

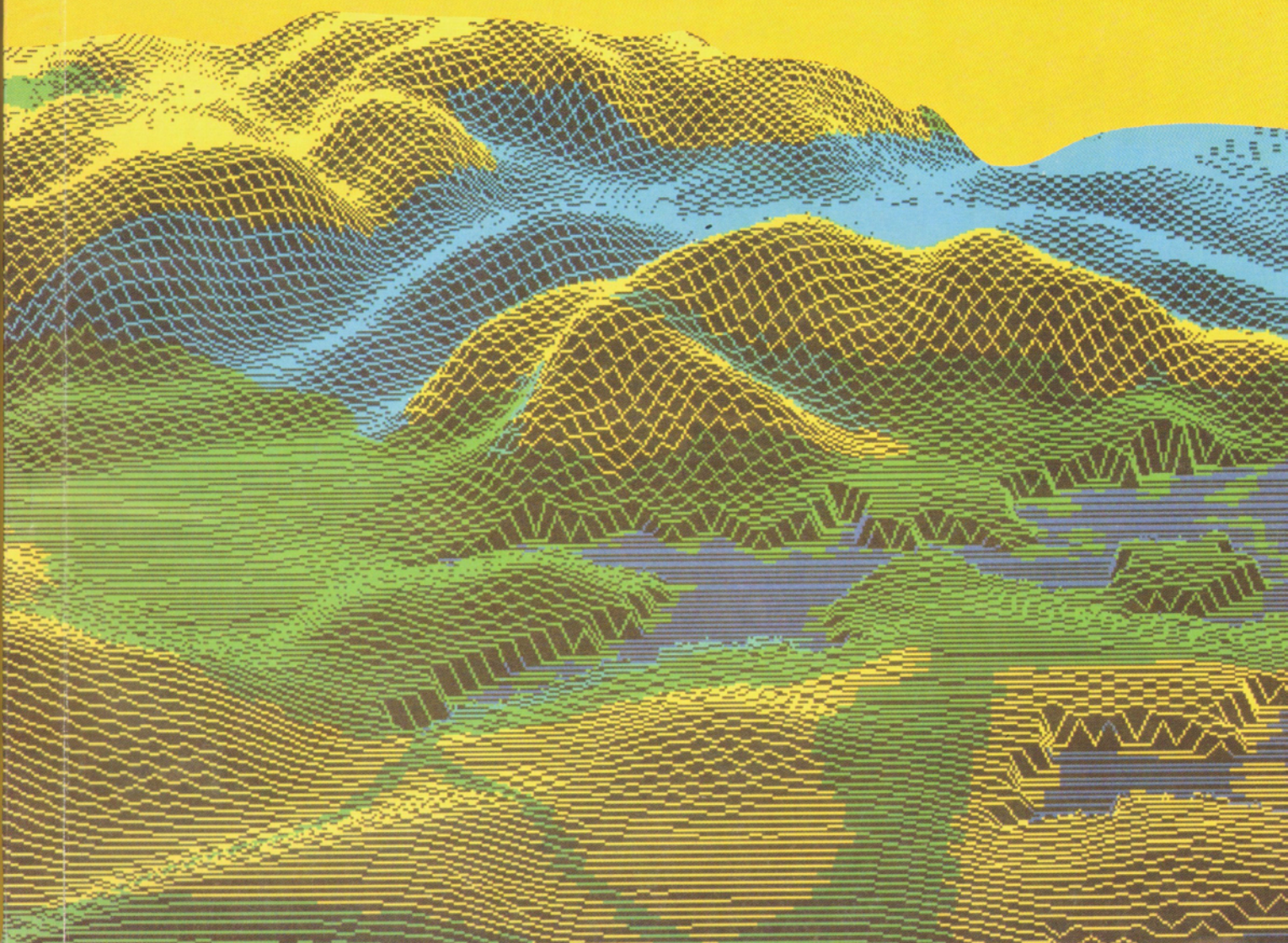
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# THE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF DECISION - MAKING FOR SUSTAINABLE CITY

(International research project funded by CEC  
Contract No.EV5V-CT92-0150)

*Antonín VAISHAR*

## INTRODUCTION

In the second half of 1994, Brno branch of Institute of Geonics of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic concluded an agreement with the Consortium for Research and Permanent Education (COREP), associated with the Technical University in Turin. The agreement considered meeting the target "THE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF DECISION - MAKING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE CITY". The agreement has been entered within the PECO program, which is focused on collaboration among scientific institutions of member of the countries of European Community and countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Mr. Gaston Ave (COREP) functioned as a co-ordinator of the project.

The project has originally been implemented in collaboration of COREP and the London School of Economics (LSE) and worked out four model (representative) towns: Bologna and Florence, Italy, Leicester and Edinburgh, Great Britain. The work was made in 1993 and 1994. By entering the project, the Institute of Geonics expanded the project to three more model town in the territory of Central Europe. These towns are Brno, Czech Republic (Institute of Geonics, Academy of Sciences); Budapest, Hungary (Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences), and Ljubljana, Slovenia (Institute of Geography, University of Ljubljana).

In addition to the model towns, there were also model (representative) problems which, according to the coordinator's opinion, best described particular areas of influence of cultural and economic conditions of the decision - making process. The spheres of traffic policy, dislocation of retail network, and public greenery and open areas policy were concerned.

The study consists of Czech, Hungarian and Slovenian part and of a summary report. The study was co-ordinated and elaborated, for its most part, in November 1994, in considerably tense condition, as far as dead-lines and financing were concerned. Its main goal

was to attempt at elaborating a report, relatively comparable with the COREP - LSE material and to prove preparedness for further co-operation. Its scientific goal was to evaluate three significant spheres of governing cities in contemporary conditions. These spheres were: traffic, retail trade and greenery and public areas.

While the COREP - LSE research evaluates development of the three above listed spheres in conditions of a relatively continual development, the major motive of East-European study is to record big cities being influenced by the revolutionary transformation of economic and social system. This process has been initiated in the late 1980's and has not been ended yet.

Methodological approaches of both studies are slightly different. This is caused by the fact that at the side of institutions of European Community worked especially economists and other experts, while at the East-European side co-operated only geographers. Consequently, our study emphasises, above all, spatial connections of the phenomena. However, the study attempts at registering mechanisms of decision-making, too.

Results of the research made by Central European partners are naturally based upon the long-term research of studied problems. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to respond to the coordinator's requirements in a relatively short period of time. One part of them has been taken from the dissertations of authors. The focus was concentrated on analysis of topical trends resulting from the process of transformation.

From this viewpoint it is important that in the Czech conditions, two ways of transformation encounter. The first of them is a result of global evolutionary progress. This way would have been accomplished with no regard to political changes in Central and Eastern Europe (development of urbanisation, automobilisation, the impacts of technological changes, etc.). The second way was created by these political changes. In the large number of cases, the results of these two transformation

forms accumulate. The analysis has been worked out by means of field research/ on-site research, interviews with responsible officers of city authorities and other bodies, and by processing the data.

The results of the study, achieved during a few weeks, provide a certain image of the situation in Central European towns. Besides the existing studies, with an economical or social focus, this is a viewpoint that considers environmental aspects. In spite of that, it is apparent that even in the sphere of environment the social, cultural and economic dimension gain importance. Major reason is the fact that actual environmental policy leaves the position of perpetual opposition and political character of problems and becomes a responsible agent in the territory. Especially in the territory of towns it is necessary to create and protect the environment for people, not from people and against people.

The teams of authors would naturally be glad to maintain the work and co-operation. There are several possible ways. The first of them is deepening studies of partial problems by means of more detailed techniques, including inquiry research, and closer co-operation with town councils. The second one is enlarging studies with other selected towns (in Moravia especially with Ostrava that significantly varies from any other town ever analysed) and with other problems (for example gentrification, suburbanisation, restructuralisation of economy platforms, etc.). The third possible way is better employment of results of international collaboration, for example by common research. Research of mentioned subject is scientifically interesting and needed in practice. This issue of MORAVIAN GEOGRAPHICAL REPORTS should give the impulse for continuation of the research.