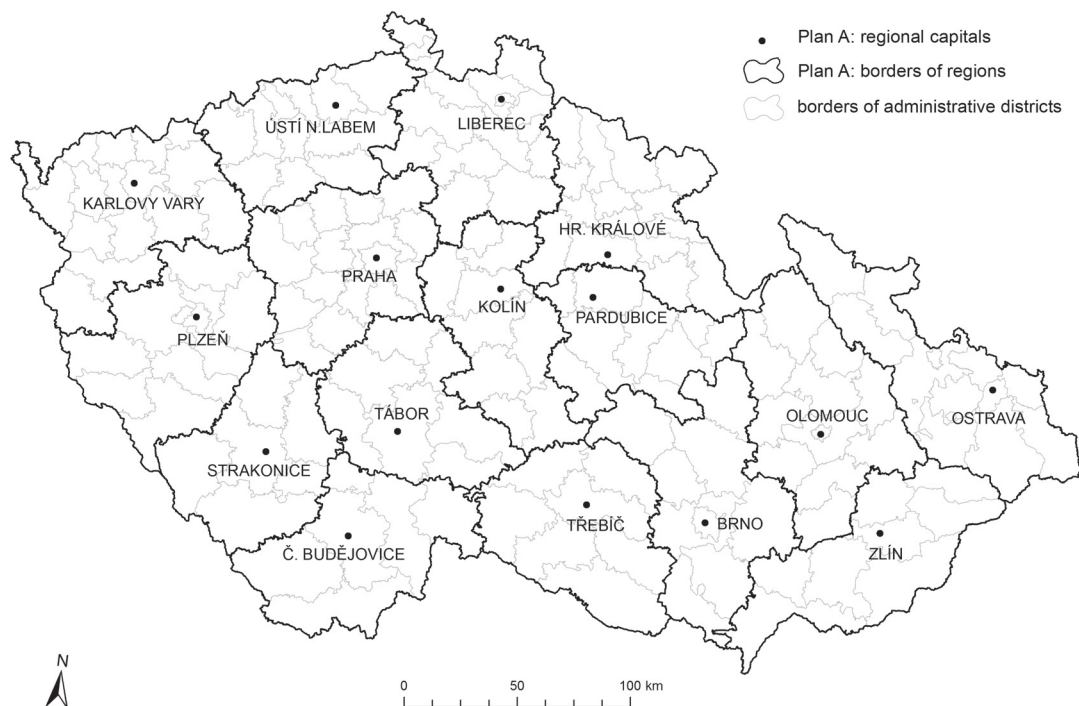
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The reasons for the selection of the regional centre and territorial delimitation of each region were justified by the authors and commented on in the Schedule to the first draft of the regional Act.<sup>6</sup>

The following regions were characterised as easily defined: Hradec Králové, Plzeň, Pardubice, Central Moravia (Olomouc), Silesia (Ostrava), and also, more or less, the Prague region. In two regions – North Bohemia (Liberec) and Zlín – the admitted geographical inconsistencies in the delimitation of these regions were to be overcome in the future as a result of the existence of strong regional capitals. The definition of the Kolín region was questionable, but according to the authors of the proposal, its importance lay in the connection of the underdeveloped parts of the Highlands to the prosperous Elbe valley. The origin of the Karlovy Vary region was doubtful, but its establishment was considered necessary as a result of the location of the area within the settlement system. The other two disputed regions located in South Bohemia were the Prachens region (Strakonice) and the Tábora region. This solution was motivated by the attempt to divide the large and mostly economically undeveloped area of South Bohemia into smaller units. The objective of the Prachens region was to fill the peripheral space between Plzeň and České Budějovice and the Tábora region was to prevent further growth of the regional function of Prague.

Regarding the selection of the regional capital, the most complicated situation was in the West Moravia region. The traditional centre was probably Jihlava, but according to the authors it was historically favoured by Germans and its importance had decreased as a result of the displacement of the German-speaking population. Another argument against the establishment of Jihlava as the regional centre was its notably eccentric position within the region. The same reasons led to the rejection of Znojmo as the regional capital. Therefore Třebíč, strategically located in the middle of the defined region, was selected as the regional capital. Among the three regional centres in question, Třebíč was the weakest in terms of population, but a significant

<sup>6</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Referentský nástin osnovy zákona.



**Figure 1** Plan A. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, k.1962, inv. no. 1613, mapa Varianta A, author's own chart.

growth in population was expected as a result of the planned industrialisation of the Třebíč district in the near future. Some controversy regarding the selection of the regional capitals was also mentioned regarding other regions. For example, in the case of the Zlín region, the possibility of moving the administrative authority to Otrokovice was discussed in order to achieve a merger of the administrative centre and the traffic junction.

### The Larger Regions Plan

The Larger Regions Plan arose because part of the staff of the Central Committee of People's Administration rejected the model suggested under Plan A. The main point of contention was the very concept of so-called central regions, which was labelled as inappropriate for the purposes of the state administration. On the contrary, the geographic, economic, social, and administrative benefits of larger regions were emphasised. In addition, the erroneous definition of certain regions in Plan A was also criticised

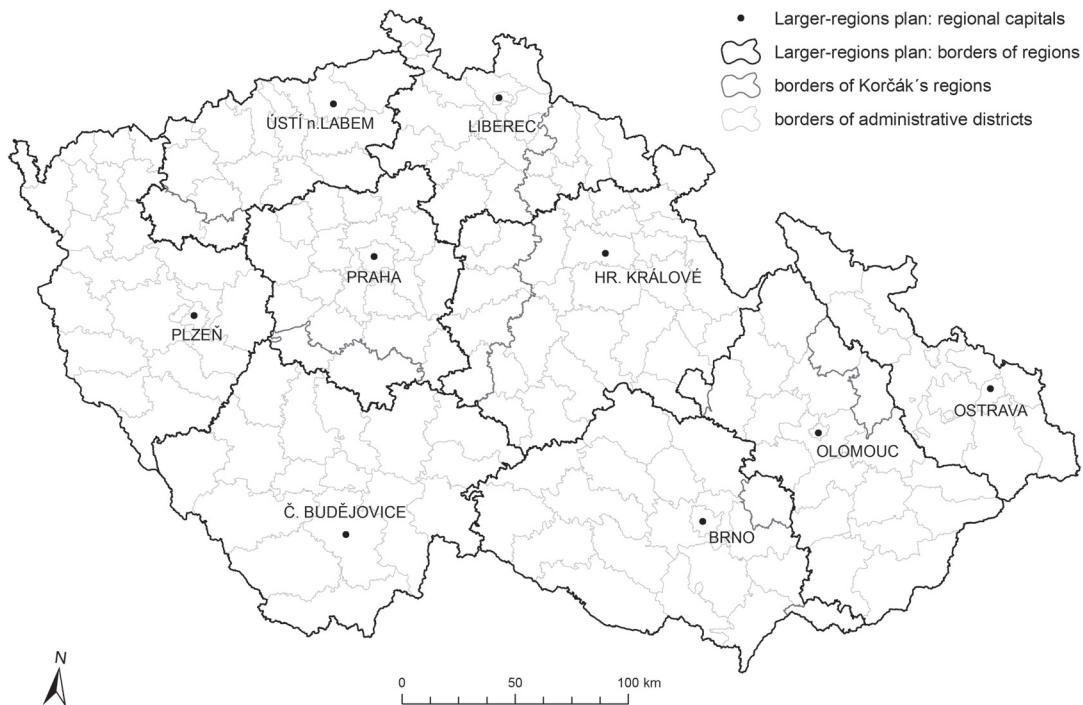
by the authors of this alternative plan. The criticism was targeted mostly at the interruption of links between production areas (e.g. North Bohemia – Hradec Králové Region – Pardubice Region), on the establishment of economically weak regions which lacked the ability to lead an independent existence (the Prachens, Tabor, and Kolín regions) and the improper setting of the boundaries of some regions (e.g. the Tabor, Kolín, and West Moravia regions).<sup>7</sup>

The authors of the alternative plan were allowed to submit their own proposal before the start of the main phase of the discussion on the final regional arrangement. This proposal, with the working title of the Larger Regions Plan<sup>8</sup>, was created in collaboration with the Planning Board of the Land National Committee in Prague (Plánovací úřad

<sup>7</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Krajské zřízení: Některé připomínky k velikosti krajů, NA, f. MV – N, box 161, inv. no. 93, Kraje podle varianty B.

<sup>8</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Varianta větších krajů.





**Figure 2** Larger Regions Plan. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, K. 1962 inv. no. 1613, mapa Varianta větších krajů, author's own chart.

Zemského národního výboru v Praze)<sup>9</sup>. The Larger Regions Plan was relatively strongly influenced by the pre-war regionalisation designed by Jaromír Korčák (1934), both in terms of determining the size of the regions and in the case of the delimitation of the regional boundaries. With reference to Korčák's theoretical principles, the optimal size of regions was set at 8,000 to 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This rule was not strictly observed, especially in industrial regions, where smaller units were delimited.<sup>10</sup> In terms of setting the boundaries of the regions, we can especially recognise the inspiration of Korčák's regionalisation in Moravia and Silesia, where the authors of this plan used his regions, with only slight modifications. On the contrary, in Bohemia the proposal that was submitted differed significantly from Korčák's definition and the draft prepared by the Planning Board of the Land National Committee got priority.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> NA, f. MV – N, box 161, inv. no. 93, Kraje podle varianty B.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

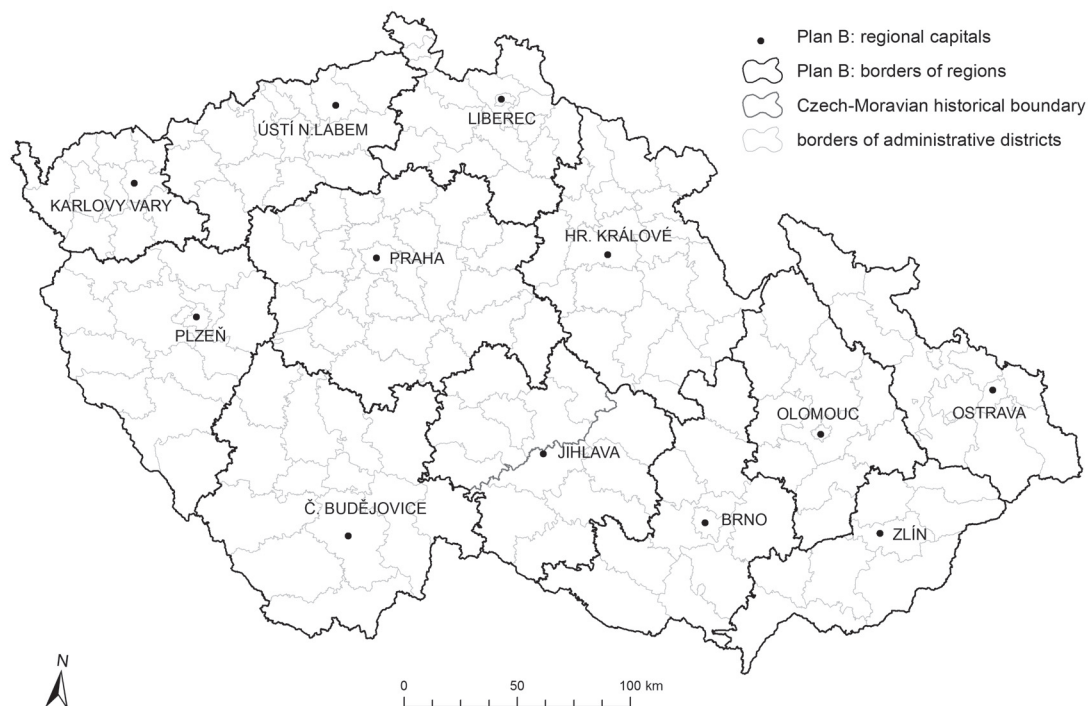
<sup>11</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Varianta větších

### Plan B

Soon after the start of preparatory works, another proposal for a regional system was submitted for assessment; it was later termed Plan B (see Figure 3).<sup>12</sup> According to the assessment report, this variant arose as the proposal of the Central Council of Trade Unions (Ústřední rada odborů) and was identical to the regionalisation presented in several papers by Jaroslav Okrouhlý (1947a, 1947b, 1947c). The officials at the Ministry of the Interior assessed this variation on the basis of the above-mentioned articles by Jaroslav Okrouhlý (1947a, 1947b). It should be pointed out that in his studies Okrouhlý does not describe the theoretical or methodological background of its origin, but focuses on an assessment of the appropriateness of regionalisation for planning purposes in terms of the required internal homogeneity of the delimited spatial units.

krajů.

<sup>12</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, Územní organizace krajů: návrh Ústřední rady odborů.



**Figure 3** Plan B. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta B, author's own chart.

In the assessment report on Plan B that criticise some shortcomings of this plan, we find three particularly important issues being discussed.<sup>13</sup> The first is the very question of the appropriateness of regionalisation for the purposes of the regional administrative division. The authors of the report suggest that it is still necessary to consider whether the territorial division established primarily for planning purposes complies in full with the requirements and needs of the public administration.

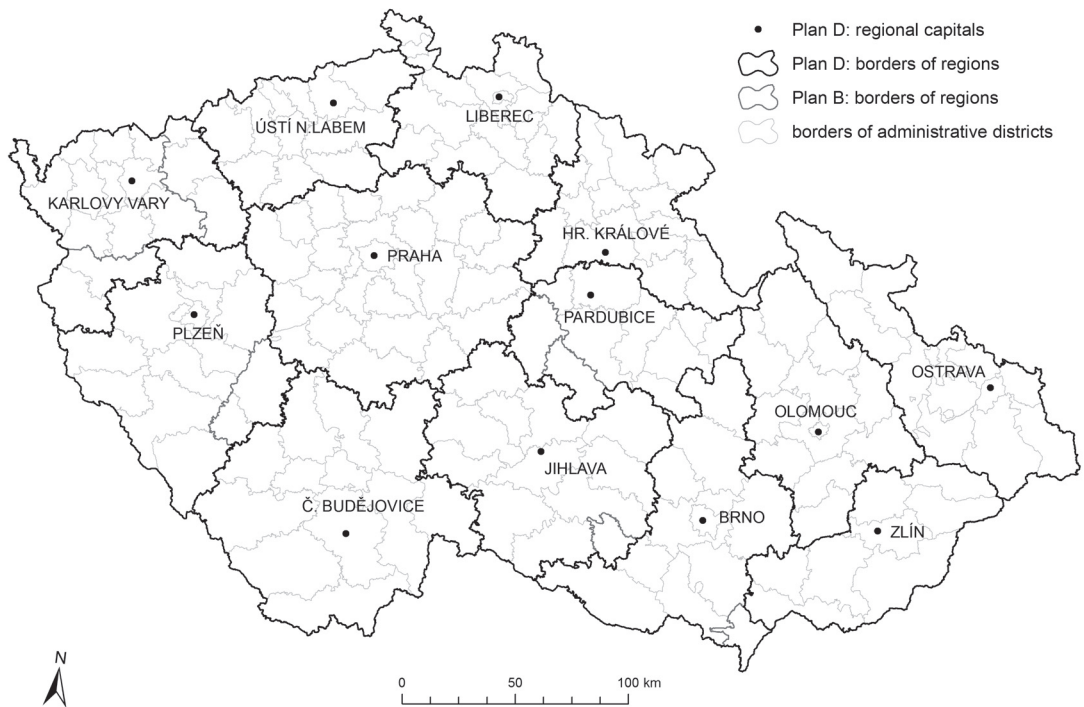
The second problem was of a theoretical and methodological nature. In terms of theory and methodology, the authors of the assessment report proceeded from the tradition of pre-war Czech regionalisations, namely from the studies by Václav Dědina (1921, 1927, 1929) and especially the work of Jaromír Korčák (1934), who was generally considered the foremost contemporary expert on regionalisation. In defining regions, both Dědina and Korčák put

great emphasis on compliance with physiographical conditions and within this approach, the boundaries of the delimited regions should respect river divides as much as possible. The suggested plan violated this rule by delimiting the Jihlava region, which was located on both sides of the main European divide, which was relatively sharply criticised by the authors of the report.

The third problem also relates to the Jihlava region and it can be described as a problem of the perception of the historical boundaries of administrative units. When the Jihlava region was being defined, the former Bohemian-Moravian border, which dates back to the Middle Ages, was not respected. In this case, the authors were afraid of a negative psychological effect because the general public perceived this border as being traditional and unchanging.

Unfortunately, in the archival resources that were studied no materials showing the course of the discussions on these controversial issues were

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 4** Plan D. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta D, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta C – pozměněná, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta B, author's own chart.

preserved. On the basis of the evaluation of further developments, we can say that these controversial issues were not taken into account and Plan B became the basis for the final arrangement of the territorial delimitation of the regions.

### Other variants

*Plans C and D.* Unlike the other design alternatives, almost no information has been preserved in the archival materials that were studied that relates to the delimitation of regions according to the variant known as Plan C. The only clue that can help us evaluate this plan at least generally is a map entitled “Kraje podle varianty C – pozměněné“, which probably captures the changes between the variants C and D.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, the C variant is evaluated together with Plan D.

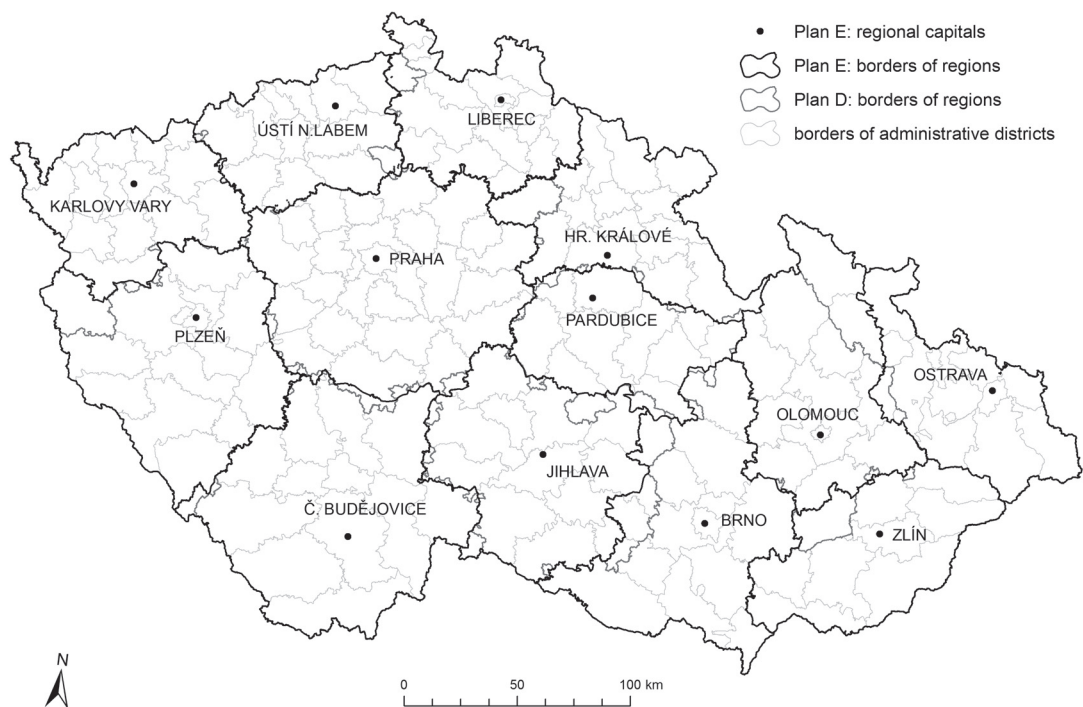
The most significant change in comparison with Plan B was the increase in the number of regions from twelve to thirteen (see Figure 4). The newly defined Pardubice region originated from the southern part of the Hradec Králové region, to which the Čáslav district from the Prague region and the Chotěboř district from the Jihlava region were connected. Considering the situation captured in the above map, we assume that in Plan C the Pardubice region was defined more generously and included the districts of Kutná Hora and Kolín from the Prague region.<sup>15</sup>

Another major change was associated with the definition of the Karlovy Vary region. Its area was criticised in the Plan B assessment report as being totally insufficient and the report even suggested the possibility of cancelling the Karlovy Vary region and connecting it to the Plzeň

<sup>14</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, Kraje podle varianty C – pozměněné.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.





**Figure 5** Plan E. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta E, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta D, author's own chart

region.<sup>16</sup> This problem was solved by a substantial extension of the area of the region at the cost of the Ústí nad Labem region (the Kadaň and Podbořany districts) and the Plzeň region (the Planá and Tachov districts; the latter was probably connected to the Karlovy Vary region in Plan D).

Plan D brought fairly clear outlines of the concept of the regional system and further discussions were focused on fine-tuning the final form of the regional administrative districts in terms of the disputed territories. By the time this variant appeared, the question of the number of regions and their capitals had been more or less resolved. The regions which were considered controversial at an early stage (Jihlava and Karlovy Vary) were not mentioned any more, so we can assume that there were no substantial doubts about the legitimacy

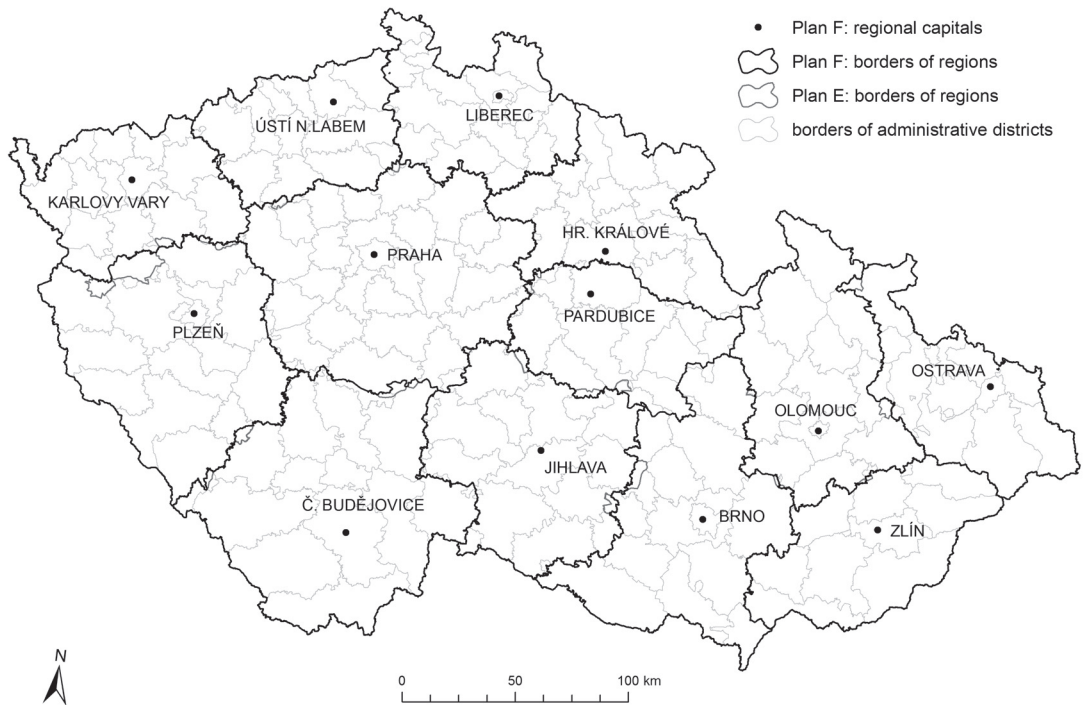
<sup>16</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, Územní organizace krajů: návrh ústřední rady odborů.

of their origin. Only the existence of the “latest” Pardubice region was not taken as completely definitive. In a report dated October 20, 1948, it is stated that the neighbouring regions require relatively large areas of the Pardubice region and compliance with these requirements would lead to its abolition.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, these requirements were accepted only to a very limited extent, so that the concept of the Pardubice region was retained and thereby the regional capitals were definitively determined.<sup>18</sup>

*Plan E.* As a result of the advanced stage of the reform, the intensity of the negotiations increased, as is evidenced by, inter alia, a large amount of archival material that has been preserved from this phase of

<sup>17</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, Záznam z 20. října 1948 o jednání na konferenci krajských tajemníků strany.

<sup>18</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, Územní organizace krajů: návrh ústřední rady odborů.



**Figure 6** Plan F. Source: NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta F, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta E, author's own chart.

the discussion.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of these discussions, which were gradually entered by a large number of involved institutions, Plan E was created (see Figure 5). While previous variants delimited the regions' borders on the basis of whole districts, the discussion related to the preparation of Plan E focused on changes at the municipal level. This new approach was conditioned by the fact that the territorial reorganisation of the districts was prepared simultaneously with the regional reform, but the regional reform should have been com-

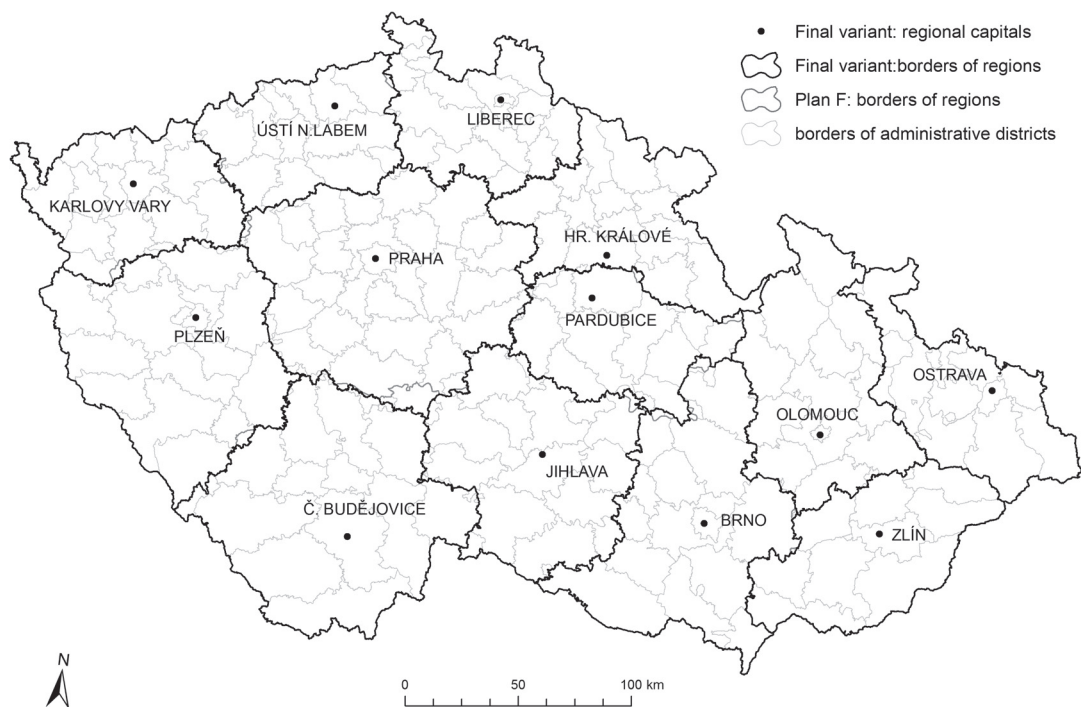
pleted before the new territorial arrangement of the districts.<sup>20</sup>

In general, we can say that in most cases the discussions dealt with smaller corrections of borders as a result of the measures taken within the district reform (the establishment of new districts or final delimitation of their borders). However, some shifts of larger areas were also discussed. As an example we can mention the alteration of the boundaries of the Jihlava and Brno regions (the areas of Bystřice nad Pernštejnem, Velká Bíteš, and Náměšť nad Oslavou) or the relatively widely discussed issue of the delimitation of the borders between the Olomouc region and the Ostrava region (the Bruntál and Jeseník districts).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Náměty a návrhy na korektury krajských hranic a reorganizaci okresů přednesené na poradě krajských tajemníků dne 19. 10. 1948 v ústředí KSČ*, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Záznam ve věci Kraje, území: Podklady pro rozhodnutí sporných otázek*, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Záznam ve věci Hranice krajů: Výsledky jednání ze dne 26. října 1948*, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Mapa varianta E (sporná území)*, NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Příprava varianty E (odstranění sporných území)*, MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Hranice krajů: Změny oproti variantě D*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. e.g. NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, *Osnova zákona o krajském zřízení: Návrh důvodové zprávy k oddílům 1, 4 a 6*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, *Náměty a návrhy na korektury krajských hranic a reorganizaci okresů přednesené na poradě krajských tajemníků dne 19. 10. 1948 v ústředí KSČ*.



**Figure 7** The final delimitation of the regions. Source: Zákon 280/1948 Sb., NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1612, mapa Varianta F, author's own chart.

*Plan F and final delimitation of regions.* Plan E became the basis for the next round of negotiations with regional secretariats of the Communist Party,<sup>22</sup> where the remaining controversial issues were discussed.<sup>23</sup> Within these discussions some minor changes were negotiated, but the issue of some disputed territories had not been completely resolved.<sup>24</sup>

The outstanding uncertainties in the delimitation of the regional boundaries primarily had two main reasons. The first was the reluctance of some regional secretariats to meet the requirements of neighbouring regions and give up a part of their territory. The second problem was connected with the fact that

the issue of the district reform had not yet been definitely resolved and the final delimitation of regional boundaries in these cases depended on the existence or non-existence of the new districts, i.e. on the delimitation of their borders.

The remaining contentious issues were further discussed, probably mainly within the expert committee established at the Central Committee of the Communist Party,<sup>25</sup> and the final result of the discussion was recorded in the map as Plan F (see Figure 6) on November 25, 1948. The borders were primarily altered in the case of the Jihlava region and some substantial territorial shifts also took place between the Plzeň and Karlovy Vary regions.

<sup>22</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Záznam o věci stanovení krajských hranic: jednání o změně varianty E.

<sup>23</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Změny varianty E a nevyřešené nebo sporné případy krajských hranic.

<sup>24</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Sporné nebo pochybné části krajské hranice.

Subsequently the Government approved a draft law on the establishment of the regional system on November 30 (Sněmovní tisk 163/1948). Yet, this

<sup>25</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Návrh krajských hranic: příprava varianty F.

still was not a definitive solution and partial changes took place after that date. Due to a continued discussion on the final form of the district reform, the Ministry of the Interior suggested minor corrections of the regional borders during the voting on the bill in the parliament (The approved changes were recorded in Sněmovní tisk 188/1948).<sup>26</sup> The final regional arrangement was officially approved within the law on the establishment of the regional system (Zákon 280/1948 Sb., see Figure 7), which was adopted on December 21, 1948.

According to the preamble to the Regional Act (Sněmovní tisk 163/1948), the regions were of medium size, with an average area of about 5,000 square kilometres and an average population of 500,000 inhabitants, with the noticeable exception of the Prague region (9,684 square kilometres and 2,011,363 inhabitants), which was justified by the importance of the capital. The average area was also greatly exceeded by the South Bohemian region (9,018 square kilometres). In this case, it was explained by the sparse population and the effort to maintain South Bohemia as a unified whole for the planned development of this economically undeveloped region.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The territorial organisation of the regions, as approved by the Law on Regional Arrangement (Zákon 280/1948 Sb), did not originate as a result of a “linear” process. On the contrary, within the discussions the regional arrangement passed through a complicated process of development and the initial perception of the regions was fundamentally different from the final version in terms of both the number of regions and the selection of the regional capitals, as well as in the definition of the regional boundaries.

In general, following the sources that were studied, we can say that the final territorial delimitation of the regions was the result of a series of factors,

<sup>26</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1962, inv. no. 1613, Záznam ve věci Osnova krajského zákona: Návrh na změny krajských hranic během sněmovního jednání

in some cases contradictory ones. These factors include political and ideological arguments, physiographic conditions, prior administrative and socio-economic development, the requirements for the functioning of the state administration, and the need for the further economic development of the newly defined regions (economic power, planning issues).

The final form of the territorial delimitation of the regions can be described as a compromise solution that resulted from a discussion of all these factors. Therefore, even at the time of its approval, there was no general consensus about the correctness of the delimitation. As an example, we can mention a letter in which the staff of the Moravian Study and Planning Institute in Brno (Zemského studijního a plánovacího ústavu v Brně) criticised the approved concept because it did not comply with the requirements of a new society and was inconsistent with the “biology of socialist space”.<sup>27</sup>

The study outlined only the basic framework of the decision-making process of the final form of regional arrangement. Further archival research is necessary for a more comprehensive assessment of the overall context of the final arrangement, which can bring us other relevant information necessary for its overall interpretation.

The very detailed re-enactment of the discussion of the regional administrative division represents only the first step of our research. As already noted in the introduction, the detailed interpretation of this phenomenon must be made after its contextualisation within broader historical, political, economic, and cultural relations. For this reason, further analysis will generally focus on the relationship between power and space in the socialist era, namely an interpretation of the spatial policy of the communist regime, i.e. the interpretation of the influence of contemporary political, ideological, and economic views on the real political organisation of the space.

<sup>27</sup> NA, f. MV I – NR, box 1961, inv. no. 1610, Dopis Zemského studijního a plánovacího ústavu v Brně z 2. prosince 1949.

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## Résumé

### Rekonstrukce diskuze o finální podobě krajů z roku 1949: příspěvek k vývoji územně správního členění českých zemí

Hlavním cílem příspěvku je pokusit se na základě studia archivních pramenů uložených v Národním archivu zrekonstruovat průběh jednání o konečné podobě krajů na území Českých zemí v rámci územně správní reformy z roku 1949. Studie poukazuje na skutečnost, že podoba územní organizace krajů, jak byla schválena v zákoně o krajské zřízení (Zákon 280/1948 Sb.), nevznikla „přímočarým“ procesem. Naopak v průběhu diskuze prošla podoba krajů složitým vývojem a původní představa se zásadně odlišovala od finální varianty a to jak z hlediska počtu krajů, výběru krajských center, tak i z hlediska vymezení krajských hranic.



Na základě prostudovaných archivních pramenů můžeme konstatovat, že před schválením finální verze bylo postupně vytvořeno sedm základních pracovních variant územního vymezení krajů. První tři varianty (tzv. varianta A, varianta větších krajů a varianta B) vycházely z odlišných teoretických a metodologických východisek a představují rozdílné koncepty vymezení krajů. Následující varianty vznikly postupnými korekcemi varianty B. Vlastní schvalovací proces lze zjednodušeně rozdělit do dvou hlavních fází. V průběhu první fáze (varianta A až D) probíhala základní diskuze a jejím výsledkem byla hrubá kostra vymezení krajů založená na definitivním stanovení krajských měst a rámcovém vymezení hranic krajů. V druhé fázi již byla diskutována především dílčí sporná území nacházející se na hranicích krajů.

V rámci varianty A bylo v Českých zemích stanoveno celkem šestnáct krajů (jedenáct v Čechách a pět na Moravě a ve Slezsku). Varianta A byla založena na koncepci tzv. krajů střední velikosti. Autoři této varianty se snažili rozdělit hospodářsky zaostalé oblasti (především Jižní Čechy a Vysočinu) do několika krajů, přičemž administrativní funkce měla přispět ke vzniku nových regionálních center (Strakonice, Tábor, Třebíč, Kolín).

Varianta větších krajů vznikla jako alternativa k variantě A. Autoři tohoto návrhu kritizovali variantu A z hlediska nedostatečné velikosti vymezených krajů. Varianta větších krajů byla poměrně výrazně ovlivněna předválečnou regionalizací Jaromíra Korčáka (1934) především z hlediska stanovení velikosti krajů, v případě Moravy i z hlediska delimitace krajských hranic.

Zmíněné dvě základní varianty byly brzy po zahájení přípravných prací nahrazeny novým návrhem krajského zřízení, jenž získal označení varianta B. Při hodnocení varianty B bylo pracovníky ministerstva upozorněno na tři zásadní problémy. Prvním byla otázka vhodnosti regionalizace vzniklé primárně pro účely prostorového plánování pro účely územně správního členění. Druhým problémem bylo upozadění fyzickogeografických podmínek především v případě Jihlavského kraje, což bylo vnímáno jako porušení teoretických a metodologických pravidel regionalizace. Třetí problém taktéž souvisel s vymezením Jihlavského kraje, jenž nerespektoval česko-moravskou zemskou hranici.

Přes tyto sporné otázky se varianta B stala základem pro finální podobu územního vymezení krajů.

V rámci varianty C a D byla definitivně vyřešena otázka počtu krajů a jejich sídel. Z tohoto pohledu byl za nejvíce problematický považován kraj Pardubický, jenž byl definitivně schválen až v rámci varianty D. Následná diskuze se zaměřila na změny krajských hranic na úrovni obcí či částí obcí. Tato skutečnost mimo jiné souvisela s faktem, že paralelně s krajskou reformou byla připravována i územní reorganizace okresů, přičemž ale krajská reforma měla být dokončena dříve než nová územní organizace okresů. Finální podoba krajů byla definitivně schválena v rámci zákona o krajském zřízení (Zákon 280/1948 Sb.), jenž byl přijat 21. 12. 1948.

Samotná detailní rekonstrukce diskuze o podobě územně správního členění představuje pouze první krok našeho výzkumu. Detailní interpretaci zkoumaného fenoménu je nutné provést na základě jeho zasazení do širšího historického, politického, hospodářského a kulturního kontextu. Z tohoto důvodu budou další analýzy v obecné rovině zaměřeny na postihnutí vztahu moci a prostoru v období socialismu. V konkrétní rovině půjde o interpretaci prostorové politiky komunistického režimu, tedy o interpretaci vlivu soudobých politických, ideologických a hospodářských názorů na reálnou politickou organizaci prostoru.

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