

LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY OF SOUTH MORAVIA

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Abstract

Microregional managers and mayors of municipalities are among the most important actors in rural development. They can influence development of a particular region to a large extent due to their access to relevant information and due to their close co-operation with other local participants in development. Furthermore, they can objectively evaluate strategies and theories and their applicability for a region. The aim of the article is to introduce perceptions of the region and visions of regional development that could be found among microregional managers and mayors in South Moravia. Selection of people to be interviewed was influenced by their function in the region, participation in networks and their impacts on local development. The text describes the current state of the study area between the municipalities of Brno, Břeclav, and Znojmo, and possible steps that may be taken in future.

Key words: South Moravia, rural development, opinion pool, actor, governance.

INTRODUCTION

Aims

Rural areas in the Czech Republic and conditions of their development are significantly influenced by the Common agricultural policy (CAP) of the European Union (EU).

Attitudes to rural development are based on understanding of the structure and mutual relationships among participants in rural development and on the premise that cooperation of all actors (from institutions at national level to local people) who participate in development is a prerequisite for improvement of living conditions in rural areas. Furthermore, cooperation can also help to make the most of regional dispositions, potential and abilities of participants and also of available sources (Binek et al. 2009:85).

The process of cooperation and of finding collective solutions to local development challenges

is connected mainly with creation of spontaneous political networks. In general, it is possible to argue that the level to which political dialogue among participants in regional development is formalised influences the engagement of these actors in local governance. On the one hand, there can be no formal rules of cooperation established but local people will be able to participate in creation and/or realisation of meaningful strategies of development. This bottom-up approach can thus accomplish relatively a lot but it is always limited by the lack of contacts with institutions at higher levels of administration. On the other hand, the level of formalisation¹ of political dialogue can be high but the cooperation will not be successful either due to strictly top-down approach when institutions at higher levels determine the strategies and only a few

¹ Formalisation in this context means institutional cooperation of regional participants in development which allows exchange of developing concepts, generates new project ideas and enables a region to achieve success in inter-regional competition (Ježek 2005:73).

or none of the important local interest groups participate in the process of their preparation or implementation (Dočkal 2006:11).

The aim of this paper is thus to research and study perceptions and visions of development among rural elites i.e. microregional managers and mayors of municipalities in the region between Brno, Břeclav and Znojmo (see Figure 1).

Former research and wider context

Perceptions of rural areas have been researched by important Czech scholars. It is possible to mention e.g. the publication written by Kučera and Kuldová (2006) who state that rural areas may be looked at from different points of view which then influence either external or internal development of these areas. Among the different points of view are: the perception of rural areas as of non-urban spaces which are, nevertheless, functionally connected to their development poles (i.e. towns; theories of centre-periphery); the perception of rural areas as of countryside; the perception of rural areas as of agricultural spaces; the perception of rural areas as of a specific life-style; and the perception of rural areas as of a space suitable for relaxation and leisure time activities.

The process of regional development is characterised in greater detail by various theories of regional development. The aim of this article is thus to study the perceptions of rural development in order to assess the appropriateness of the theories of regional development that are currently being used and that are based mainly on institutional and neo-liberal economy (Blažek and Uhlíř 2002).

Current regional policy is, on the one hand, influenced by theories such as the ones that focus on the dichotomy of centre-periphery. In regional development these theories argue that there are spatial disparities, and they support such strategies which ensure convergence of development among regions.

On the hand, there are also other views in current regional policy that emphasise only certain strategic fields of economy which should be supported by means of external impulses, effective networking,

innovations created in the process of permanent learning (internal impulses), internal efficiency and internal development.

There are two publications which were very important for the purpose of this text: *Rural Geography* by Woods (2005) and *Geography of Rural Change* by Ilbery (1998). The focus of these publications is on spatial and social processes in their entirety with a view (but not only) to rural regions.

The main area of interest of the theory of actors is interaction (both relations and connections) among important people. It argues that people are able to influence an outlook of a particular area and communities by debates, own intentions and their promotion.

Networking is discussed e.g. by Murdoch (2000) who speaks about a “new rural paradigm” that comprises of activities such as networking and cooperation. These arguments are then applied by e.g. Perlín (2006).

Public administration of rural areas and its principles have been constantly changing over the years; the text studies mainly interaction between the top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Rural governance is very close to local community planning and it reflects local political points of view (MacKinnon 2002; Goodwin 1998). The principle of governance is gradually evolving into governmentality i.e. to the state when more and more local people are involved in the process of governance and public administration (Herbert-Cheshire 2000).

STUDY AREA AND DATA

The study area

The research was conducted in the lowland area between Brno, Břeclav, and Znojmo. Adjustments were made to include the whole of the Břeclav district and to respect the administrative borders. It was also necessary to define landscape characteristics in order to ensure that these were similar for the whole study area.

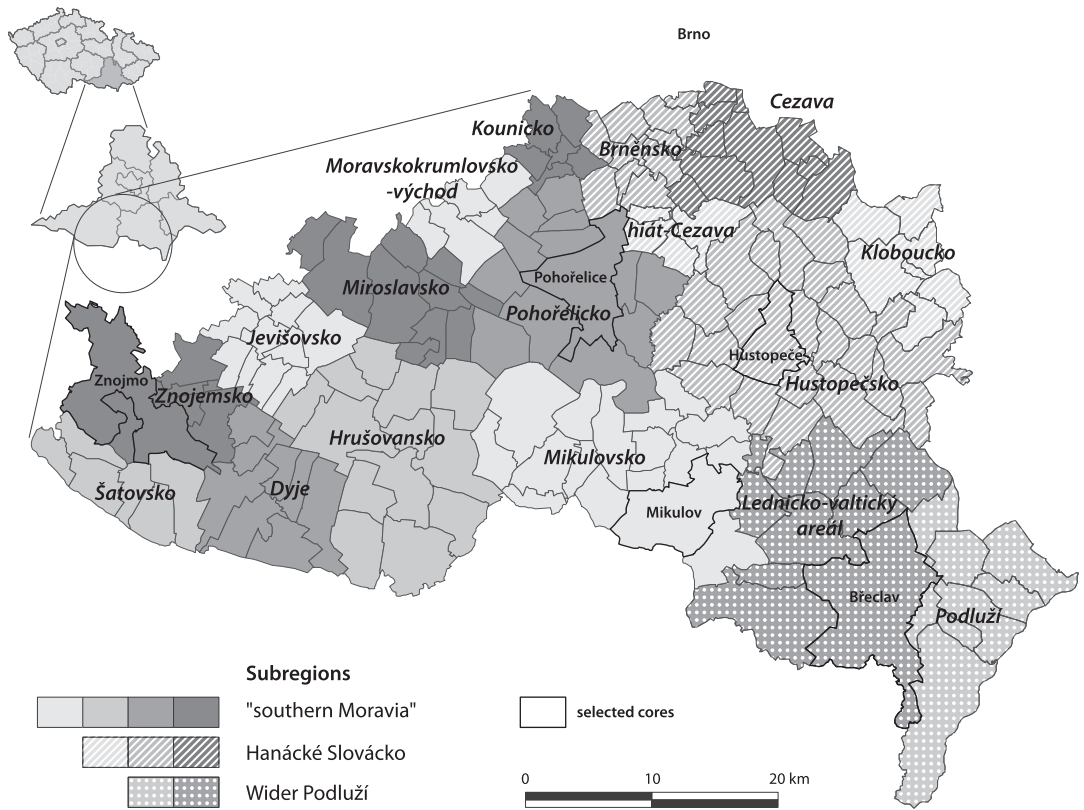


Figure 1 The study area divided into 3 subregions, 17 smaller units with own action groups, and 165 individual municipalities. Source: South Moravian Region (administrative region), own elaboration.

For defining the study area, ethnographic and historical point of view was, nevertheless, preferred. The region thus includes: Hanácké Slovácko (northern region), Podluží and the area of Lednice and Valtice (a part of an administrative region of municipality with extended powers Břeclav) i.e. Wider Podluží, and the area historically inhabited by Germans (“southern Moravia” near Znojmo). After the Second World War the Germans living here (i.e. in “southern Moravia”) were forced to leave, which caused an important discontinuity in people’s feelings and relations toward this part of Moravia. The study area was also divided further into smaller units, each with an own action group, and into individual municipalities (see Figure 1).

The area consists mainly of important villages (over 1,000 inhabitants) with declining lifestyle. Nevertheless, there are also small towns which can be described as relevant and hierarchically significant centres, i.e. Břeclav and Znojmo. In case of Brno, only its external influences such as possible opportunities and threats were taken into account.

The area is becoming significantly polarised; the important role being played by transport accessibility and availability, telecommunications and information technologies. The effects of borders of all hierarchic levels are also visible in the area.

Data and research process

It is also necessary to highlight here that the topic of perceptions is very complex and it is necessary to interpret the answers in a holistic way.

The methodology of the research is based on the recommendations made by Disman (2002) or whose book provides detailed guidance about the way of conducting research in social sciences. The author highlights the complexity of research. The publication then not only describes the methods traditional quantitative research which are used to verify set hypotheses but it also focuses on qualitative research and its potential to discover new phenomena and facts. For the purpose of the research of these phenomena, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used (see Crang 2005).

For the purpose of this research, standardised interviews with microregional managers (13) and mayors (165) were conducted in the study area between Brno, Břeclav, and Znojmo. Qualitative approaches to conducting research were used for creating the questionnaires.

The survey thus combines the principles of induction (i.e. discovering of the “new” facts and relations) as well as of deduction (i.e. verification of theoretical principles and set hypotheses). Furthermore, methods of comparison, analogy and authorised deconstruction of interviews were also used during the research. Quantitative methods then helped the authors of this research (2009-2010) to verify their knowledge of the area, and qualitative methods were used for learning about perceptions among important actors in the area and for understanding the future development.

Opinion polls

The interviews were conducted among the heads of voluntary associations of municipalities and microregions which participate in the LEADER programme. Among these areas are: Židlochovicko, Hustopečsko, Jevišovka, Znojemsko, Šatovsko, Podluží, Dyje, Mikulovsko, Miroslavsko, Moravskokrumlovsko, Pohořelicko, the area of Lednice and Valtice (Lednicko-valtický areál in Figure 1), and Hrušovansko.

Examples of questions discussed during the interviews:

- What dominates: internal, own or external development/“development”?
- Does the centre influence its surroundings or it does not have any impact? What was its role in the past and what is its role nowadays?
- Are there any new good addresses that are currently appearing?
- Are there any deteriorating areas?
- Is it possible to spatially define social groups that live their “own” lives and are excluded from the society?
- Is there any power struggle under way? Is it fuelled from the inside or the outside?
- Is it possible to speak about community/communities?
- How are the people who have moved to the area recently perceived? Do they participate in the life of a municipality?
- Are there places for relaxation? For entertainment? Are they used by the locals?
- Is there a church, a pub, local clubs? What's their function/do they have influence?
- How does culture shape the identity of people?
- How satisfied are people with public administration?
- Do people participate in development of the municipality?

Survey among mayors

Interviews with microregional managers were complemented by standardised interviews with mayors or in some cases with deputy mayors. The survey was conducted in 165 municipalities which are shown on the map of the study area (see Figure 1).

The mayors discussed mainly the following questions:

- What do you consider the most serious problems in your area nowadays?
- What were in your opinion the most serious problems of your rural area at the beginning of the 1990s?
- Do you think that it is important to “revive” and “develop” life in rural areas?

- Who or what is in your opinion threatened by the current state of rural areas, and how?
- What steps (activities, programmes, policies) do you consider the most important for revival of life in rural areas?
- Provided that you had enough money, what problems would you start to try and solve first?

RESULTS

Based on the interviews, the following part of the text summarises the main findings about characteristics of the study area, its problems and its potential for development.

Results – microregional managers

According to ten out of thirteen microregional managers, people welcome any development; only the inhabitants of the most peripheral areas are not interested at all because they consider this word to be misused a lot. It must be highlighted though that there are differing opinions of what development really is. It is viewed as a word which leads to improvements; however, it was also proved that people do not actively seek development unless they are regional managers or inhabitants otherwise interested in it. Any activity will be perceived negatively if it, according people's opinion, leads to any worsening of any area of their lives.

Administration of an area is connected with a lot of dilemmas. Implementation of top-down projects is thus sometimes really difficult. Listening to local people and their advice therefore starts to be emphasised, and endogenous development is being preferred, which is, however, not the only way forward. Further concepts such as partnership or shared governance are thus being developed and pursued as well.

Administrative bodies, local businessmen and organisations participate in collective activities; the administration usually being the initiator. In small villages cooperation is rather a necessity so that the people would stay there.

Active implementation of theories of regional development may be found in the region of Mikulovsko.

This area actively uses the advantages of the opened border with Austria. Despite this, understanding and trust between the inhabitants and the institutions is according to the respondents relatively low and it is still possible to see formality, impatience, and fear of competition and of the way of conduct of the competitors as well as the potential partners. The most important activity in the area bordering with Austria is provision of services for tourists such as building new accommodation and catering facilities or wine business. The highlighted problem of the Czech Republic in this border area is that the schools and also companies here do not actively promote acquiring of the German language.

The northern part of the study area – Židlochovicko (in Figure 1 Cezava and Brněnsko) – may be characterised by competition of relatively similar-sized towns. This is then an advantage for Brno whose impact is increasing here due to the process of suburbanisation.

To speak about centrality in the regions with lower transport accessibility and availability is according to the respondents difficult. The regions invest into internal activities but, on the other hand, they are aware that their chance of being successful is not very high. They therefore chose e.g. strategies of inertness when i.e. Šatovsko (see Figure 1) may be characterised by formality, pseudo-subsidiarity and unfulfilment.

“Good addresses” are near or in important centres such as e.g. residential areas of businessmen in Znojmo, Mikulovsko, and Hustopečsko. Among the “bad addresses” are, on the other hand, disused agricultural sites that deface the countryside and are often used for landfill purposes.

Vaguely defined land rights have been causing problems since the 1990s since they have not been dealt with satisfactorily. At the moment the Ministry of Agriculture does not support any final solution to these difficulties, which are becoming very expensive.

Political struggle in seven out of the thirteen researched smaller units is under way among individuals and it is hidden. Only Jevišovka could be

characterised by the lack of any political tensions but this region forms a periphery to all the centres and also to important transportation routes. Political cooperation is, according to a microregional manager, successful in the Znojmo surroundings despite disagreements of the political parties at the higher levels. People in Šatovsko support direct election of mayors and they are critical of the conditions but they speak about low participation of inhabitants in public matters.

Last but not least, a very important aspect in development is the ability to learn and learning on the whole since people can learn by both positive (identity, employment) and negative (dependence on subsidies, declining identity). The quality of rural life may be further enhanced by supporting community involvement in local associations, supporting cultural activities and/or young people and marginalized groups activities, development of accommodation capacities and increasing of the tourist attractiveness of the region which can be in South Moravia based on e.g. wine culture and traditions.

Results – mayors

Among the biggest problems identified by the mayors are: unemployment, decline of agriculture, unsolved land rights and inadequate technical as well as social infrastructure in the municipalities. The mayors are trying to find solutions to all these problems at the same time but pursuing this strategy means that the available finance must be divided into a lot of different areas. On the other hand, it should be highlighted that these problems are really pressing and the mayors are required to deal with them satisfactorily.

The aim of the second question was to learn about the changes in the most problematic aspects of life in the rural areas on the study area since 1989. It should be, unfortunately, highlighted that the problems limiting the development of the municipalities in 1989 were the same as the current ones mentioned above such as unkept technical infrastructure and lack of financial resources, which is caused by current fragmentation of the Czech Republic.

People with lower qualifications do not run businesses and they struggle with finding enough employment opportunities in their surrounding. People who worked in this area had low qualifications due to being employed in agriculture, which limits their opportunities nowadays. Young people and people with higher qualifications, on the other hand, leave these municipalities to “free” themselves from the limitations (such as job opportunities), which further influences the lack of endogenous resources of development.

A lot of municipalities struggle with selective emigration because they are losing their social and cultural resources. Selective emigration is thus one of the important challenges for these municipalities which try to overcome the problem by strategies of regional development that ensure convergence.

Certain steps, however, sometimes do not influence the rural way of life positively. A decision of a local council to sell the hall used for cultural events and a decision of a local businessman to close the pub resulted in dissolution of the traditional sport association “Sokol” and of the voluntary fire-fighters organisation. All this led to no participation of local citizens in the meetings of the municipality council and to a complete estrangement of the citizens of the municipality.

Most of the municipalities are at the moment able to use their potential of attractiveness of wine industry for tourists but there are limitations even in this area due to the small number of vineyards that belong to individual people (when compared with Austria) which was caused by the processes in agriculture in the second half on the 20th century, and also due to the unwillingness of vineyard owners to offer their properties and products for the tourist industry. Endogenous growth of municipalities could be intensified by mutuality of local people.

Agriculture is also perceived as in poor conditions due to the unfavourable economic situation of agricultural businesses and cooperation between them even though the problems in cooperation seem to be caused by both of the parties. Natural conditions for agriculture are very good in the study area.

The local governments of the municipalities argue that they are the only actors who are responsible for the landscape management, which they have to perform, though, without appropriate financial support. All the municipalities seem to be aware of the fact that increasing number of inhabitants will result in more difficulties with the services delivery on the different hierarchical levels.

In case of having sufficient financial resources, the municipalities divide the money in order to tackle all the pressing problems such as cultural activities, facilities for the citizens, strengthening of local economy, environmental challenges, and problems with technical infrastructure or cooperation. Such a list of activities, nevertheless, suggests that the money resources are split in order to finance a lot of minor activities. Only a few actors realise that there is the need to invest the finance effectively and efficiently. On the other hand, it is not surprising that the local leaders try to spend money on a lot of small projects given the long-term lack of resources that is viewed as a very important problem.

Among other difficulties which limit the possibility of using the financial resources efficiently is the lack of experience of the local leaders (30% of the new mayors in their first electoral term have other jobs and are not able to devote all their time to the administration of the municipality). The interviewed mayors acknowledged their lack of experience with implementation of development strategies, which negatively influences the concept of endogenous development. On the other hand, a successful implementation of development strategies has activated the local inhabitants and the participation spread to other people connected to the successful person (i.e. any success brings about further success).

At the moment another difficulty lies in the unwillingness of banks to invest own financial resources (their clients' resources respectively) to such projects and there is also very limited competition among banks in the area of providing money for development purposes of municipalities. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that the current system of

subsidies has the potential to enable endogenous development of municipalities by using the exogenous impulses.

The question is then why the local leaders are not able to use these opportunities or how consulting agencies influence the process of getting money resources; eventually why the rules of regional operational programmes were set in such a confusing and difficult way.

It is also questionable whether it is possible for the local actors to understand the current system (including the process of getting financial resources) because of its complexity. It is possible to argue then that the system brings relatively fewer positive effects to its users than it could.

According to the answers of the mayors, all inhabitants of rural areas are threatened by the current problems. The mayors are also thinking about whether any specific rural character of people still exists or not.

DISCUSSION

There are two main conclusions about the regions: First, the more often they are described by experts as peripheral ones, the more marginal they really are. Second, the higher number of experts who deal with the question of local development means that there is more effort to implement their suggestion, which, however, disrupts the local communities. Development in the sense of administration of projects is not perceived only positively but there are also objecting claims that the regions are learning to live on subsidies and state benefits, and that the administration is selective and limited only to regions with required size or human capital.

The regions consider the concept of networking a useful one; on the other hand, it needs to be stated that it would be misleading to see it as the only way forward. Setting the rules influences the results. Regional development is sometimes administered by the method of trial and error although good examples from practice may be found.

CONCLUSION

Quo vadis? Regional Development

This part of the article describes anticipated future development of the study area. The predictions are based on the interviews and answers obtained from microregional managers and mayors. For the purposes of this part of the text, the study area was divided into six sub-regions, each with a different path of future development.

A) Integrated areas of Hanácké Slovácko including Pohořelicko

The process of functional interconnection between these suburbanised areas and Brno will continue. It is possible to predict socially-cultural conflicts within the current social stratification of the area but the results of the conflict are impossible to forecast. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the local people, both newcomers and those who have lived in the area for a long time, will try to preserve the rural community in case they will plan to live there for a long time. The area will use the positive effects of the city of Brno but, on the other hand, it will be burdened more by transportation (individual as well as public transport).

B) Wider Podluží

It may be assumed that the region will use its cultural activities, its attractiveness and its rural community resources. The area offers very interesting opportunities for recreation and tourism so it is possible to predict further development of accommodation and catering facilities, activities and programmes and marketing, which will create new job opportunities for local inhabitants and it will thus balance the job offers from Břeclav, which is an important transportation junction in the Czech Republic. Other opportunities may come from the sector of services even though these jobs are not that well-paid here.

C) Mikulovsko and Hrušovansko

Cultural resources are significantly lower here than in the previous region but the rest of the characteristics of Wider Podluží can be applied to this region as well. Improvements of transport and technical infrastructure are important for both of the areas;

an important role may be also played by the planned construction of a motorway between Brno and Vienna.

Mikulovsko and Hrušovansko are at the moment using the opportunities of cross-border effects from Austria more actively. The shops here attract due to lower prices a lot of customers from Austria, which improves local economic (as well as social and cultural) situation.

D) Znojemsko and Šatovsko

The region can be characterised by the process of Znojmo suburbanisation and by cross-border influences despite its borders with a relatively poor Austrian region. It is possible to predict that these regions will use Znojmo and their favourable position near the Austrian border. On the other hand, some of the services offered in this region do not represent the Czech Republic positively.

E) Miroslavsko, eastern Moravskokrumlovsko, Kounicko

Intensive agricultural production which is one of the important sources of work opportunities and actors in rural development will continue. Promotion of quality of life and sustainable development will become a general trend. It is also possible to predict strengthening of the position of Brno in these regions.

F) Jevišovka a Dyje

The area has been so far experiencing the spiral of decline which can be characterised by the following trends: the lower the number of people, the lower the number of available facilities. Since commuting is not attractive, people try to solve this situation by migration, which means that a municipality further loses its inhabitants and its potential, the negative feedback is strengthened and the municipality is in decline.

Final results

The dichotomy of centre and periphery can be found in the region till today. The municipalities are able to use their endogenous resources to differing extent (the highest in case of the region A, and the lowest in case of the region F). The municipalities and microregions are at the moment also trying

to use external financial resources (EARDF, ESF, ERDF). Getting financial support is, nevertheless, nearly impossible without mediation services.

There is not such a big number of leaders when rural areas are compared with centres (Brno, Znojmo, and Břeclav), and a network is not so well-established among these leaders. Nevertheless, they are trying to, within their scope of powers, use various principles of endogenous and exogenous development for the benefit of the studied municipalities and microregions. In spite of active interest in municipality matters and focus on progress among the leaders, these people often lack expert and long-term assistance.

The municipalities use strategic planning but their citizens are not in most cases involved in the process of planning. In future the municipalities will have to pursue such strategies that will make the people more active, use their own potential of development and also communicate more effectively with the people living in the municipalities and microregions.

The microregional managers know and try to use the most common theories of regional development. They know the area and they try to develop it mainly by using the top-down method and by making use of exogenous impulses (convergence strategy).

The mayors use endogenous development with exogenous impulses but they are not able to motivate the citizens in such a way that the people would help them fulfil the common perception of development. The mayors use the bottom-up methods. They have problems with a burnout syndrome and with severe lack of finance at this level of administration in the Czech Republic where the top-down approach prevails.

Networking is one of the very important strategies of current regional policy of the Czech Republic. Contacts and adherence to political parties play a very important role in supporting various perceptions of rural development. The resulting state of a region is determined by the most powerful actors who have contacts and the clearest vision of image of the area.

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Résumé

Percepce rozvoje venkova očima leaderů: Případová studie pro jižní Moravu

Mikroregionální manažeři a starostové obcí patří mezi nejvýznamnější aktéry v oblasti rozvoje venkova. Do značné míry mohou ovlivnit vývoj určitého regionu, jelikož mají přístup k relevantním informacím a úzce spolupracují s dalšími místními aktéry v rozvoji zdejšího regionu. Kromě toho mohou neobjektivněji hodnotit strategie regionálního rozvoje a obecně jejich teorie a jejich použitelnost pro daný region.

Cílem článku je představit percepci regionu očima mikroregionálních manažerů a starostů obcí na jižní Moravě a jejich vize regionálního rozvoje (kam bude směřovat další vývoj venkovských regionů). Výběr osob, které byly osloveny, byl ovlivněn jejich funkcí v regionu (mikroregionální manažeři a starostové obcí), jejich účastí ve zdejších i hierarchicky vyšších sítích aktérů a jejich kroky na místní (endogenní) rozvoj. Text popisuje současný stav studované oblasti mezi městy Brno, Břeclav a Znojmo, a možná opatření, která mohou být přijata v budoucnu.

Synergický přístup k rozvoji venkova je opřen o poznání struktury a vzájemných vztahů jednotlivých aktérů rozvoje venkova a o předpoklad, že spolupráci subjektů uvnitř i vně rozvíjených venkovských území lze výrazně lépe využít rozvojových dispozic, možností a schopností aktérů a dostupných zdrojů (Bínek et al. 2009:85).

Cílem předkládaného článku je zachytit percepci rozvoje venkova leadery, kteří jsou schopni tento budoucí vzhled venkovských regionů mezi Brnem, Břeclaví a Znojmem reálně naplnit.

Pro naplnění tohoto cíle byla použita pracovní hypotéza založená na síťování významných aktérů a na percepci zkoumaného území.

Pro zachycení percepce regionálního rozvoje byla zvolena kvalitativní metoda semistrukturovaných rozhovorů se všemi mikroregionálními manažery a se všemi starosty obcí ve zvoleném regionu.

Kvalitativní metoda výzkumu byla založena na doporučeních Dismana (2002). Předmětná publikace obsahuje podrobné pokyny o způsobu provádění kvalitativního výzkumu ve společenských vědách. Uvedená metoda přispěla k ověření pracovních hypotéz (síťování aktérů, jejich percepce a aplikace percepce v budoucím regionálním rozvoji daných venkovských regionů).

Semistrukturované rozhovory s vyznanými leadery (s mikroregionálními manažery a se starosty obcí) byly dlouhodobě testovány společností GaREP, na jejíž vybranou publikaci od Binka (2009) předkládaný příspěvek navazuje.

Poté, co byly sesbírány percepce uvedených aktérů, bylo provedeno setřídění, analýza a syntéza možných vývoje venkovských regionů mezi Brnem, Břeclaví a Znojmem. Získané a roztríděné závěry (podle jednotlivých podstatných témat, semistrukturovaného rozhovoru) jsou publikovány v části věnované výsledkům práce.

Uvedená tématická syntéza je dále prostorově lokalizována do území v rámci kapitoly věnované závěrečnému vývoji v šesti agregovaných územích.

Konkrétně se jedná o tato území:

- A) integrované území hanáckého Slovácka a Pohořelicka;
- B) širší Podluží;
- C) Mikulovsko a Hrušovansko;
- D) Znojensko a Šatovsko;
- E) Míroslavsko, východní část Moravskokrumlovská a Kounicko;
- F) Jevišovka a Dyje.

Možný budoucí vývoj ve všech uvedených agregovaných (účelových) oblastech získaný na základě syntézy uvedených percepce regionálního rozvoje venkovských regionů očima mikroregionálních manažerů a starostů obcí byl popsán právě v závěru tohoto příspěvku. Obecné teoretické otázky, které vyvolal předkládaný kvalitativní výzkum (semistrukturované otázky vybraným leaderům v zájmovém území) jsou uvedeny v části nazvané diskuse.

Předkládaný článek navázal na aktuální výzkumy v oblasti rozvoje venkova a uplatňování politik regionálního rozvoje. Ověřil nynější nejpodstatnější trendy (viz použitá literatura) a postihl vnímání budoucího vývoje v území. Uvedený příspěvek navázal na činnost Binka et al. (2009).

Autoři splnili cíl článku, pracovní hypotézy byly potvrzeny, provedená dotazníková šetření odpovídala aktuálnímu stavu poznání v oblasti rozvoje venkova, tento nástroj zjišťování byl vyhodnocen jako relevantní pro hodnocení zkoumané problematiky a předložil zajímavý obrázek budoucího vývoje ve zkoumaném území.

Sladění rozvoje venkova je v současnosti velmi diskutovaným tématem v rámci Společné zemědělské politiky. Autoři věří, že předkládaný článek přispěje k rozvoji interdisciplinárního oboru „rozvoj venkova“.