

## **Abstract**

In the context of the planned implementation of the High Speed Rail (HSR) megaproject in the Czech Republic, speculations, stories about the future, revitalization discourses as well as positive and negative expectations related to the impacts of the project implementation are beginning to take shape and circulate in the affected regions and cities. The Czech Railways Administration (Správa železnic) is currently working with the possibility of routing the HSR Prague – Dresden through the city of Ústí nad Labem, the research site of the presented work, and with the possibility of building a special railway terminal in its centre, despite the original concept of territorial development. However, the exact form of the route and the terminal remains unclear, which, apart from the plan itself, causes a number of disputes and speculations. Some actors frame the project as a major opportunity for positive change in the city and the region, while many perceive the route through the centre of Ústí as a major threat and a radical negative intervention into the very fabric of the city, and for some the whole issue is elusive or ambivalent. The aim of this thesis is to describe by means of the method of discourse analysis how the narrative of the future of the city of Ústí nad Labem is articulated and legitimised within various discursive practices through the infrastructural promise of the HSR terminal. The thesis addresses the following research questions: How do imaginaries of the future affect the present and manifest themselves in the present through the discursive practices of infrastructural promises? How is the time as a phenomenon itself discursively and politically mobilised? The thesis is a qualitative work based on a discourse analysis of field research data (interviews and observations), complemented by data from existing textual and audiovisual materials (primarily strategic and territorial administrative documents and recordings of the Ústí City Council meetings). The theoretical framework of the thesis is provided by the literature on the anthropology and politics of time, and the anthropology of infrastructures. The thesis describes the operations of infrastructural promises in the present, within the specific modality of infrastructural temporality that is the deferred and planned megaproject in relation to imaginaries of local urban development.

## **Keywords**

Ústí nad Labem - high-speed rail - future - temporality - urban planning - transport infrastructure - anthropology of infrastructures - infrastructures - urban anthropology - anthropology of time - chronopolitics - European integration - discourse analysis