

# **PARTS OF THE CITY OF OSTRAVA – THE PAST AND CURRENT STATE OF URBANONYMY**

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## **Parts of the city of Ostrava – The past and current state of urbanonymy**

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the development and current state of the street names in the main parts of the city of Ostrava. It covers essential features of progress with respect to the history of the city and political changes. It offers analyses of individual ranges according to the stated standards and monitors the development of significant motives. The main aim of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of the chosen ranges and to point out their general features.

**Keywords:** urbanonymy, factors of urbanonymy, identifying and commemorative names, urbanonymic types.

## **Introduction**

In my contribution I discuss the typology of urbanonymy, its origin and development regarding the conditions affecting its formation. The core of the study consists of an onomastic analysis and comparison of some selected areas of the urbanonymic system; I also delineate the characteristics of different urbanonymic types. The work is based on the research of the Ostrava street nomenclature, which I describe in my PhD thesis. Ostrava is the third biggest city in the Czech Republic and is the center of the Moravian and Silesian region.

## **Factors of urbanonymy**

City street names are included in the literature between hodonyms (as their sub-category) or referred to as urbanonyms. In this study I work with terms such as *urbanonym* (city street name) and *urbanonymy* (set of city street names). I understand urbanonym as an official name of an area in the city (street, square, quay, district etc.). Urbanonymy is the system that includes all official toponyms of the city area.

Before I begin to characterize and compare the selected areas, there are some important questions that need to be asked relative to the establishment and functioning of urbanonyms:

- Where, in what circumstances and why are they created?
- How are they created?
- How do they work?
- Which conditions influence their establishment and functioning?

These questions are answered in the following diagram. It illustrates the influence of external conditions on the formation and development of urbanonymy.

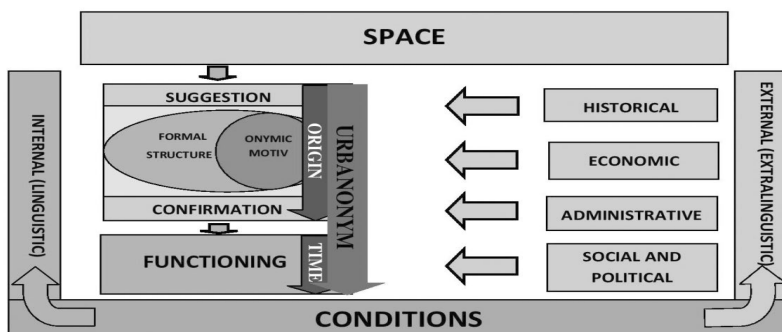


Figure 1. Factors of urbanonymy

**Space** is an essential condition of urbanonymy. It consists of the developed area (village, township, city). On the (inhabited) territory a wide variety of unofficial natural names appear, which emphasize the identifying function, but the emerging urbanonymic system is connected to certain residential assumptions – particularly to the development and concentration of housing estates with regard to the nature and extent of the space. Simply numbering houses ceases to fulfill an orientation function, as the existing onymic system of space appears inappropriate.

A new urbanonymic system can also occur regardless of these natural reasons. It may be the result of adding an independent municipality (in which there were no street names, as it was not necessary) to a greater whole (where the urbanonymic system has already existed and it is necessary to complete it). Its appearance in this case raises the pressure of the urbanonymic system on the joined parts.

The urbanonymic space can be divided in different ways:

- traditionally, according to the area type – street, avenue, square, quay, garden, park etc.;
- according to location: intra muros and extra muros, center and outskirts;
- according to the character of the development – urban and rural;
- according to more detailed specifications – the historical core, inner city, housing estate and connected villages.

Along with space, the **conditions** create basic assumptions and the context of urbanonymy. I distinguish internal (linguistic) and external (extralinguistic) conditions. As shown in the diagram, they are linked and the external conditions affect the internal conditions.

The **internal conditions** of urbanonymy express name binding to the language, linguistic reality and linguistic system. I consider formal structure and onymic motive as the basic operators that are associated with the emergence of the name and its functioning in time.

The **origin of urbanonymy** occurs when the internal and external conditions interact, linking linguistic reality and the pressures of the outside world in a certain area. Processes

of proprialization and transonymization are influenced by the effect of administrative regulations and interventions, and by potential economic, historical, social and political effects. I discriminate between administrative and linguistic aspects of naming.

As regards the administrative aspect of naming a public space, a series of laws and regulations are adopted (in Ostrava starting with the year 1857). Street names are proposed by the municipal district. The choices are based on databases of proper names, the nature of space and current (unofficial) names, but they can be based on the stimuli of citizens and polls. The proposed names are assessed by the committee in terms of functionality, suitability and compliance with the law. Afterwards the names are approved by the city council. The administrative consequences of the process include the change of orientation, financial costs for municipalities, businesses, and difficulties for residents of the area.

From the point of view of onomastics, proper names fulfill many functions (individualizing, localizing, differentiating etc.). They are mediated by the naming motive and formal side of a name: two inseparable parts, the inner and outer side of any onym (Šrámek 1999: 32).

The basic requirement in terms of formal (surface) structure is economy of naming (brevity, clarity, conciseness, effectiveness).

**Formal structure** allows three views of urbanonymy: word formation aspects, name formation and morphology. Word formation and name formation reflect the structural and derivative account and form a systemically constitutive component of proprial language layers. They are tied to name formation, everyday communication and are present in every proper name (Šrámek 1999: 36). In terms of word formation, names can be distinguished as one-word, two-word, multiple words; name formation analysis follows the origins of urbanonyms, which can be created from appellatives and proper names. Morphology assesses the value in terms of parts of speech, as applicable to individual morphological categories. All groups can be further divided by types.

According to **onymic motive**, two large groups of names can be noticed in the urbanonymic system: identifying and commemorative.

An identifying name is linked to the street itself, it expresses its direction, property, character, a significant (present or past) object, that is (was) located there or it reflects an earlier place name, the occupation of its inhabitants etc. This type of urbanonyms is older and more stable.

The second group is characteristic of commemorative motivation. This naming motive is not related to the nature, location or orientation of space – it reflects the names of significant public figures of local, national or international importance (regionalization, nationalization, internationalization), organizations, interest groups, major events or abstract concepts. Unlike the (older) possessive motivation, honorification is not associated with real property relations to the object, but only with symbolic ones (David 2011: 215). Honorific names appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and are less stable. They are present mainly in the city center, in the center of inner city parts, and also reflected housing estate construction in the post-communist countries. They are usually attributed due to their prestigious character. In contrast to the relatively limited repertoire of names, there is a very wide supply of honorific names.

Over time there has been a dynamic development of individual urbanonyms and the urbanonymic system under the pressure of the external conditions. The **functioning**

consists especially of: title renaming, name return, name abbreviation, name oscillation, name transposition, inaccurate naming, extinction of the area, discrepancy between the official form and common use.

**External conditions** apply to internal (linguistic) conditions and affect them. I distinguish historical, economic, administrative, social and political conditions. These conditions are not strictly isolated from each other, but they come into contact to emphasize certain aspects that influence the development or functioning of urbanonyms.

**Historical conditions** express the time frame of urbanonymy. They represent the natural history of the city. They are present in urbanonyms from minor-place names (environment, nature of the areas), from vanished buildings (urbanonyms are a part of the history of a city). They reflect the development and transformation of the onymic motives and formal structure of names, and influence the function of the urbanonymic system. Of course, commemorative motives survived historical characters, movements and events.

**Economic conditions** are closely related to historical conditions, but unlike them they emphasize the development dynamics (recession, conjunction) and industrial character of the city and its parts. In urbanonymy they are manifested by selecting the onymic motive – commemorative (urbanonyms from the factory owners, officials, experts and scientists) and identifying (industrial, supporting the industrial buildings: mines, factories, businesses). From another perspective we can consider the signs of the economic conditions (brevity, clarity, conciseness, effectiveness) to be abbreviated urbanonym forms. In compliance with the administrative conditions, they reflect the economic aspect of renaming (changing of municipal and corporate documents, identity cards, the costs of street signs).

Economic conditions have always performed a significant role in Ostrava's urbanonymy. They show the city's growth (industrialization, increase of population) at the turn of the nineteenth century. The original agricultural character of Ostrava has been replaced by spontaneous development (factories, workers' colonies), slowly leading to urbanization and centralization and has been accompanied by (among others) the urbanonymization of the city. After World War II the character of the city (and also the urbanonymic system) was affected by the rise of housing estates, which caused population loss in the city center and the inner city.

**Administrative conditions** determine the rate of administrative (official) interventions into the urbanonymic system. They are governed by laws and regulations. They are ubiquitous – they are connected with name formation, renaming and disappearance – and accompany the standardization of urbanonyms. The administrative apparatus is responsible for the operation of urbanonymic system – it records all changes in the urbanonymic system and plays a critical role in selecting and approving new names, naming affiliated parts, as well as in mass renaming as a result of political changes. Administrative conditions are quite closely related to social and political conditions, which are promoted through them.

**Social and political conditions** significantly affect the urbanonymic system (its formation and functioning), influence its stability, combine the naming of the city space with the terms of the outside world – regional, national, international.

The result is the existence of a layer of more or less stable commemorative names which are mostly unrelated to the city space and which carry a risk of renaming. Consistently applying honorification makes orientation in the city difficult, as evidenced by numerous

renaming waves in the twentieth century (in the Czech Republic in the years 1919, 1939, 1945, 1989).

If we add to them socially significant policy changes and administrative measures related to the expansion of the urban area (in the years 1924, 1941, 1957, 1976), we could talk about the great dynamics and urbanonymic system variability.

Social and political changes are accompanied by certain spontaneity, flamboyance, link with tradition and history, belief in the future of the nation, country or ideology.

### **Selected urbanonymic districts of the city of Ostrava**

The city of Ostrava is located in the eastern part of the Czech Republic, on the border of the historical territory of Moravia and Silesia, at the confluence of the Odra and Ostravice rivers. The medieval town of Moravská Ostrava (Moravian Ostrava) was located here in the thirteenth century, but its boom only really came in the middle of the nineteenth century due to coal mining and industrial development, especially in the field of metallurgy. In the twentieth century, development continued, modern housing estates were under construction and urban areas expanded. Currently over 300 000 inhabitants live in Ostrava and it consists of 37 parts. About 3700 names appeared in this area during the development, and nowadays 1900 urbanonyms are located there.

We assume that each urbanonymic system consists of small, separate sectors. On the one hand, they are unique and unmistakable; on the other, in some respects they are identical to other (similar) units and form urbanonymic types. We expect that there will be a different character and naming system in the historic center, in its adjacent areas, housing estates and on the outskirts of urban areas, where rural types of buildings prevail. With regard to the specific developmental features and different character of naming, I will be working with four different areas (Moravská Ostrava, Hrušov, Poruba and Hošťálkovice), which are representative of the city core, the inner city, housing estate and rural area respectively.



Figure 2. Selected urbanonymic districts

The basic question is – if and how the urbanonymic system reflects the character and development of its parts.

All urbanonyms in the selected districts (current and past) were analyzed with reference to four different aspects, which are the subject of further analysis: word formation, name formation, motive of naming and morphology.

**Table 1. Examples of analysis**

Aspects of analysis	<i>Jiráskovo náměstí (Jirásek Square)</i>	<i>Ulice U Dolu (Street At the Mine)</i>
<b>Morphology</b>	Nominative singular denominal possessive adjective	Genitive singular binding of preposition and noun
<b>Word formation</b>	One word formation derived with the suffix <i>-ovo</i>	Two-word prepositional formation
<b>Name formation</b>	Transonymization, formation from proper name (deanthroponym)	Proprialization, formation from appellative (common noun)
<b>Naming motivation</b>	Honorification, nationalization; Alois Jirásek (1851–1930), Czech novelist, playwright, author of historical novels	Identification according to the important building in the street; Location according to the former mine called Hubert

### Graphical comparison of the development of urbanonymic motives in the selected districts

The development of various aspects of the analysis in the selected districts is clearly described by its graphical representation. It tracks the development in diachronic and synchronic comparison in each of the motives and allows us to characterize the development of motives in different periods of the districts and compare the different kinds. As an example, I show the graph that tracks the development of the commemorative motive of the districts.

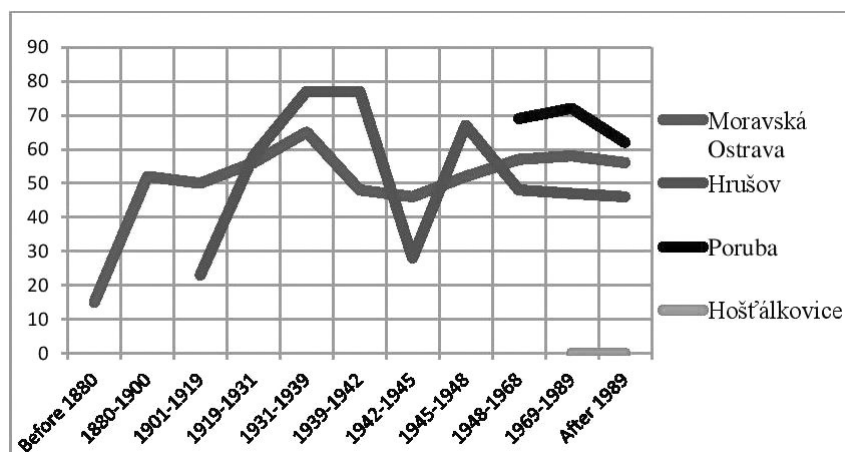


Figure 3. Development of commemorative names

The timeline is divided by milestones chosen with regard to historical, economic, administrative, social and community development, which is reflected in urbanonymy. The most important are: 1919 (the alteration of urbanonymy after the formation of the independent state), 1931 (the stabilization of the Ostrava street nomenclature), 1939 (the beginning of the Nazi occupation), 1945 (the end of World War II), 1948 (the communist coup), 1989 (the restoration of democracy). All information is shown with regard to the different district sizes as percentages. The oldest urbanonyms appear in Moravská Ostrava in the second half of the nineteenth century and they emphasize especially the identifying function. In the following stages, the commemorative names play an essential role in the formation and functioning of urbanonymy. We can also notice a few other characteristics:

- dynamic development of urbanonymy in Hrušov (inner city),
- lower proportion of commemorative names during the Nazi occupation,
- apparent urbanonym stabilization in the second half of the twentieth century,
- high honorification in Poruba (housing estates),
- low honorification in Hošťálkovice (rural area).

### **Urbanonymic types**

In the following part an overview of the urbanonymic types is presented. All are documented in the diagrams illustrating relevant motives.

#### ***Urbanonymic type I – City core (Moravská Ostrava)***

The historical heart of the city, its center and constitutive element is Moravská Ostrava (founded in 1269). It is the largest part of today's Ostrava and also the only part where we meet the medieval pre-official street names. We can find the oldest group of official names (from the year 1857) and a wide variety of types there. The results of the analysis and comparison show (see Figure 4) that the system has undergone a series of interventions that reflect the social and political changes, especially in the twentieth century (renaming, returning of names). Honorific names prevail there. These are typical, prestigious names that reflect the regional, national and international character. There are numerous medieval names. An orientational motive seems to be obvious as well – urbanonyms derived from the significant object in the street, crafts or names reflecting local names. One word deproprial adjectives dominate there.

Motivation from the anti-Nazi resistance representatives appears infrequently and motivation from plants, animals, prepositional names, two-word deantroponymic urbanonyms and appellative urbanonyms are not represented at all.

We can again notice a few other features:

- the motive of regionalization is traditional and seems to be more stable;
- the motive of nationalization emerged after the Czech Republic formed, is very strong and dominates all stages, except the era of the Nazi occupation;
- the motive of internationalization is very significant at the end of the nineteenth century and before 1919 (Austro-Hungarian personalities), and important during the Nazi occupation (German personalities), but records a decreasing tendency after World War II;



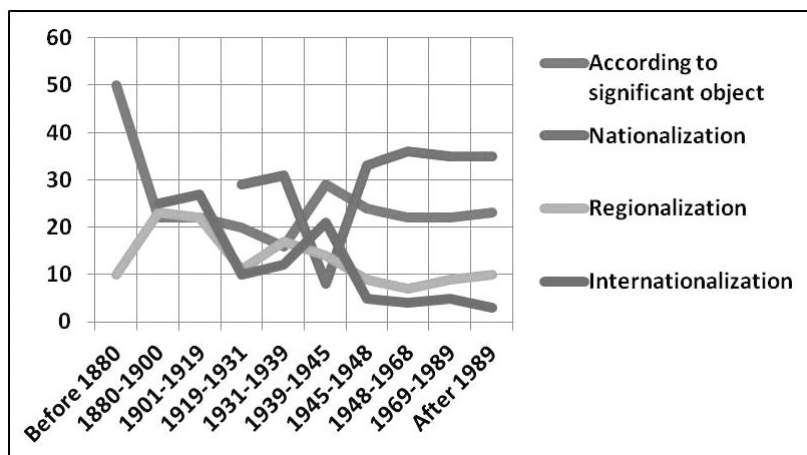


Figure 4. Development of relevant motives of naming in Moravská Ostrava (City core)

- the proportion of urbanonyms from significant object prevails at the beginning of urbanonymic development and in the era of the Nazi occupation.

#### *Urbanonymic type II – Inner city (Hrušov)*

At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, the rural area was transformed into a city area, especially around the historical center of the city (but wherever there were suitable conditions). This process was especially caused by the industrialization of the area (coal mining, metallurgy) and was accompanied by the arrival of labor, worker colony construction, transport and urban infrastructure development.

This dynamic is also reflected in urbanonymy. For urbanonymic systems of this type, there is a typical clash of Czech and German elements, which reflects the ethnic structure of Moravian towns and is manifested by high honorification and frequent renaming throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The names alternate references to important Austro-Hungarian, Czech and German personalities, and after World War II, to important communist movement representatives and the anti-Nazi resistance leaders. The character of urbanonymy symbolizes current control of the urban area by the nation or ideology.

The industrial character is indicated by identifying urbanonyms that are motivated by the position of the streets near factories, mines, and regional honorification by their owners, important senior officials and internationalization from scientists. Urbanonyms are one-word, deproprial, denominal possessive adjectives derived from anthroponyms, as it was the case with the historical part. The development of word formation motives in the individual parts can be difficult.

The character of urbanonymic systems has changed under the influence of economic conditions. In the last fifty years in Hrušov the number of urbanonyms was reduced (67→56); the number of atypical motives for this type rose (plant and prepositional names), and honorification decreased. This documents the weakening of the prestigious character and the decline



of the district, which have, of course, their obvious causes (removing inhabitants to housing estates, destruction of the chemical industry in the early 1990's and the flood in 1997).

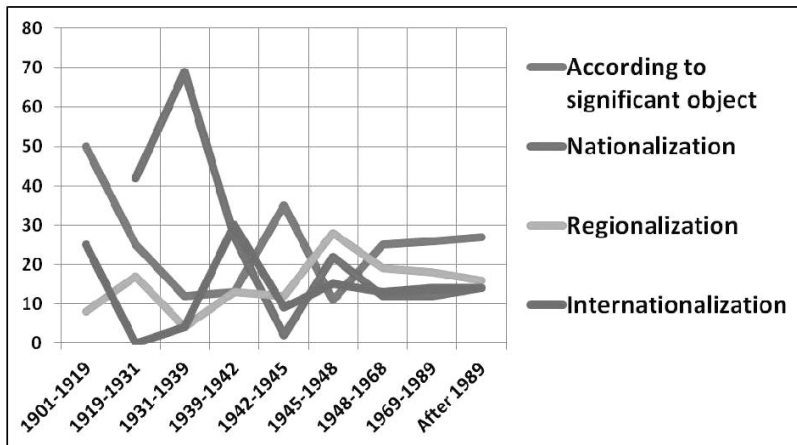


Figure 5. Development of relevant motives of naming in Hrušov (Inner city)

We can notice:

- greater dynamics in the inner city than in the city core;
- the motive of nationalization is the strongest during 1919–1939 and substitutes other previous motives;
  - in the second half of the twentieth century the motive of nationalization declines and the motive based on significant objects rises in coherence with the weakening of the prestigious character of the district Hrušov;
  - the development of the regionalization and internationalization motive is similar in the city core.

### ***Urbanonymic type III – Housing estate (Poruba)***

From the early fifties, the building of modern housing estates occurred in socialist Czechoslovakia. A typical example might be the Poruba housing estate, which was built in the years 1953–1957 in the area of the village of the same name. It represents a new type of urbanonymy and is characterized primarily by having little connection with the previous character of the area and the interruption of natural development. It shows high honorification, particularly nationalization and ideologization of the space – urbanonyms are derived from the figures of the Czechoslovak and international communist movement, representatives of the anti-Nazi resistance, from organizations and movements. This type of urbanonymy is not characterized by strong dynamics. An example may be a reflection of the social changes after 1989. Systematized naming is characteristic of housing estate urbanonymy, in which individual urbanonyms are linked by a formal or semantic aspect – in Poruba, there are commemorative names from socialist states. The surface structure of housing estate urbanonymy is characterized by a high proportion of nouns, mainly names consisting of two-word anthroponyms, and a low proportion of possessive adjectives.

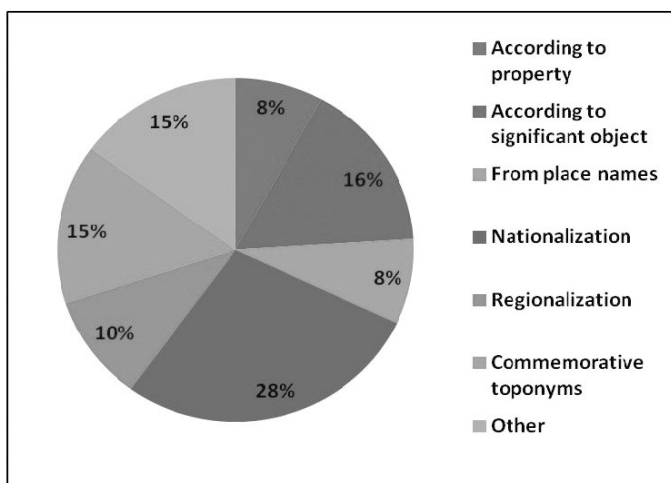


Figure 6. Contemporary relevant motives in Poruba (Housing estate)

#### ***Urbanonymic type IV – Rural area (Hošťálkovice)***

In connection with urban area expansion (in Ostrava since 1941) another type of urbanonymy must be mentioned, which maintains a permanent liaison with the rural character of space and buildings. These urbanonymic areas usually arise by administrative methods and they tend to have a small range, for example in Hošťálkovice (32 urbanonyms). The identifying motivation prevails in this district. There are typical urbanonyms from significant object or significant determinant of the property, inspired by minor-place names, urbanonyms from the plants and animals or reflecting agricultural character of the space. Commemorative names, when they occur, have (low prestigious) regional character and highlight changing nature of space under the influence of economic conditions.

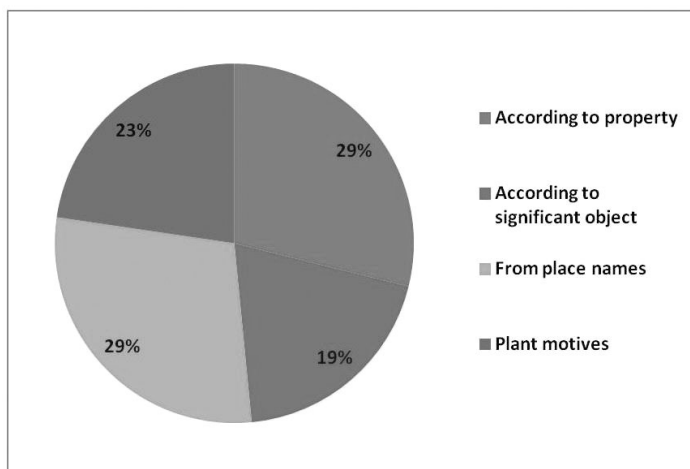


Figure 7. Contemporary motives in Hošťálkovice (Rural area)

Urbanonyms arise mainly from deappellatives and are characterized by a higher proportion of prepositional structures. For this type of urbanonymy, relational adjectival and nominal forms are typical.

### ***Boundary urbanonymic types***

On the boundary of rural and urban development there are still two urbanonymic subtypes that affect the dynamic of the urbanonymy and state pressure of urban development on the edge of the urban land (building of housing estates or industrial complexes). Economic and social conditions change the character of the space where urban types and rural characteristics immediately pervade. In urbanonymy they reflect the growth of honorification and the loss of prepositional names and the change in the character of the urbanonymic system. Such a development has occurred in several boroughs – e.g. housing estate construction in the district Výškovice, the emergence of the metallurgical complex in the district Kunčice etc.

### **Conclusion**

After analyzing and comparing the development of motives in the selected parts of Ostrava, the basic and boundary urbanonymic types have been characterized:

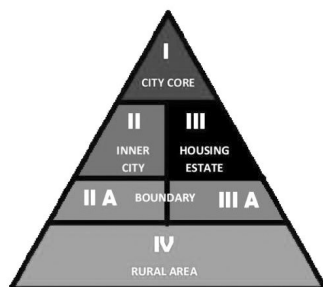


Figure 8. Urbanonymic types

Consequently, an urbanonymic map of Ostrava could look as follows:



Figure 9. Urbanonymic map of Ostrava

An attempt to define the different types of urbanonymic sectors has a lot of specific aspects:

- the starting point is a thorough analysis of urbanonyms;
- the whole is superior to individual names;
- each unit has a unique character;
- units, where similar conditions prevail, have common characteristics;
- urbanonymy reflects the development of the space under the influence of certain conditions;
- a small sector was examined: the need of further research and a wider comparison which will prove the validity and accuracy of the present results;
- the research of the identifying function of honorific urbanonyms deserves special attention.

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