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# MEASUREMENT OF SOFT FACTORS IN THE EU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF MEDIA IMAGE OF CZECH REGIONS

## Měření měkkých faktorů v regionálním rozvoji EU: Příklad mediálního obrazu českých regionů

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### Annotation

*In the European Union, there is the belief that with the limited development potential of European territory, the endogenous development factors have become more important. However, there is a lack of a systematic and simultaneous assessment of the role soft factors. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussion and to extend the existing knowledge of the theoretical and methodological foundation of the geographical research of the importance of “soft” factors and the importance of media image of regions as one of the intangible factors in the Czech Republic. Results of literature review showed the majority of studies of soft factors of regional development in central eastern countries of the EU have focused on the human and social capital or institution. Image of the region influenced by media (TV) is one of the intangible factor which is rarely included into evaluation of regional development factors. Anylysis revealed that media landscape of the Czech Republic does not always comply with genuine features of individual regions.*

### Key words

*media, regional development, soft factors*

### Anotace

*V Evropské unii převládá přesvědčení, že s omezeným rozvojovým potenciálem evropského území se stále důležitějšími stávají faktory endogenního rozvoje. Systematické a souběžné hodnocení role měkkých faktorů je však nedostatečné. Cílem článku je přispět k diskusi a rozšířit dosavadní znalosti teoretických a metodologických východisek geografického výzkumu významu „měkkých“ faktorů a významu mediálního obrazu regionů jako jednoho z nehmotných faktorů regionálního rozvoje v České republice. Výsledky literární rešerše ukázaly, že většina studií měkkých faktorů regionálního rozvoje v zemích střední a východní Evropy se zaměřují na lidský a sociální kapitál či instituce. Obraz regionu ovlivněného médii (TV) je jedním z nehmotných faktorů, který je do hodnocení faktorů regionálního rozvoje zřídka zahrnut. Zjistilo se, že mediální prostředí České republiky ne vždy odpovídá skutečným rysům jednotlivých regionů.*

### Klíčová slova

*média, regionální rozvoj, měkké faktory*

**JEL classification:** C80, O18, R11, R12

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the interest in the issue of spatial development and imbalances in the European Union (EU) has increased and has been analysed in numerous studies using a variety of different approaches. The reasons can be seen in the fact that economic growth theory has advanced greatly over the last decades. The EU's internal diversity and inequalities are reflected in the quality of living standards, different pace of development of the European territory and also spatial organization of economic and social activities. The spatial economy was given new impetus in the 1990s with the work on the new economic geography, which provided economists with new tools

to examine why and where population or economic activity is located. Assessment of regional (spatial) development and disparities (mainly at the level of NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 regions) and identification of key development and competitiveness factors, that may contribute to increasing the dynamics and development potential, is crucial to adopt the measures supporting the long-term growth of regional economies. (Poledníková, 2018) Policy makers need a clear sense of its current position and latent factors of competitiveness to better understand the potential development options and limitations for countries and they can more clearly identify the required interventions to the best use the factors of competitiveness and development. (Staničková, Melecký, 2014)

In the EU, there is the belief that with the limited development potential, the endogenous development factors have become more important. The difference between any two regions lies in the soft and intangible factors, either in better regional branding (image) and marketing as well as in the reputation management or in other, more subtle ingredients. These factors are more difficult to identify and consequently to replicate, especially since they relate to human factors, namely trust and confidence, culture and guarantee of stability. In other words: “people make the difference”. (European Association of Development Agencies, 2006)

There is no uniform approach to analyzing (factors, indicators, methods) of the level of performance, development potential and competitiveness of the regions at the European level and in the member countries at national level. (Poledníková, 2018) Most of researchers prefer the approach of quantitative methods with using indicators of so-called “hard” (tangible) factors of regional development. The “hard” factors of regional development (geographical and socio-economic ones) are more easily measurable than the so-called “soft” factors (in particular social and human capital) which are moreover more difficult to measure territorially. Systematic, simultaneous and quantitative assessment of the role “soft” (intangible) factors is still limited in the EU. One of these soft factors represents the media. The mass media play a critical role in the EU’s public sphere by informing citizens about the national and EU issues. Despite the increasing acknowledgement of the significance of the mass media, there is scant research on media coverage of various national or European topics and the impact on the socio-economic development of regions. (Carrascosa, Mendez, Triga, 2018)

*The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussion and to extend the existing knowledge of the theoretical and methodological foundation of the geographical research of the importance of “soft” factors and the importance of media image of regions as one of the intangible factors in the Czech Republic.*

To achieve the aim of the paper, *the method of a literature review* is used. The method of literature review objectively describes and discusses the state of the science of a specific topic from theoretical and contextual point of view. Literature review has an important role in continuing education because it provides current thinking and research on a selected area of study, and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area. (Poledníková, 2017) Relevant literature was identified through a literature search in several academic databases (i.e. Web of Science, Scopus, internet search engine Google and Google Scholar), using various combinations of related keywords (soft and hard factors, intangible and tangible factors, media, exogenous and endogenous regional development, evaluation, EU, Czech Republic, regions). The articles were then studied and analysed in terms of their theoretical and methodological approaches, main findings and conclusions.

After Introduction, Section 2 covers the theoretical framework of soft factors of regional development. Section 3 introduces a set of published studies dealing with the role of media and mental maps representing the intangible factors and reports the analysis and the results of media image of regions in the Czech Republic. Section 4 draws the main conclusions.

## 2. Factors of regional development

It is only in the last decades that the economic literature increasingly highlights the role of intangible factors as key drivers of growth and development. The novelty of the current endogenous approach to economic growth lies in its focus on endogenous resources (not only physical capital but also intangible assets) as well as on endogenous process. More specifically, endogenous growth fosters additional externalities linked to the intangible assets (such as learning, networking, personal and social capabilities, etc.) that impact positively the productivity of factors. Information societies, knowledge economies, smart cities have become then the key factors for a breakthrough of the spatial organization of towns, social relations and even political participation. (Montalbano, Palumbo, Valentin, 2014, p. 3).

## 2.1 Exogenous and endogenous factors of regional development

Most of the authors point out that the regional development should be viewed from different perspectives taking into consideration a combination of factors, such as geographical, historical, economic, institutional and social attributes (exogenous and endogenous factors characterized by quantitative and qualitative indicators) (see e.g. Cheymetova, Nazmutdinova, 2015; Rivera, 2012; Raszkowski, Głuszczyk, 2015; Klímová, Žitek, 2015; Slavata, 2018). According to Benneworth, ESPON (2006) distinguishes the following dimensions of the region:

- the so-called hardware equipment (hardware) of the region that are tangible and visible elements of the region, such as technical infrastructure, production factors;
- the so-called software package (software) of the region, which can be classified as institutional structure, social infrastructure;
- the so-called intellectual equipment of the region (mindware), which includes cultural identity and *image of the region*.

These components of the regional development have different ability to respond to the changes carrying out in the region, while it can be claimed that the most flexible is the hardware equipment. A key element in the regional development is knowledge, their creation, transfer and management.

Over the past decade, the interpretation of endogenous regional capacity has led to a change of paradigm from the classical development factors to the innovative ones; from the hard factors to the soft or intangible factors; from the functional approach to the cognitive one (Ďurková, Čábyová, Vicenová, 2012, p. 91). The potentials associated with exogenous and endogenous factors and “hard and soft factors” differ widely between EU countries, especially the central and eastern European countries (CEE). From this regional perspective, one of the most important general features of post-1989, socio-economic development in CEE has been a dramatic increase in the level of regional disparities. Basic regional development trends were identified such as the increasing primacy of capital cities, the widening gap between urban and rural areas, the declining performance of old industrial regions, and the emerging relevance of the West-East gradient in the level of socio-economic development. While “soft” features of regions and localities relate predominately to their individual characteristics, such as talent, education, culture and entrepreneurial spirit, the geographic location of a particular region (both its vertical and horizontal geographic position, which is often referred to as the West-East gradient in most of the CEE countries) is considered to be the most important “traditional” factor of regional development. (Blažek, Netrdová, 2009). Also Ďurková, Čábyová, Vicenová (2012, p. 90) stated that changes in the central and eastern European countries do not have the same character as the changes in the countries where the market principle worked also after world war. In this context, the following aspects should be particularly highlighted while analysing regional development factors in the CEECs. Firstly, the systemic transformation, despite its substantial progress justifying the hypothesis of the convergence of development processes with highly-developed countries, can still be evaluated at the regional level in the short rather than long term. Therefore, it can be expected that the role of exogenous factors in the development success of regions should be more prominent than that of endogenous factors. Secondly, these countries can still be regarded as semi-peripheral in terms of development level compared to highly-developed countries. In consequence, even the core regions can rely more strongly on exogenous rather than endogenous factors, which will be more likely to provide the foundation for the influx of external capital. Thirdly, extensive disparities in the economic structures across and within countries can result in the growth factors being strongly differentiated in consequence of the structural dissimilarities between the core and peripheral regions. The former should be more prominently included into information economy, which may be manifested by the development of knowledge-intensive services and high-tech industries, whereas the latter should be much more strongly embedded in the industrial, and in some cases, agrarian, development models. The factors which are most frequently quoted as those informing regional divergence include (Smętkowski, 2014, p. 2–3):

- *Exogenous factors*, related to the accessibility of a given region, which either enables or facilitates the influx of inward capital. This, in effect, gives an advantage to regions with large international airports (mainly capital city regions), and also to the western regions of these countries, which are more easily accessible from the better-developed neighbouring countries and which have enhanced access to European sales markets. On the other hand, regions situated along the external eastern border of the European Union attract much less interest from foreign investors, also as a result of their underdeveloped technical infrastructure.
- *Endogenous factors*, related to the size and diversification of the economy of a given region (agglomeration effects) and to the quality of its human capital (in particular the percentage of residents with higher education) as a factor promoting the development of enterprise, innovative businesses and specialised business services. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that development based on the local innovation capacity is a phenomenon rarely encountered in CEE countries; in many cases, these factors rather tended to foster the transfer of technologies and duplication of solutions from highly-developed countries. In effect, at an advantage were the regions of large cities furnished with adequate education and research infrastructure,

which boosted the quality of the human capital needed for the development of information economy in a strong institutional environment that supports the development of the local enterprise.

- *Structural factors*, related to the presence of sectors with a higher added value in a given region. In particular, the situation differed from region to region in terms of the share of advanced producer services in the regional economy, the role of industrial processing or the scale and intensity of agricultural activities. In effect, slower development could be observed in agricultural regions and in the majority of regions with a heavy concentration of traditional material-intensive and resource-intensive industries, that is, in old industrial districts.
- *Traditional factors*, denoting the volume of investment inputs and effective use of the available labour (while trying to reach the natural unemployment rate), in compliance with the Cobb-Douglas production function).

Nevertheless, traditional approaches to regional analyses (such as exogenous and hard factors) do not enable one to answer the question of whether the operation of key factors of regional development and development potential. This lack of empirical analyses is in contrast with the conventional spatial planning practice, which often automatically assumes positive effects of endogenous factors in the CEE countries. In addition to the above mentioned traditional regional development factors we assume that, “soft” (intangible) factors also play a significant role in the development of CEE countries.

## 2.2 Soft factors of regional development

The importance of endogenous soft factors for development of regions, cities and rural areas is emphasized by many European authors, see i.g. Boryczko (2007), Keune (2011), Antonescu (2015), Jóna (2015). According to European Association of Development Agencies (2006, p. 12) main intangible factors that combine to deliver the regional competitive edge relate to elements including: an entrepreneurial, venture-prone culture; the anticipation of new needs; governance; leadership; social capital; a critical mass of finance and talent; serial entrepreneurs; i.e. factors that cannot be moved from one place to another. According to ESPON (2006) tangible factors such as natural and human resources, investment, infrastructure and towns with additional functions to agglomerations have often been considered as decisive factors for a vibrant rural economy, current research highlights the significance of less tangible or soft factors. Kalnina-Lukasevica (2003) emphasises the importance of education, innovations and the human capital. She introduces the *Synthesized Model* which enables to identify causation of regional development trends, the priority areas of policy and recommendations and intervention to stimulate economic development. Model emphasizes the necessity to clarify the attitude of population towards the matters influencing economic processes and to provide a qualitative assessment of the implemented development policy (sociological surveys and expert assessment of the specific situation of the region). Development directed by intangible assets represents the process of social relations where development is not based solely on tangible resources but also on intangible aspects of social relations. Traditional growth models based on accumulation of tangible resources have limited interpretation possibilities of intangible aspects. (Kalnina-Lukasevica, 2003, p. 10). Dańska-Borsiak, Laskowska (2014) as well as Bal-Domańska (2013) also see human capital and social capital as two intangible factors of growth but the relationships between these factors and economic development on the regional level may differ from their interdependence in the national economy (the EU-12 and the EU-15 regions). Staničková, Melecký (2014) also pointed out that innovative employees determine the success of companies. The greatest assets of the EU countries are not material things, but people who are able to create new values flexibly respond to changing market needs and constantly bringing new ideas. These factors together with institutional environment affecting the EU countries competitiveness are included to the factor called “Economic growth and development”. So institutional facilities (such as government organizations, regional and local governments, research and educational institutions, financial institutions, businesses, interest and professional associations, NGOs) also affected the regional development. These institutions have a supporting character in order to ensure smooth information flow between the subjects in the region and stimulate the innovative activities. For example, Muštra, Škrabi (2014) pointed out that institutions are an important force in the regional growth process. GDP, quality of governance (voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption institutions) are an important force in the regional growth process. Interdependence between social and institutional proximity indicates the necessity of combining different institutional factors for harmonious regional development. Suriñach, Moreno (2011, p. 182) analyzed the role of intangible assets on regional economic growth in Spain and EU countries. They put special attention to the knowledge, human, social and entrepreneurship capital. Agglomeration economies still matter, although their impact (in quantitative terms) and their scope (in terms of distances) are estimated to be lower and shorter respectively when intangible assets are included in the model since these factors play a crucial role in determining regional performances. Result confirms previous evidence on the fact that spatial spillovers are somehow bounded in space and that knowledge diffusion is more effective among closer regions. Kaasa (2018) extended the factors such as social capital, government quality by the cultural dimensions and religion and investigated the influence on region’s labour productivity. He used the structural equation modelling



approach enabling to find out both direct and indirect effects in 78 regions of 22 European countries. The results showed institutional trust and civic participation to be the most important for productivity.

### 3. Image of region as intangible factor: Case of media's role in the Czech Republic

According to Boryczko (2007, p. 3) to achieve successful regional development three components are necessary. First one is *genius loci* or *spirit of the place* (economic and academic traditions, natural conditions, business climate, liability, physical attractiveness, human capital, competition with other regions). There are some qualities of the place which are difficult to measure and to create. They are often described as a locale's atmosphere or spirit. Local traditions, culture and natural conditions have a substantial impact on the region's image. Locale's "atmosphere" has a significant role in attracting or discouraging people to live and conduct economic activity in the region. The life quality concept should be understood not only as the level of earned income, the availability of services, sport and cultural goods, but also the opportunities for living and being professionally fulfilled in an open, friendly for all environments, sustainable, abundant in attractions, characterized by a strong brand and a positive *image, place*. (Boryczko, 2007; Raszkowski, Głuszczyk, 2015) As Suchacek, Seda, Friedrich, Koutsky (2014, p. 125) introduced, overall atmosphere, reputation, image as well as position on the mental map can be ranked among typical attributes of the intangible dimension of the space. *Mental maps* are formed on the basis of aggregation of individual images of particular spots and territories. From this standpoint, the image of the territory should be perceived as overall picture and reputation of given area in the eyes of the wide public. Mental maps reflect the psychological representation of space. Gould and White (1986) showed that mental maps are not mere preference surfaces but also predictors of consequent spatial behavior. Growing importance of mental maps is in compliance with recent upsurge of soft location factors. (Sucháček, 2014, p. 644)

#### 3.1 Role of media

The economy moving towards more and more intangible activities is supported by the information society and the rapid development of communication facilities. Accessibility is no longer limited to physical mobility and even remote territories are connected in real time to a variety of information sources and flows. (ESPON, 2006) Mental maps are formed through the influence of *media* (newspapers or journals, or electronic, such as TV, radio or on-line content), distinct role is played also by educational institutions, family settings or surrounding milieu in general. In reality, territorial images considerably differ from territorial realities. Media are not mere observers of events any more, instead they became *sui generis* one-way mediator of information from elite groups to the wide public and are able to influence everyday events. The number of information affecting wide public is constantly growing. (Sucháček, 2014, p. 644–655). The development of modern media has four parallel processes: globalization, de-mass scale, conglomeration, and convergence. (Rutovic, 2016).

Mass media always represented a reference point for economy, society and politics, at global and European level. Since antiquity, the communication networks offered opportunities for development and innovation, providing new structures for the economic and social systems. The most important internal and external events, about which the majority of us have extremely strong formed opinions, were brought to us through mass media. From here the easiness with which media can influence the valuable judgments and the choices that people make and the decisions they can take following them. Probably television being the most used form of mass communication, because "the audience" is formed from a highly increased number of persons. Theorists agree that press and the other mass media instruments have effects on individuals, groups, institutions and masses, modeling the human personality under a cognitive, affective and behavioral aspect. (Terchilá, 2014, p. 182–183) Enikolopov, Petrova (2017) provides an overview of recent empirical literature on the role of mass media in influencing political, social, and financial outcomes. Empirical evidence indicates that mass media has a very important effect on a variety of outcomes, including political outcomes, such as electoral support of particular parties and participation in political protests, social outcomes, such as education outcomes and fertility decisions, and financial outcomes, such as stock returns and corporate governance performance. There are two main theoretical explanations for why media can influence people's behaviour. First of all, it can change their beliefs by providing relevant information. Second, it can have a direct effect on behaviour, independently of people's information, through persuasion (Enikolopov, Petrova, 2017, p. 2). The effect of mass media through the provision of information can be explained by most standard models of rational Bayesian updating, such as informative and signalling models of advertising, cheap talk models and persuasion games. The ability of media to influence behaviour by providing information and changing beliefs is more apparent in behavioural models that assume specific deviations from fully rational Bayesian updating that comes in the form of categorical thinking, limited memory, or double-counting of repeated information. Models in which media can change behaviour without affecting beliefs assume that informatic directly affects utility that people derive from certain actions. This type of theory includes the models of persuasive advertising and psychological models in which non-informative "peripheral" factors may play a central role. There are several predictions of belief-based and persuasion-based models that in principle allow for distinguishing them

empirically. (Enikolopov, Petrova, 2017, p. 3) Modern researchers use different, sometimes complicated empirical strategies to identify the causal impact of media exposure. Three empirical techniques, most widely used by researchers, are field experiments, difference-in-differences method, and instrumental variables approach. (Enikolopov, Petrova, 2017, p. 22)

Despite a general agreement on the importance of media development in broader social, economic and political progress, the international community (governments), development agencies, donors – largely views the development of an independent media sector as a secondary objective instead of a matter of critical importance. Media can have a positive effect on societies (Media Development Investment Fund, 2014, p. 2–5):

- Governance impact: Corruption has a negative impact on society, particularly in furthering poverty and income inequality. Numerous studies show a robust link between a free, strong, and independent press and reduced corruption. A free press exposes private and public sector corruption.
- Economic impact: Economic actors need accurate and timely information to allocate resources efficiently. Investors and other groups increasing value and demand a governance-monitoring role from the media. A free and independent press can provide information and monitoring to the economic policy development process leading to more effective economic policies. It can also reduce political risk and increase good governance. Example of successful economic development are Poland and Hungary, where the media has played a role in transforming situations of conflict into coordination, but also access to information has allowed politicians and the populace to coordinate on good conjectures leading to economic progress. There is a growing body of evidence that mass media plays an important role in financial markets. Media reports on specific companies were shown cause a significant increase in trading activity of individual investors. (Enikolopov, Petrova, 2017)
- Social impact: In order for development to be just and sustainable, citizens must productively participate in the decisions that shape their lives. A free and independent media supply timely and relevant information to citizens allowing them to change their own behavior and to demand higher social standards for society.

The influence of media on economic and social issues confirm also other researches, i.e. Triga, Vadratsikas (2017) employs a comprehensive literature review identifying the main theoretical and methodological approaches used to study mass media effects and European identity. (Terchilă, 2014, p. 184) analyzed by interview the impact of media on the economic, social and politic systems in Europe. Approximately 73% of the interviewed persons consider that media has a high impact on the economy of the European countries. Approximately 27% of the interviewed persons consider that media has a very high impact on the economy of the European countries. All the interviewed persons consider that media highly influence the society in Europe.

### 3.2 Media image of regions in the Czech Republic

Media influence the functioning of individual subjects as well as whole territories. Regions without media publicity are largely omitted by visitors, potential visitors, investors, non-regional entrepreneurs 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. Based on them, people can create ideas, opinions, stereotypes, expectations and preferences about places in which they have never been before. These mental aspects directly enter into the decision process in the context of behavior in space. Psychological aspects are among the primary factors influencing formation and evolution of territorial inequalities. This underlines the complexity and multidimensional nature of territorial inequalities (Urminsky, 2018, p. 84). *Image* of the region should characterize its specific supply and distinctiveness. In reality, territorial image very often does not correspond to the objective reality, which is caused primarily by the processes of agenda-setting and agenda-cutting that are used in various kinds of media rather frequently. The traditional mission of media is objective, accurate and unbiased depiction of reality. However, contemporary media can be already perceived as co-creators of the milieu we are living in. Regarding the great and steadily growing interconnectedness of the world, media can show just selective cuts of complex reality. Subsequently, we are currently entitled to speak about media-territorial or directly mediatorial development, rather than about mere territorial development. (Suchacek, Seda, Friedrich, Koutsky, 2014, p. 125)

Related with the topic of regions' development and the role media Carrascosa, Mendez, Triga (2018) aimed to uncover territorial and temporal patterns in the EU Cohesion Policy coverage and tone in the online news and social media. To do so, structural topic modelling and sentiment analysis is applied to an original Cohesion Policy media dataset at multiple territorial levels. The dataset covers 4,000 Cohesion Policy-related news stories and 33,000 user comments. From the perspective of mass media, the EU's Cohesion Policy is not a common topic such as, say, Sport or the Economy. For instance, a web media article covering the construction of a new museum in a city receiving EU funds might use labels such as: locality, public works and the purpose of the museum.

*New approach to the problems of media image of regions* was applied by Suchacek (2014), Suchacek, Seda, Friedrich, Koutsky (2014), Urminsky (2018), Urminsky (2016). They distinguished local, regional and national media and considered national media as the most influential ones because they inform not only about national or foreign issues but also about particular regions. Suchacek, Seda, Friedrich, Koutsky (2014) analysed and evaluated selected aspects of NUTS III regions portrayals within national TV coverage which was represented by evening news of 3 principal TV companies in the Czech Republic. The research therefore monitored Události and Události, komentáře of Czech TV, both of them representing public TV. On the other hand, Zprávy constitutes part of private FTV Prima air time and the same applies to Televizní noviny of TV Nova. Research covered the period between 2004 and 2011 years. Analysis and interpretation is based on content structure of contributions appearing in national TVs and related to individual NUTS III regions in the Czech Republic. Individual themes related to country's self-governing regions include relevant economic, social as well as environmental aspects of life in these territories. Contributions are thematically divided into 30 categories and 10 pillars (social, environmental, economic, education and science, public affairs, European and international, security, accidents, sport and justice). Altogether the amount of 54,667 contributions was monitored by this way. To meet the goal, they used the analysis of variance – the Kruskal-Wallis test, Correspondence analysis. Correspondence analysis confirmed that structure of contributions of both private TV stations bears a certain resemblance, which is palpable mainly in the concentration on commercial or tabloid issues. Coverage of private TV Nova and FTV Prima differs significantly from that of public Czech TV, which indeed deals with public affairs more intensely. It should be also added public Czech TV produces two different news programs with relatively distinct profiles. Analysis revealed that media landscape of the Czech Republic does not always comply with genuine features of individual regions.

Sucháček (2014, p. 649) then focused on European themes, which appear in the framework of national TV news reporting in the Czech Republic. Quantitative analysis concentrates upon the number of contributions in national TV reporting. Qualitative analysis and interpretation is based on the content structure of contributions appearing in national TV reporting. And just the shifts in the thinking of wide public can be predicted via qualitative analysis of media contents. From aggregate perspective, 2004 and 2009 turned out to be the most “European” years in national TV coverage. However, national TV news reporting in the Czech Republic has also its spatial dimension. As it has been examined, from quantitative perspective, the number of Europe - orientated contributions is largest in the capital city of Prague. Nonetheless, the share of European themes on the total amount of contributions related to the given town, Hradec Králové turned out to be the most “European” regional metropolis. At the same time, one has to bear in mind that European themes appear only rarely, which influences the final results. Content structure of Europe - orientated news appearing in individual regional metropolises brought further interesting facts. Prague as a capital city represents entirely specific category, for which themes, such as Czech presidency of the European Union as well as elections to the European Parliament became typical. Contrary to the capital city, media profile of Brno does not reveal any important European theme. European artistic and cultural themes were stressed in case of Ostrava and Brno, mainly for the sake of the candidacy of both towns for the title of European Capital of Culture 2015. Last but not least, amount of European themes bound to other regional metropolises is nearly negligible.

Urminsky (2018, p. 84) analyzed and evaluated regionally bound TV news reporting in the Czech Republic between years 2005-2011 with focus on the information about economies of self-governing regions (NUTS III). He used a combination of research methods - the contingency tables, Pearson's chi-square test, Cramer's V and correspondence analysis. It can be stated that it matters, which news in TV broadcasting are particular actors and target groups watching. The reason is that the thematic structures of the information about regional economies are different. The news reporting of commercial TV coverage emphasizes information about common economic events (*category - economic life*, see also Urminsky, 2016) as well as economic crimes (*category - economic criminality*). Contrary to that, news reporting of the public Czech Television accentuated rather information about research and development activity (*category - research, development and education*) in the regions and also information about governmental activities within economic system of the regions (*category - economic policy*). Differences are observable also in the regional pattern. The news reporting of the public television, contrary to their commercial counterparts, more accentuated regions with the largest population size, in which the biggest towns in the Czech Republic are located. They represent the most important economic and institutional centers of the Czech Republic at the same time. Naturally, some regions are more connected with some specific thematic area of the economic information. This is apparent, for example, in case of the traditional industrial regions of Usti and Moravia-Silesia. These regions are more accentuated in the area of economic policy. Problems with the economic structure of regions persist, mainly on the labor market. It should be noted that in some news it is possible to observe elements of gatekeeping, such as negativity, threshold or unexpectedness. The large investments accomplished with the help of investment incentives have attracted the attention of the media in the Moravian-Silesian region. A typical example of an event with negative connotations is a scandal in the Pilsen region. It is



possible to claim that virtual portrayals may not correspond to the real characteristics of the territories. Urminsky (2017) also stated the quite expected media attractiveness of the capital city of Prague. The least attractive area in the media is the Central Bohemian Region, which suffers from a strong position of the capital city of Prague. In the case of the aggregation of the territory of the Capital City of Prague and the Central Bohemian Region, where the spatial unit thus delimited much better reflects the strong intra-territorial links corresponding to the concept of the so-called natural region, we can regard Central Bohemia as a key area of media interest with a quarter share in total contributions. In this case the intensity of media interest corresponds to the relative weight of the population. A significant under-proportional share of media contributions compared to the share of the population is also observed in the South Moravian region despite the fact that the second most populous city in the Czech Republic, Brno, is located here. Compared to traditional industrial regions, this region is economically less problematic.

#### 4. Conclusion

Development of European regions and elimination of their diversity are becoming increasingly important for the development of the European economy in times of globalisation. Various researchers emphasise different aspects of regional development considering it as combination of qualitative and quantitative features of the region's economy, of which the qualitative or structural are the most meaningful. Every territory (regions, towns, rural areas) can be characterized by both material and intangible characteristics. Intangible factors are of increasing importance of a region's or city's territorial potential, and offer synergies for the jobs and growth agenda. Results of literature review show the capability of intangible assets to foster regional growth, productivity and to create a virtuous framework for competitiveness.

As this literature review showed the majority of studies of soft factors of regional development in central eastern countries of the EU have focused on the human and social capital or institution, entirely at the level NUTS III, LAU II or rural areas. The quantitative measurement of media image of regions as one of the intangible development factors have not received much attention in the previous researches. Only case of this approach represents the studies of media (TV) image of regions and cities in the Czech Republic (i.e. Sucháček, 2013; Sucháček, 2014; Urminsky, 2018). Regions and local governments should be carefully taken into account the image of territory when designing and implementing economic policy because the specific features strongly influences firms localization choice, people living and consequently the economic performance of territories. Mass media thus represent the actor actively influencing the mental maps and media portrayals of regions or cities by content of published information, their processing and contextual interpretation. Analysis revealed that media landscape of the Czech Republic does not always comply with genuine features of individual regions and we are entitled to talk about importance of gatekeeping.

There are several directions for future research. It would be useful to seek the possibility to quantitatively assess the territorial differentiation of soft factors what the previous literature have not yet achieved and support the including intangible factors in the system of regional development evaluation since the comprehensive measurement enhances the complex view on the level of region's development. It requires to fill the gaps in the existing intangible assets databases and create homogeneous databases of intangible assets at the regional level for EU countries by Eurostat. It would be useful to extend the testing the relation between media and regions, and their effects on the image and development at the level of NUTS III but also NUTS II Czech regions utilizing in particular primary data acquired from field survey with a view to assess the importance of media/mental maps for the development of these areas. Also we still know little about the impact of new technologies, such as Internet and social media, their gatekeeping and "fake news", on the behaviour of people with relation to regional image and development.

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