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## Meditorial Development in the Czech Republic

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### Abstract

This paper deals with chosen immaterial factors of regional development. As it is shown, media play rather relevant role in contemporary territorial development of the Czech Republic. The themes that appear namely in national media, co-determine the socioeconomic developments in country's regions considerably.

**Key words:** media, regions, regional development, Czech Republic, soft factors of regional development

### 1 Introduction

Not surprisingly, 21<sup>st</sup> century is commonly called the century of information. Informational needs currently represent such an important category that they are comparable with the saturation of physiological needs. Media – and no matter whether printed, such as newspapers or journals, or electronic, such as TV or radio – are undoubtedly the primary source of information.

At the same time, media formed the environment that directs our everyday activities. Media influence the functioning of individual subjects as well as whole territories. In brief, individuals or enterprises that do not appear in media are losing their existence in virtual world and become inconspicuous also in the real world. And the same applies to regions. Regions without media publicity are largely omitted by investors, tourists as well as wide public.

If the region appears in the media it still does not mean any victory since investors, tourists and the wide public are pretty sensitive on the composition of news about individual territories. If the region is depicted in a positive way, it often lures the above mentioned target groups; vice versa, negative news repel these target groups and the region can easily fall into psychological and economic vicious circle. Succinctly, media in relation to regional development do matter. The main aim of the article is to show that although it is seldom stated, media represent one of the most important immaterial factors of regional development in the Czech Republic.

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## 2 Relations between National and Regional Media

National media are practically unlimited when choosing the topics. They can refer to foreign happenings as well as domestic ones. Domestic news can be brought from the capital city or from regions located outside the capital city. Image of particular region behind its borders is shaped mainly by national media. They disseminate the information about regional issues on nationwide level. In spite of the fact they collect the materials from various parts of the country, their main influence is describable by ‘top-down’ principle with almost no feedback.

People from the western part of the country get the information about their eastern counterparts mainly by means of national media. But since the people from the west have only vague notion of the reality in the east, they are compelled to rely primarily on news provided by national media. From this point of view, national media bear a great responsibility in terms of objectivity and exactness of regional news. Unfortunately, central editors have typically only a very little knowledge about true life in individual regions and they have practically no relation (neither professional, nor emotional) to these territories. Therefore, if they prepare or edit the news from particular region, they are often isolated from reality, which can be markedly seen just in the Czech Republic.

It is not necessary to underline that prejudices, stereotypes, ignorance and other habitual informal institutions play a cardinal role in this context. Central media thus actually function as an informational filter between true happenings in the regions and regional images in the whole country.

It is undeniable that national media usually have their own regional branches. However, contributions from regions that appear in national newspapers or on TV programs are modified just according to the preferences of central editors in order to attract the attention of readers or lookers in the whole country. Succinctly, these contributions must be shallow but very easy to swallow in order to comply with the rules of infotainment, which prevails in national media (see also [1]). In spite of the fact that contributions are created by regional or local editors that are usually familiar with local or regional settings, the final form of these news is rather distorted as form supersedes contents more and more.

Other media, such as journals, rely on reportages of their own reporters. These reporters spend quite a short time in the given region and subsequently bring the reportage about some attractive regional topic, which can be sold easily. The main problem however consists in the fact that two or three days the reporters spend in the regional settings constitute absolutely insufficient time span for any deeper penetration into the nature of local or regional problems. Consequently, regional reportages differ from the reality in regions and localities.

Regional media that are much more familiar with true happenings in regions<sup>1</sup> can basically influence only inhabitants of regions concerned. In other words, foreign investors read or

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<sup>1</sup> To draw more accurate picture of regional/local media, one has to mention that apart from numerous pros they are characterised also by some cons. As [2] stress, spatial proximity of journalists and principal societal actors often leads to certain hibernation of existing local/regional political and economic structures, which is supported just by local or regional media. The common practice in the Czech Republic is that owners of local/regional media are forced to maintain ‘good relations’ with local/regional politicians as they often possess also other enterprises that get the orders from local or regional managements. Such kind of specific ‘relationship marketing’ is advantageous both for huge and impenetrable entrepreneurial empires on the one hand and regional or local political elites on the other hand.

watch national media first and most often they can see merely Prague regional mutation of national newspapers.

In the Czech Republic, the spatial distribution of media is heavily centralized. This fact corresponds to the administrative structure and socio-economic disparities in the framework of the country. All principal media are concentrated into the capital city. At the same time, one has to take into account that Prague also functions as an administrative, political and socio-cultural center of the country. This is the factor that endangers the territorial objectivity of news.

This centralistic organisation of media principally influences the way, in which media inform. National media headquartered in Prague often depreciate the importance of regional events for the whole country. Subsequently, rather than about territorial development, we are increasingly entitled to speak about media-territorial or directly meditorial development<sup>2</sup>.

### 3 'Nationalisation' of Regional Media

Czech media scene at the level of national media underwent very dynamic development in transitional period. This development can be perceived as a result of big competition on a relatively small Czech market on the one hand and large activities of strong foreign (namely German) investors on the Czech media stage on the other hand.

In spite of technical developments, press still plays very important role in the Czech Republic. While in 1989, there existed 5 national newspapers, in 1992, at the time of hasty privatisation, their number reached 14. Currently, their number shrank to 6. Concentration processes are not typical only for newspapers but also for electronic media.

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<sup>2</sup> While media influence the formation of mental maps in the short run, textbooks namely at elementary and secondary schools do the same in the long run. Generally, textbooks represent one of the most frequently used didactic instruments as well as one of fundamental sources of geographical knowledge. Undoubtedly, textbooks play highly relevant role in the process of the formation of informal institutions as well as the space-related stereotypes and attitudes. The school curriculum of given era is not mere reflection of knowledge, but also of the dominant value system. At the same time, it forms the future knowledge as well as future value system. The attention paid to the composition of texts and figures in the school textbooks is far from optimal so far. Textbooks are often negatively beset by stereotypical view on various regions (see for instance [3]). The importance of the school textbooks for the formation of mental maps is undeniable mainly in the long run. School textbooks reach such a high degree of importance because they essentially predestinate the general perception of regions in the eyes of the whole generation of people. The image of the region can be thus improved only through the systematic marketing work that cannot omit the long-term perspective. And the same applies also to local/regional management [4]. School as the main source of knowledge, skills and behavioural patterns, apart from the family and the media, greatly contributes to the shaping of attitudes, images and stereotypes [5]. From this point of view, it is worth to mention the importance of school textbooks in the process of the formation of informal institutions towards countries, regions and cities. The formation of mental maps actually commences already in the heads of pupils just by means of school textbooks that are one of the most important didactic tools. More importantly, these informal institutions gained in the youth accompany the individuals essentially the whole life and tend to be inertial in the adulthood. Both media and school textbooks very often offer the superficial and simplified image of the reality. There exists the inertia of images, which are remaining unchanged for a long time, despite the fact that the reality they pretend to depict has altered greatly. Undoubtedly, these trends hamper the materialization of the attempts to change the negative or stereotypical images of the regions that are often made by local and regional authorities. Endeavours that are directed towards the improvement of regional images have to reckon with both short-term and long-term perspectives otherwise their efficiency would be lowered.

In 1989, at the time of the dusk of socialism, all 8 regions had their own newspapers. The same applied to district newspapers. Obviously, the news they produced were in consonance with regime's preferences and lacked the democratic character. All of these regional/district newspapers have been privatised after 1989. At that time, regions and localities enjoyed more newspapers that covered respective territories. This was useful not only from the perspective of competition but in most cases it brought also multiperspective informing of the population.

Situation, when regional or local newspapers have been managed primarily by editorial offices that had their seat in given region or spot lasted approximately till the end of 1990-ies. At the end of 1990-ies, all regional and local newspapers have been bought by powerful foreign investors that merged formerly more or less independent newspapers.

[6] shows that in such a 'united' regional press regional topics are actually gradually disappearing. What is striking even more is that contemporary editors-in-chief of virtually all regional newspapers are located in Prague and manage all relevant questions connected with regional and local press. Obviously, if editors-in-chief are located in one place, which is also the case of the Czech Republic, they can be easily controlled by foreign owners. In other words, practically no independent press exists out of Prague nowadays.

All regional and local newspapers are produced centrally and genuine regional news occupy approximately one third of individual copies. Local or regional journalists produce the articles concerning local/regional issues but these are further controlled by geographically (and usually also psychologically) distant editors. Remaining two thirds of materials are produced exclusively from the central editorial offices and comprise themes, such as domestic and foreign political issues, life of celebrities, leisure activities etc.

Hence, various names of local or regional newspapers form merely different wrappings of newspapers, whose contents is in 60%-70% the same. Moreover, these media with regional or local names in reality do not possess decisive competences concerning the structure and general strategic direction of the newspapers. These conceptual issues are solved out of regional or local editorial offices. Regional/local redactions thus became mere branches or executors of commands created out of the regions and localities in question.

Obviously, the steps depicted above, which are usually justified by contemporary severe competition bring amply negative impacts on Czech regions and localities. Foreign owners of the press in the country logically act according to their economic urge that aims at profit. Subsequently, they strive for the attraction of sufficient quantity of advertisers. And the original function and mission of media is set aside.

In that way, specific media monopolies are created at the territory covered by non-central localities and regions. This always brings the danger of monoperspective view on regional/local issues. Main editors, who do not live in territories concerned obviously cannot become familiar with regional or local settings. This fact is detrimental to the objectivity and accuracy of the final shape of newspapers.

Moreover, such kind of press can only hardly contribute to the formation of regional consciousness and regionalism. Regional or local media should promote the sound regionalism since it forms an indispensable part of real qualitative development at the local or regional levels and subsequently also at the level of the whole country. Unfortunately, this is not the case of current Czech media.

These tendencies influence the efforts of important players of local and regional development in a negative way. For these actors – and no matter whether economic, political or cultural ones – the communication with media is one of the most relevant activities. They get the important information from the media on the one hand and address the public just via media on the other hand. In this context, already described alienation of local and regional media can affect the destiny of individual Czech territories in a fatal way. In other words, apart from the limited economic and administrative autonomy of Czech regions, a distinct move towards the lack of informational autonomy of these regions is observable too.

#### 4 Regional Topics in National Media

As already indicated, monocentric character of the location of Czech media manifests itself in accentuation of events that happen in the capital city and depreciation of happenings out of this city. Media that have exclusive seats in the capital city often judge the events in regions (namely in more remote ones) in a distorted way. While the events that occur in the geographical proximity of media headquarters are often preferred, the other happenings are frequently being unnoticed or ignored, which takes place both intentionally and inadvertently. In that way, one-sided and non-complex view on the events in the country is formed.

While some territories are mentioned quite frequently in media, the other are named often only in connection with some marginal happenings. Activities that occur in any territory are always bound to the population present in the given space. From this perspective, also the news concerning individual regions that appear in national media should be roughly in balance with existing settlement system<sup>3</sup>.

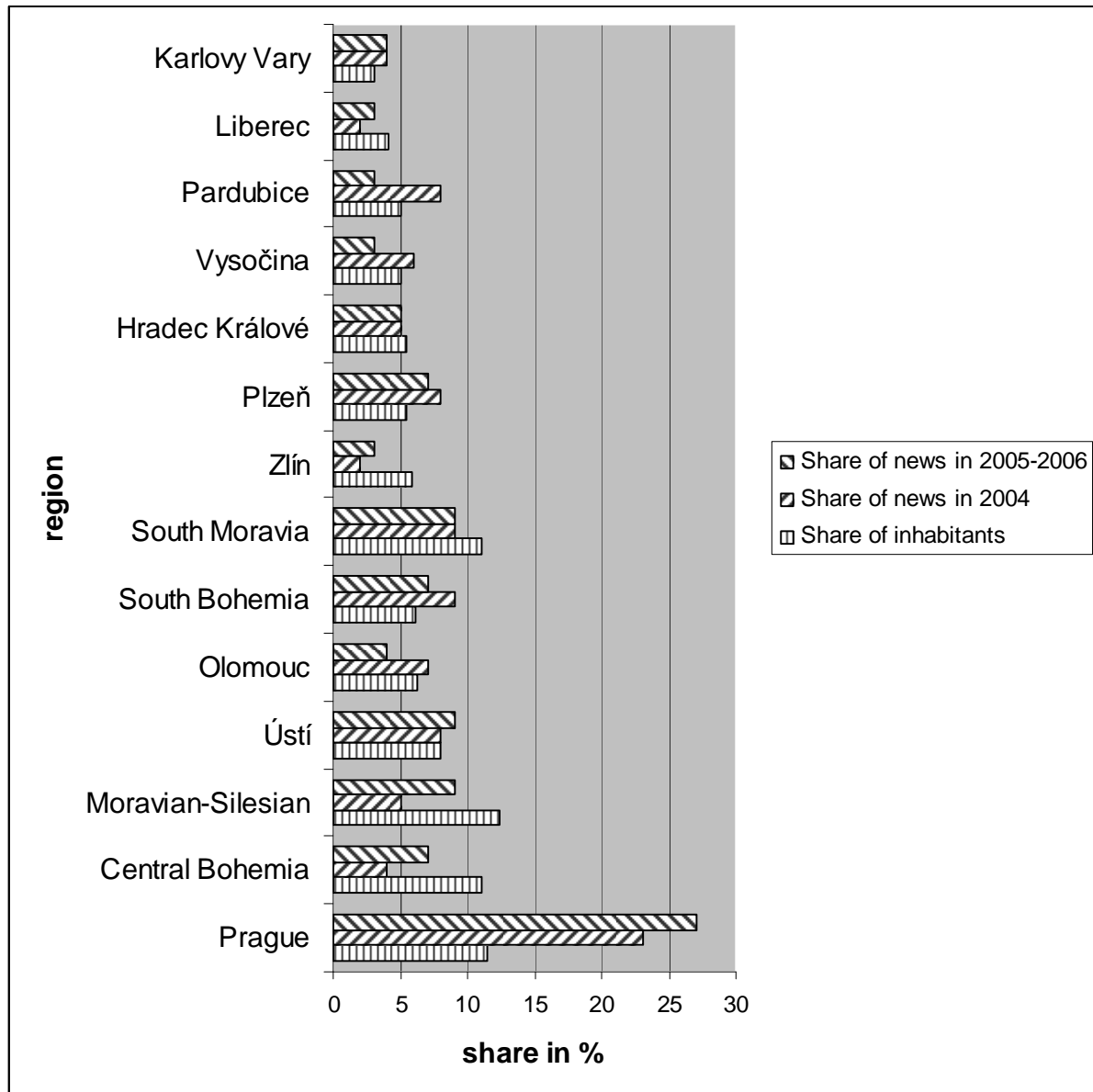
Figure 1 discloses, what was the share of regional contributions on national media news between 01 - 06/2004 and 01/2005 – 06/2006<sup>4</sup>. The figure provides us with an important information, how often could Czech people hear about individual regions in their national media, i.e. how frequently the regions in question were on their minds. At the same time, share of inhabitants of individual regions on the total population of the Czech Republic is recorded there.

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<sup>3</sup> Ratio of inhabitants of given region on the total number of country's inhabitants is naturally only orientational indicator of the bulk of activities in the given territory. Aggregate social and institutional structures do matter too as well as economic importance of the region, its infrastructural endowment, its entrepreneurial activities, tourist attractiveness, geographical location, cultural specifics etc.

<sup>4</sup> Media analyses are rather fresh phenomenon in the Czech Republic, therefore, we have to take with very short time series. National media were analysed in the afore mentioned time span, which already provides sufficiently long period in order to avoid random changes, extraordinary events etc.

**Figure 1: Share of Regional News in National Media between 01 – 06/2004 and between 01/2005 – 06/2006.**



**Source:** Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author’s Calculations

In 2004, strongly heterogeneous location of Czech media manifested itself in the fact that practically one fourth of all news was connected with the capital city<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, Prague’s share on total Czech population reached approximately 11%. Prague’s dominance turned out to be detrimental for instance in case of Central Bohemia that surrounds the capital city. This could be ascribed to ‘sucking’ effect from Prague.

Zlín region or Moravian-Silesian region represent the most remote areas in relation to the capital city not only from geographical, but also from psychological standpoint. While Zlín region’s share on the Czech population was roughly 5.8 %, its share on the Czech news

<sup>5</sup> Obviously, all capital cities have certain nationwide functions, such as foreign policy. Therefore, the analysis concentrated exclusively upon these references in national media that are connected with territorial contexts of Prague as well as other regions. In case that these regional territorial contexts would be omitted, victory of Prague in all categories would be an overwhelming one.

reached mere 2%. The same applied to Moravian-Silesian region, where respective numbers amounted to 12.4% for population but only to 5% for the coverage (for more details see [7]). Remaining regions had more or less proportional share of news and population on the aggregate national statistics.

Between 01/2005 and 06/2006, some interesting moves in the share of regional news in national media happened. First, Prague's unique position has been further fortified. The same applies to Central Bohemia, where 'sucking' effects from Prague were overpowered by diffusion effects from that city. Hyperconcentration of all kinds of activities into Prague causes general diffusion effects that hit namely Prague's hinterland. It is observable for instance in the sphere of economic investments, housing etc. and finds its spatial reflection also in media. In spite of this, Central Bohemian share on news in national media is still lower than its share on the total Czech population.

Relative growth of media contributions in Moravian-Silesian region is of different character. Closer analysis reveals that much attention is paid to the economic topics in that territory. This is caused by economic troubles of this old industrial region on the one hand and newly prepared investments (mainly into the car industry) on the other hand. Some regions, such as Zlín, Vysočina or Liberec are relatively of trouble-free character and subsequently, they are not medially so attractive. This may be caused by rural character (such as Vysočina region<sup>6</sup>) or by the distance (such as Zlín region) from national media.

Generally, in Czech media, all activities, events, virtually every element of life is territorially labeled either as 'nationwide', i.e. important and principal or as 'provincial' or 'local', i.e. irrelevant, small and almost ridiculous. Subsequently, practically all events that happen out of the capital city are labeled as provincial or local with a hidden message that regional or local means minor, little or something, which should not be taken seriously. Naturally, this suppresses regional consciousness and true regional development that has no space to develop. Czech media thus often act as polluters, which affect the thinking of population and brake local and regional developments.

Fundamental quantitative analysis has shown us that there exists also certain media superiority of the capital city in relation to the remaining parts of the country. Next chapter brings a qualitative view on the regional information in Czech national media.

## **5 Composition of Regional Themes in National Media**

### **5.1 Economic Topics**

Composition of regional economic topics in national media is divisible into agricultural and purely economic themes. As for agricultural topics, one has to take into consideration that this economic sector is generally quite neglected not only in media but also in general life. More attention is paid only to these agricultural issues that have something to do with country's membership in the European Union. Therefore, the regions with biggest agricultural sector in

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<sup>6</sup> Actually, a lot of news about Vysočina region is connected with its geographical location, when the most frequented highway cuts the region's territory. Therefore, this sparsely populated region is exposed to many socioeconomic interactions and flows, which are not managed directly from Vysočina.

the country (i.e. South Bohemia, Vysočina or South Moravia) occupy rather great portion of regionally-related national agricultural news.

**Table 1: Regional Economic Themes in National Media (in %)**

Region\Topic	Economic Life	Agriculture	Economic Policy
Prague	20.0	5.4	15.4
Central Bohemia	8.3	10.6	5.1
South Bohemia	5.9	37.2	6.2
Plzeň	4.2	3.2	2.7
Karlovy Vary	1.9	0.3	2.4
Ústí	6.6	2.9	8.6
Liberec	3.2	3.8	1.0
Hradec Králové	4.2	2.2	3.1
Pardubice	2.2	1.0	0.7
Vysočina	2.5	5.8	0.3
Olomouc	4.6	3.8	5.8
South Moravia	9.2	16.3	5.5
Zlín	3.2	3.5	1.4
Moravian-Silesian	23.8	3.8	41.8

**Source:** Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

View on economic life and economic policy brings seemingly paradoxical dominance of Moravian-Silesian region. This has much to do with recent economic developments in this region. As a traditional industrial territory<sup>7</sup>, this region represents very sensitive entity not only from economic, but also from social and environmental perspectives. Old industrial areas in the Czech Republic became the target of contempt and ignorant attitudes after 1989 stemming from their alleged favouritism in the communist era.

Every new investment in these regions is contemplated with a suspicion and certain envy in the rest of the Czech Republic. [8] brought ample evidence that no other highway as D47 that will connect Moravian-Silesian region with other parts of the country initiated so many media tensions. It is only hardly possible to reckon the formidable bulk of contributions in media that concerned the building of this highway. These contributions concentrated namely on alleged environmental and economic problems connected with the building of that highway.

<sup>7</sup> As already mentioned, geographically distant or functionally different regions represent probably the most sensitive entities in terms of territorial imbalance of national news. In the Czech Republic, Ústecký and Moravian-Silesian regions can be perceived as territories that are beset by references in national media (see for instance [7], [8] or [9]). Old industrial regions can be characterized by traditionally bad image, which is partly caused by objective facts on the one hand but overall life of these regions underwent the profound transformation in last 15 years on the other hand. The bad reputation acts as a true bane for these regions, since it discourages potential visitors, investors and reduces the number of interactions with the outer world in general. Unfortunately, national media very often ignore positive events in these regions and on the contrary, hunt down for negative phenomena, such as criminality or unemployment. Reputations of these regions consequently remain hibernated or even worsen in the course of time. Numerous people that did not visit such kind of regions adopt the negative attitude towards these regions just under the influence of national media. Old industrial regions consequently find themselves in certain isolation. Obviously, it affects the activities of the inhabitants in the region that realize that they are 'sentenced' to the setbacks. They are exposed to the underestimation and the distrust of the other regions, which culminates in the form of brain drain and subsequently, the territory finds itself in the vicious circle of institutional rigidity. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence that principles of aforementioned cumulative causation are working (see [8] or [9]).



In reality, this was mere creation of media haze by different interest groups (see [8], [9] or [10]).

The similar situation occurred a bit later and was connected with new and important investment into the car industry in Moravian-Silesian region. While this investment would help this territory severely befallen by policies (or ignorance) of both pre-1989 and post-1989 regimes, numerous voices against this investment started media propaganda again. It is worth to notice that there are several investments of similar rank in the country, however, no one stimulated such an intense media emotions. It seems that voices against both investments were led by the intention to postpone their accomplishment as much as possible. This can be perceived as a kind of dirty interregional competition.

There is also next ground for the dominant position of Moravian-Silesian region in economic themes: almost one half of the economic topics is related to unemployment. Unemployment constitutes one of traditional themes linked with Ústí or Moravian-Silesian region. In the long run, an interesting feature of news tackling with unemployment can be traced: they concentrate primarily upon the growth of unemployment, while its decline, which also happens sometimes and is definitely positive news, is largely omitted.

Naturally, consciousness of big or growing unemployment<sup>8</sup> to a certain extent paralyses practically all human activities in regions concerned. This is connected with the fear of the loss of jobs, which brings distrust and tension that are then transposed to interpersonal relations. From economic point of view, we are entitled to speak about the rise of transaction costs. This unfavourable situation is further multiplied by media since they write about growing unemployment almost every day<sup>9</sup>. So, it is always worth to ask, how unemployment grows, but also why unemployment grows?

Indeed, the causes of media attention are sometimes rather complex ones. However, usual winner of media themes, Prague, occupies the second position because the city is decisive economic node of the country on the one hand and all essential economic indicators differ from the rest of the country considerably on the other hand.

Ústí region, next traditional industrial territory, occupies the third place. Ústí region is forced to cope with similar socioeconomic problems as its Moravian-Silesian counterpart. However, the attention devoted to Ústí region is not so big as in case of Moravian-Silesian region, which may be caused by stronger familiarity of Prague's journalists with territory of North Bohemia (i.e. Ústí region) because of relative geographical proximity. From this perspective, the psychological distance of Moravian-Silesian region to the capital city is undoubtedly much bigger than in case of Ústí region.

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<sup>8</sup> It is not necessary to underline that sacking is as an open wound that harms the whole body of individual, subject, region or state not only economically but also psychologically. [11] states that if the enterprise finds itself in the crisis, it is worth to consider carefully the possibilities of more efficient utilisation of employees before any bigger dismissals. According to him, this strategy is applied and performed by the growing number of German firms. Usually, dismissals are seen as the painful tool of coping with economic troubles. However, these are mostly routine measures. [11] claims that in most cases, there exist also different routes, how to improve the economic performance of the firm and sacking is not necessary. He stresses that it is useful to abandon the routines and schemes of our own thinking.

<sup>9</sup> From this perspective, one cannot avoid the hypothetical thesis about 'control rate of unemployment'. This rate, which is hardly detectable, would in practice mean that elite groups can curb the whole regions by persistent media repeating of the high rate of unemployment. If unemployment rate declines under 'control rate of unemployment', media managed by these elite groups would disregard this fact.

## 5.2 Societal Topics

Societal topics traditionally lure the attention of wide public. In topics that depict general life of the society, media contributions concentrate primarily upon Prague. In topic pertaining to art and culture, the supremacy of the capital city is apparent even more. Only Plzeň region, which lies in the western part of the country and comprises fourth biggest town of the Czech Republic enjoys quite a lot of attention about art and culture at the national level.

Information about social life are presented mostly as examples of right and full-value life, which is according to media possible exclusively in the capital city. In the sphere of art and culture, all institutions (no matter whether theatres or galleries) that are located out of Prague, are named as ‘provincial’. Big cultural events happening in ‘provinces’ are typically being disregarded or even lampooned. Sport news and mainly sport successes are related to Prague in almost one half of all cases.

Security represents rather specific domain. Although media report most frequently on the security in Prague, statistics shows that there are not such big discrepancies in real level of crime. More precisely, for Prague, hidden, financial and sophisticated forms of crime are typical. This can be accounted for by the strong concentration of the capital in this city.

The further ground for contributions concerning security in Prague is much greater bulk of people that flows on city’s territory every day, which exceeds the city’s population. This can be explained by tourists, visitors, people that work in Prague but live in different regions or people that are forced to go to the city for the sake of working matters. This concentration of people obviously attracts also criminal activities.

Last but not least, concentration of economic elites into the capital city brings also raised fear of the crime. In other regions, economic issues are often perceived as the most important ones, however, in Prague, where economic needs are basically fulfilled, an attention focuses upon crime. It has to be stated that criminal events in the capital city are also a bit exaggerated due to the proximity of media that grow the image of ‘dirt of the city’, which can be perfectly sold to the wide public.

**Table 2: Regional Societal Themes in National Media I (in %)**

Region\Topic	Society	Art, Culture	Sport	Security
<b>Prague</b>	35.3	38.1	47.9	28.1
<b>Central Bohemia</b>	4.3	3.8	7.3	8.3
<b>South Bohemia</b>	8.6	6.3	3.8	4.8
<b>Plzeň</b>	4.8	18.2	0.7	9.4
<b>Karlovy Vary</b>	3.8	8.6	1.7	4.3
<b>Ústí</b>	7.2	2.6	3.1	8.8
<b>Liberec</b>	3.6	2.0	5.9	4.1
<b>Hradec Králové</b>	4.2	1.8	3.1	5.6
<b>Pardubice</b>	2.1	0.9	3.1	2.1
<b>Vysočina</b>	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.0
<b>Olomouc</b>	2.8	2.1	3.8	3.4
<b>South Moravia</b>	9.8	6.8	6.9	7.7
<b>Zlín</b>	3.9	3.9	5.9	2.3

<b>Moravian-Silesian</b>	7.4	3.0	4.2	9.1
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Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

**Table 3: Regional Societal Themes in National Media II (in %)**

<b>Region\Topic</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Social Policy</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>Prague</b>	44.6	28.8	62.6
<b>Central Bohemia</b>	2.9	9.5	5.2
<b>South Bohemia</b>	3.7	1.2	3.5
<b>Plzeň</b>	2.1	0.8	2.6
<b>Karlovy Vary</b>	1.1	2.1	0.0
<b>Ústí</b>	10.4	11.5	7.8
<b>Liberec</b>	4.8	3.7	2.6
<b>Hradec Králové</b>	2.7	11.9	5.2
<b>Pardubice</b>	2.2	2.1	0.0
<b>Vysočina</b>	3.6	3.3	2.6
<b>Olomouc</b>	1.7	3.7	2.6
<b>South Moravia</b>	9.2	4.9	2.6
<b>Zlín</b>	1.7	3.3	0.9
<b>Moravian-Silesian</b>	9.2	13.2	1.7

Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

Similarly to other spheres of life, Czech political scene also starts and ends in Prague. From regional point of view, there are numerous connotations that Prague's communal politics is somewhat of a different rank than communal or regional politics in other parts of the country. The political peculiarity of Prague among other regions can be clearly seen also in the volume of news devoted to the political life of the capital city.

The same – and even more intensely – holds true for churches. Due to the complicated economic relation between the churches and the Czech state, the main media attention focuses upon Prague again. At the same time, it has to be mentioned, that Czech society is generally rather secular one, which also brakes further development of churches and belief in all parts of the country.

In contributions pertaining to social policy we have to distinguish two basic components:

- Social policy, which is created almost exclusively in the capital city on the one hand,
- Serious social problems that concern several regions.

The latter applies for instance to previously mentioned Ústí or Moravian-Silesian regions.

### 5.3 Infrastructural Topics

After the evaluation of economic and social topics, it is only hardly surprising that in the sphere of education and science the most media contributions are connected with Prague again. While over 40% of all news is devoted to Prague, no other region surmounts 10% share in media coverage on education and science.

**Table 4: Regional Infrastructural Themes in National Media (in %)**

Region\Topic	Public Health	Transport	Education, Science	Energetics
Prague	24.5	38.2	40.3	7.8
Central Bohemia	10.1	7.6	3.1	2.9
South Bohemia	7.3	4.1	6.9	34.3
Plzeň	4.4	3.5	2.4	8.8
Karlovy Vary	2.2	2.6	2.8	4.9
Ústí	8.8	12.2	8.3	19.6
Liberec	2.7	6.6	7.3	0.0
Hradec Králové	5.0	6.6	2.4	2.9
Pardubice	1.5	1.5	1.4	2.9
Vysočina	2.9	1.2	3.5	5.9
Olomouc	3.1	0.8	2.8	0.0
South Moravia	14.4	7.7	9.7	2.9
Zlín	2.7	1.0	3.5	0.0
Moravian-Silesian	10.3	6.4	5.6	6.9

Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

Unfortunately, this reflects real investment preferences in these key spheres of life. Similar situation can be found in rather strategic domain of transportation as the capital city represents also the transportation heart of the whole country.

As for public health, the distribution of media contributions proved to be a bit more even. This is explainable by the emotional and dramatic process of the privatisation of health care and the hospitals that caused very often antagonistic attitudes of interested parties. However, also in the sphere of health services Prague differs from the rest of the country considerably.

The theme of energetics was affected mainly by never ending disputes concerning nuclear power station Temelín, which is located in South Bohemia. This issue stimulated a great interest also at the Austrian side of the border. Ústí region occupies almost one fifth of Czech energetic topics, which is in consonance with its industrial character.

From this perspective, it is quite surprising that media share of further strongly industrialised region – Moravian-Silesian region – is so small. However, it can be accounted for by relatively trouble-free run of energetic industry in this region, for which sharp technical and organisational discipline is typical.

Further infrastructural – and rather vogue and modern – topic concerning informatics was in comparison with previously described themes mentioned surprisingly rarely. In any case, Prague's share on informatics reached almost 50% again, which support its image of not only rich but also progressive city in the Czech space.

#### **5.4 Environmental Topics**

Nature and environmental protection constitute increasingly important issues. Concurrently with the growing wealth of the society, an attention is paid also to the environmental quality

of life. In the sphere of nature, larger attention is devoted to regions lying in Bohemian part of the country. This is explainable by recreational needs (or rather preferences) of inhabitants of Prague.

**Table 5: Regional Environmental Themes in National Media (in %)**

Region\Topic	Nature	Environmental Protection
Prague	8.4	3.9
Central Bohemia	13.7	7.3
South Bohemia	6.5	10.4
Plzeň	5.6	3.1
Karlovy Vary	5.7	1.7
Ústí	12.2	35.8
Liberec	5.2	6.8
Hradec Králové	10.5	13.5
Pardubice	3.3	5.9
Vysočina	3.0	2.0
Olomouc	7.8	1.4
South Moravia	6.6	1.4
Zlín	4.5	1.4
Moravian-Silesian	6.9	5.4

Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

An interesting situation is observable in the area of environmental protection. Share of Ústí region is in compliance with its traditional industrial features. This region was befallen by communist industrial megalomania, which took no account of environmentally friendly technologies.

Hradec Králové region, which has no major environmental problems is on agenda quite frequently in both 'environmental protection' and 'nature' domains. Generally, after 1989, the quality of environment improved tremendously in practically all regions.

One should not forget that country's most industrial Moravian-Silesian region bears formidable environmental handicap from the past. Moravian-Silesian environmental load is even worse than that in Ústí region. At the same time, Moravian-Silesian share on the topics related to environmental protection is almost negligible in spite of the fact that industry of Moravian-Silesian region is the biggest polluter of the air and water in the whole country and by far the biggest producer of hazardous waste in the Czech Republic. Possible explanation of biased media contributions lies again in the relative spatial proximity of Prague media to Ústí region.

## 5.5 Other Topics

Areas of traffic accidents and justice deserve our special attention since they are the second and the fifth most frequented topics in analysed period in absolute numbers. These topics are related to individual regions in spite of the fact that they have barely some connections with territorial development. However, their frequent occurrence shows the evidence of

commercialisation of Czech media on the one hand and low level of conscience of regional developmental topics on the other hand.

Traffic accidents are distributed regionally relatively evenly in media and constitute almost inherent part of news. They fill in both electronic and printed media and create a certain dubitable and queer reference on the locality or region where the accident happened.

Justice is the next topic often mentioned not only in the Czech Republic but practically in all transitional countries. Immature state of the law in combination with general characteristics of the society provides numerous opportunities for illegal behaviour. Since the capital is mostly concentrated into the capital city, it naturally lures various parties and individuals. Moreover, as already mentioned, security and justice create topics that can be sold very easily. This explains the dominance of Prague in the category of ‘justice’.

Both traffic accidents and justice take the eye of the population off the regional developmental issues. Both topics touch the urges of curiosity on the one hand and acrimony on the other hand. In that way, the attention of population is distracted. These tendencies can be perceived as one of results of systemic degeneration of informal institutions during socialist period and it naturally applies to both journalists and their readers or viewers.

Topics pertaining to public administration issues confirm political-administrative centralisation of the country as more than one half of these news focuses on Prague. Bureaucracy undoubtedly becomes the topic inherent to the capital city. Regional themes are represented relatively evenly, which may be linked with general underestimation of regional issues in national media<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 6: Other Regionally-Related Topics in Czech National Media I (in %)**

Region\Topic	Traffic Accidents	Justice	Regions	Public Administration
Prague	13.1	40.4	19.7	53.0
Central Bohemia	8.9	4.7	6.3	4.5
South Bohemia	8.5	2.5	4.5	7.7
Plzeň	7.6	11.2	6.6	1.6
Karlovy Vary	4.9	1.8	4.0	6.7
Ústí	9.0	8.4	10.4	5.1
Liberec	3.7	2.0	10.9	2.6
Hradec Králové	5.3	5.3	5.6	2.2
Pardubice	4.1	1.1	2.3	2.2
Vysočina	4.4	0.7	5.3	2.2
Olomouc	6.2	6.4	5.1	0.6
South Moravia	11.5	8.2	10.1	6.7
Zlín	3.5	0.6	1.3	3.2
Moravian-Silesian	9.1	6.7	8.1	1.6

Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author’s Calculations

<sup>10</sup> As already indicated, for national media, only these events that are lucky enough to take place in the centre are important ones. On the contrary, regions are treated as something small, provincial, inferior and almost ridiculous. Hence, regional themes in national media are often limited to regional differentiation in prices of petrol, gas or electricity etc.

At the first glance, it is surprising that in historical topics, Prague is exceptionally at the second position after Ústí region. The explanation lies in the Czech-German relations, for which the history is one of the most delicate issues and Ústí region represents one of the most important gates between Germany and the Czech Republic, where numerous not only idyllic historical events took place.

Contributions about international events bring next vigorous proof about country's centralisation. Almost 70% of national media news about international events is devoted to Prague on the one hand and four regions (Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Olomouc and Zlín) have not been mentioned at all on the other hand! This only confirms previous thesis only these happenings that are lucky enough to take place in Prague do matter in Czech media world.

Monocentric organisation of Czech media scene and its manifestations are confirmed by the results from the category 'media'. Subsequently, inhabitants of the country get the impression that everything that happens out of the capital city is somehow of inferior character and if they do not live in Prague, they are 'sentenced' to lower level of life.

There are also some topics that are mentioned only occasionally. While in case of 'universe' it is quite comprehensible, in case of 'globalisation' and mainly 'European Union' it is already startling.

**Table 7: Other Regionally-Related Topics in Czech National Media II (in %)**

Region\Topic	History	International Events	Media
Prague	25.2	68.0	60.5
Central Bohemia	7.2	1.0	3.5
South Bohemia	9.0	4.0	1.2
Plzeň	6.3	4.0	1.2
Karlovy Vary	2.7	8.0	4.7
Ústí	36.0	6.0	1.2
Liberec	0.9	2.0	1.2
Hradec Králové	0.9	0.0	5.8
Pardubice	1.8	0.0	1.2
Vysočina	0.0	2.0	4.7
Olomouc	2.7	0.0	2.3
South Moravia	1.8	2.0	10.5
Zlín	2.7	0.0	0.0
Moravian-Silesian	2.7	3.0	2.3

Source: Internal Materials of Innovatio Agency + Author's Calculations

As already mentioned, road casualties are on daily agenda of Czech media, while globalisation and European topics appear only occasionally. It only provides the evidence of tabloid character of Czech media that focus on daily and highly controversial issues and give them the seal of highest relevance. Unfortunately, processes and issues, which are truly important and have increasing impact on the opportunities and limitations of individuals, economic and other subjects, localities, regions as well as the whole countries and continents are largely ignored in Czech media.

## 6 Conclusions

From spatial point of view, media can be perceived as rather relevant and at the same time aggressive institution. Monocentric location of Czech media manifests itself namely in accentuation of events that happen in the capital city and depreciation of happenings out of Prague. Spatial concentration of Czech media in the capital city brings monoperspective and biased perception of reality in the Czech Republic.

Naturally, the images of regions are formed primarily by composition of regional themes in national media. The production of information in the capital city and their top-down spreading with almost no feedback resembles also other centralistic mechanisms in the country. Prague keeps the primacy in the number of contributions in national media and is labeled by plentiful attractive themes, such as social life, art and culture, education, science or international relations. On the contrary, geographically distant or industrial regions are persistently depicted as territories with the concentration of negative phenomena and events. Mental maps, which are based upon the information from media, subsequently co-determine spatial socioeconomic relations and interactions as well as investment preferences. Media thus co-shape the contemporary as well as the future socio-economic map and contribute to the country's centripetal character. Hence, rather than about mere territorial development, we are currently entitled to speak about media-territorial development or directly meditorial development.

Soft factors of territorial development are still underrated in the Czech Republic. Marketing activities – namely these at national and international levels – should stress the positive elements and phenomena occurring in all Czech regions. At the same time it is worth to observe both quantitative and qualitative composition of news in media and texts in school textbooks as they form mental maps in the short run and in the long run, respectively. Decentralisation or relocation of decisive media, which is typical in advanced countries, represents further interesting challenge for modification of spatial profile of the Czech Republic.

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