

Abstract: Agriculture represents one of the most important economic activities that co-creates the qualities of landscapes. While topics such as food production, land utilization, or the development of rural regions are typically taken into account when analysing agriculture, regionally differentiated media portrayals of agriculture constitute a largely innovative approach. The main objective of this paper is to analyse and interpret agriculture-oriented news about individual self-governing regions in Czechia that were broadcasted in the framework of the national TV reporting. The paper is conceived as a historical study of the creation of the image of agriculture in the period from 2004 to 2011, which we define as the period of adaptation of Czech agriculture to the EU. The article includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In summary, the media portrayals of agriculture largely differ from real conditions in Czech self-governing regions. Important themes, such as common agricultural policy or organic farming, have been mostly ignored within regionally focused national TV coverage. On the contrary, TV news is typically focused on one or a few phenomena of unusual or negative character, which is consistent with the gatekeeping conception.

Keywords: self-governing regions, agriculture, TV news reporting, territorial image

Highlights

- One or more single events usually tend to influence media portrayals of the whole territories.
 - TV news tends to favor specific events in agriculture that are negative or unusual.
 - The number of news contributions covering agriculture in the regions does not correspond with the importance of this sector.
-

1. Introduction

In the area of local and regional development, the so-called “soft factors” are increasingly – although not yet sufficiently – being considered. Territorial images are included among these factors. Territorial images do not capture real, geographical space, but an individual’s perception of it. Nonetheless, territorial images are not mere representations of spatial preferences, but they also are a co-determiner of future spatial activities. One of the most important determinants of the formation of territorial images are the territorial references made by the media. Media information about individual regions affects readers, listeners, or viewers, primarily in the short term (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Huxford, 2007).

Frequent repetition of certain topics may influence the tendencies, attitudes, or behavior of any population in the long term. In addition to the media, which influences individuals mainly in the short term, educational institutions, family, and the surrounding environment also play a significant role in the formation of individual images. Such an influence is usually long-term.

The media interprets information selectively. Only a partial piece of a very complex reality is shown. In such a way, the population is not only informed, but in addition, its behavior and perception of reality are influenced. Such media information can thus improve or worsen the image of a region (Kuypers, 2014; Lowery, De Fleur, 1995; McCombs, Reynolds, 2002).

The image of a region is reflected both externally and internally. Externally, the reputation of a region determines the attitudes and behavior of external economic, social, or political entities towards the given region. Internally, the perception of a region is reflected by its inhabitants. The psychosocial atmosphere of a region and its expectations about the future significantly co-determine the future development of the region. It has been shown that positive expectations about the future of the region attract more investors. However, there are several examples where a bad image of a region hinders its development

(e.g., Sucháček et al, 2015). The image of the region is not always in line with its specific characteristics (Anholt, 2011; Kitchin, 1994; Kitchin and Blades, 2002; Tuan, 1974; Rijnks and Striker, 2013).

In reality, the images of individual regions are often quite far from reality. The media plays a very important role. It is no coincidence that in connection with the ever-increasing influence of the media, there is a discussion about so-called mediocracy, as the amount of information to which the population is exposed is constantly increasing (see Shoemaker and Vos, 2009; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Sucháček, 2015; Dill, 2013). From the perspective of regional development and the economy, it is therefore important to assess what image the media creates about different economic activities, one of which is agriculture.

No one can doubt the importance of agriculture and its impact on a society. Although the direct connection can only be linked to units of the percentage of GDP and the Czech population, for whom agriculture still represents an important means of livelihood, it is necessary to study the wider impact on the entire Czech population. This impact can be in the form of supplying the population with food, and industry with raw materials, or through the landscape and the countryside in which people live. The countryside with its agricultural landscape thus provides services to the city and it is therefore essential to think about the urban-rural continuum. Recently, issues related to the production of quality products, organic products, and locally grown products have been gaining more attention from several authors in Czechia (Spilková and Perlín, 2013; Hrabák and Zagata, 2020; Hruška et al. 2020).

Agriculture has been changing the Czech landscape for several millennia. In recent decades, it is increasingly portrayed as a means of maintaining the current state and image of the landscape, and also as an imaginary "administrator – maintainer" of the Czech landscape (Kabrda and Jančák, 2007). Agriculture has provided food for the population. However, this previously considered primary role of agriculture is currently being compared to the so-called non-production functions of agriculture. The gradual transformation of the agricultural system was expressed considering both the production and non-production functions of agriculture, leading to the applied concept of so-called "multifunctional agriculture" (Holmes, 2006; Wilson, 2007; Renting et al., 2009; Hrabák and Konečný, 2018). The question is what topics related to agriculture are presented to the public and in what context.

The transformation of the perception of the importance of agriculture is happening in connection with changes in agricultural policy, an important regulatory framework for agricultural activity in the Czech Republic, and especially in the European Union (Bičík and Jančák, 2005; Cairol et al., 2009; Renting et al., 2009; Věžník, Král and Svobodová, 2013). The role of the EU Common Agricultural Policy was very strong and novel in the period of the Czech accession to the EU and the subsequent period of adaptation of Czech farmers to the EU single market, which is the focus of this historical study. The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) budget accounted for a significant proportion of the total EU budget during this period (approximately 2/3). Agriculture is one of the areas that was significantly affected by the entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy (Kabrda and Jančák, 2007; Věžník and Konečný, 2011; Svobodová, Bečvářová and Vinohradský, 2011; Konečný, 2017).

This paper will focus on agriculturally based news as a part of national news about individual regions of the Czech Republic, which is an issue that has been largely underappreciated and, to a certain extent, neglected. The analysis is based on real data and the outcomes will lead to important conclusions.

The main aim of this paper is to analyze and interpret agriculturally based media news about the regions of the Czech Republic within the framework of nationwide news of the public Czech Television and the commercial television stations Nova and Prima. This work has both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension.

The quantitative analysis will focus on the number of contributions from individual regions relative to the number of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries who live in that area. The number of inhabitants in an area is always a very important factor for evaluating a spatial socio-economic potential. The qualitative analysis is based on the content of agriculture-oriented contributions of national broadcasting about individual regions. The news programs monitored are two Czech TV news outlets ("Události", and "Události, komentáře" in Czech) and TV Nova news ("Televizní noviny" in Czech).

Time series related to these news contributions are studied for the time period 2004–2011. These time series are not very long; nonetheless, they cover all parts of the economic cycle as well as various important events, such as economic crises. Moreover, the period of the entry of the country into the European Union after 2004 and subsequent modernization tendencies also related to agriculture have been occurring at that time. The time series data help to obtain at least a basic overview of the development tendencies in the area of territorial media news about the self-governing regions under investigation. The analyzed period provides us with an appropriate historical framing for TV news coverage in the realm of agriculture and related regional differentiation.

The main research question was formulated as: What type of regionally oriented agricultural topics most often penetrate national television broadcasts?

This article has the following structure: the introduction is followed by subsections demonstrating the importance of agriculture and the importance of the media. Next are the methods section and results. A conclusion section finalizes the paper.

2. On the Importance of Agriculture and Media

2.1 Agricultural Characteristics of Individual Regions

Agriculture in the Czech Republic reflects the different physical and socioeconomic conditions of individual regions, and therefore it is very spatially differentiated (Věžník, Král and Svobodová, 2013; Konečný, 2017). The regions with the most favorable conditions are characterized by the significant use of land for agricultural purposes (Pardubice, Vysočina, South Moravia, Central Bohemia) (Tab. 1). The share of land use for agriculture alone shows the importance of this sector in the area. This claim can be supported by the fact that agricultural production per hectare in these areas is the highest among the regions. Although the Czech Republic is made up of 14 regions (13 regions and the capital city of Prague), more than half of the country's agricultural production is concentrated in four regions (Central Bohemia, South Moravia, South Bohemia and Vysočina) (Kovářnová, 2016). These regions have also long been the ones in which agriculture generates the largest range of production per hectare, measured in Czech crowns. In comparison, regions with below-average agricultural land area relative to the whole territory (Moravian-Silesian, Ústí nad Labem, Liberec and Karlovy Vary) also exhibit lower agricultural performance per hectare.

Natural conditions also significantly underline the spatial concentration and intensity of agricultural production and agricultural specialization (Konečný, 2017). Such phenomena can be illustrated by an example of the intensity of husbandry and its orientation. As Kovářnová states (2016), the Pardubice Region outperforms all the other regions in production per hectare due to its high intensity of poultry farming. In the Vysočina, South Bohemian, Pardubice, and Plzeň Regions, the intensity of animal breeding (especially cattle) and production of milk is higher, and it is an important part of their agricultural production. Fertile areas (high proportion of arable land), the South Moravian and Central Bohemian Regions, are more focused on crop production, fruit and vegetables, with a specific position for wine production. In regions where the intensity of animal breeding and production of milk is higher and conditions for agriculture are favorable, there is the largest proportion of economically active people working in agriculture, i.e., Vysočina, South Bohemian, Pardubice, and Plzeň Regions. Due to the declining importance of agriculture in the population's employment, however, it is still only 3.7–6.0% of the economically active population.

Tab 1. Basic agricultural characteristics of self-governing regions in Czechia and the country as a whole in 2010. Source: Czech Statistical Office; Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre; Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

Region	Agricultural production per 1 ha of farmed agricultural land [current prices in thousands CZK]	Share of economically active persons in the primary sector [%]	Share of agri. land [%]	Share of arable land on agri. land [%]	Share of agri. land in mountain area [%]	Share of land in organic farming [%]	Cattle stocking rate [heads per 100 ha of farmland]
Pardubice	40	3.7	60	73	6	4	42
Central Bohemian	40	2.7	60	83	0	2	22
Vysočina	38	6.0	60	77	6	5	51
South Moravian	37	2.8	59	83	0	4	14
Hradec Kralové	37	3.3	58	69	5	7	37
Zlín	35	2.5	49	64	23	18	30
Olomouc	34	3.3	53	74	10	13	32
Plzeň	32	3.7	50	68	8	11	41
South Bohemian	32	4.8	49	64	16	13	43
Moravian Silesian	30	1.6	51	62	20	18	28
Ústí nad Labem	28	1.7	52	66	6	16	14
Liberec	23	1.7	44	47	13	23	32
Karlovy Vary	17	2.0	37	44	17	49	32
Prague	*	0.4	41	73	0	0	*
Czech Republic	35	2.6	54	71	8	11	32

* in this case, the capital city of Prague is part of the Central Bohemian Region

Regions with unfavorable natural conditions are more significantly oriented towards organic farming, which is primarily associated with farming on permanent grasslands (Hrabák and Zagata, 2020). The Karlovy Vary Region has an exceptional position in this regard. In that region in 2010, the share of ecologically farmed land was close to fifty percent. Among other regions where ecological agriculture is increasing are Liberec, Moravian-Silesian, and Zlín Regions. Approximately over one fifth of the farmers in these regions have been focusing on organic farming. On the other hand, regions with favorable agricultural conditions are not specialized in organic farming, they have a low amount of land for organic farming (below five percent), and the number of farmers working in organic farming does not exceed ten percent (South Moravian, Central Bohemian, and Pardubice Regions). In these regions, employment in agriculture is below the Czech average, as it is an extensive form of farming.

Region Hradec Králové, Zlín and Olomouc represent a kind of average territory that is not very specialized in a specific type of production, as they are internally significantly heterogeneous. In fact, their territory includes both very fertile areas with a high proportion of crop production and mountainous areas where organic farming and cattle and sheep farming are practiced.

2.2 Media and its Influence on the Perception of Reality

As it has been shown, the media influences the perception of reality. Most people, whether consciously or unconsciously, accept opinions and preferences advanced by the media. Such acceptance can happen through the accentuation (agenda setting) or ignoring (agenda cutting) of certain topics, through the way in which phenomena and events are interpreted, as well as their explanation and evaluation. Among other

things, the media also affects the above-mentioned issue of territorial images (see e.g., McCombs, 2014 or McCombs and Reynolds, 2002).

The mission of the media is to provide objective, verified, balanced, accurate and impartial information about events in individual regions. Today's media, however, function rather as co-creators of the environment in which people live. The previously mentioned agenda-setting and agenda-cutting strategies have been widely employed. Traditional agents of territorial development such as public institutions or business entities are compelled to respect the media. The media is one of the decisive sources of information for these agents. And, conversely, these agents address the population mainly through the media. Thus, the media represents a bilateral information filter between managing agents who exert influence, and controlled or influenced agents, and elements of territorial development. These continually increasing trends intensify the influence of the media, which is far from being a mere mediator of information (see e.g., McQuail, 1994).

From a spatial point of view, the influence of the media is essential for shaping the image of a region, especially beyond regional borders. Considering the organization of the media and their position with respect to the territory they cover and on which they report, there are national, regional, and local media. Generally, this can be considered a type of order-of-magnitude differentiation of the media. At the lowest territorial level, local media operations cover parts of individual regions and inform the public about events in individual localities. Regional media covers the territory of the entire region. The information the media produce and report on is usually intended for a specific region or locality. The media reach is therefore limited by the border of these territories. National media also use information from individual regions, but report on them at the national level. In this case, regional information is usually grouped with the national and international news.

National media are only partially limited when choosing their topics. They can reference foreign events as well as domestic ones. Domestic news can be incorporated from various places and regions. As already indicated, the image of a particular region inside its borders is shaped mainly by national media. National media disseminate information about regional issues on a nationwide level. In spite of the fact that they collect material from various parts of the country, their main influence can be described as "top-down", involving almost no feedback from their audience (McCombs, Reynolds 2002).

People from the west of the country get information about their eastern counterparts mainly by means of national media. However, since people from the west have only a vague notion of the reality in the east, they are compelled to rely primarily on the news provided by national media. Obviously, the converse holds true, and people from the eastern part of the country get information about their western counterparts primarily through national media.

From this viewpoint, national media have a considerable responsibility in terms of the objectivity and accuracy of regional news. Unfortunately, central editors typically have very little knowledge about the real life of individual regions, and they have practically no relation (neither professional nor social) to these territories (see e.g., Shoemaker, Vos 2009; Sucháček et al. 2016). Therefore, if they prepare or edit the news from a particular region, they may inadvertently distort reality.

The influence of national media on the population will be significantly greater than the influence of regional media. The news in the national media has local or regional connotations that significantly co-shape the territorial image. Therefore, the present article mainly focuses on national media and their view of individual regions.

The mass media aggregates information from individual territories. The information in the news reports is always partial, as the media cannot capture all the elements of very complex systems. Through the volume of information about individual regions, the thematic composition of this information, and the way in which the information is presented, the media creates virtual images of individual regions. However, the resulting virtual image does not necessarily correspond to its real characteristics (see Kuypers, 2014; De Fleur and De Fleur, 2009; Sucháček, et al, 2014).

The concept of gatekeeping, which explains the process of selecting information for inclusion and publication in the media, plays a significant role. Gatekeeping reflects the process of institutional

communication, or rather examines communication within media organizations. The core idea of gatekeeping is that the very selection, processing, and inclusion of information in news reports is not random. Thus, the news has a very stable and predictable character that is subject to recurring criteria, namely news values or news factors. The resulting form of news reports is therefore conditioned by predetermined rules or routine procedures (see Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Shoemaker and Voss, 2009; Groseclose and Milyo, 2005).

Everyday procedures generating the resulting virtual image of a region can accentuate, but also suppress, the real characteristics of that region. The result can even be a virtual distortion of real phenomena and processes taking place in a specific region, including a limited ability to show developmental changes. The structure and relevance of the information with which the audience, i.e., the population, is confronted is of considerable importance. It is the mass media that can currently be considered as one of the primary sources of information for respective audiences. Naturally, the intensity of the message varies according to the individual characteristics of these audiences.

The media can influence the audience through the content, method of presentation, and form and intensity of the message. They create, but also change and strengthen existing opinions or attitudes. More broadly, media co-determine some kind of informal institutions, which can be perceived as habits of thought forming human behavior or rules shaping human behavior. Understandably, these informal institutions also have spatial connotations and, in this way, the mass media can be seen as agents actively shaping the perception of the attractiveness of individual territories. It should be emphasized that information published by the mass media can also preserve stereotypes and prejudices. The result can be institutional or spatial-institutional rigidity. The spatial activities of the population, and also its future spatial activities, can ultimately be based on imperfect information or distorted ideas about the state and character of individual territories (see McQuail, 1994; Sucháček et al, 2016).

The final form of territorial images is mainly influenced by information of a spatial nature. The vast majority of news articles published by mass media have some sort of a territorial character (see Gould and White, 1986; Kitchin, 1994; Kitchin and Blades, 2002; Saarinen and Maccabe, 1995; Johnson et al, 2004).

3. Methods

The analysis of the media presentation of agriculture-oriented contributions in 14 regions of the Czech Republic was based on data of the continuous analysis of the media content by the Media Tenor company, a global association specializing in media content analysis. The number of individual contributions about the regions was monitored within the framework of the national broadcast. These data were sorted according to regions, thematic focus, and nature of the television programs. The data provider is an important non-academic organization in Czechia, and has an international expertise due to its involvement in the global network of the same name. The company has offices in the United States, Switzerland, South Africa, Austria, Germany, and Vietnam. Media data are statistically evaluated and analyzed with the Media Tenor Codebook, which is based on content analysis.

For the purposes of this paper, only television news programs were analyzed. As stated by Herot (2012), among all currently available media, a high degree of impact on audiences is attributed to the agenda of television news. Herot emphasized that the viewership of the main news program TV Nova („Televizní noviny“) between September 2009 and September 2011 ranged from 1.6 to 2.8 million viewers. The viewership of the main news program of the Czech TV („Události“) and TV Prima („Zprávy“) in the same time period has ranged between 500,000 and 1.1 million viewers.

Nečas (2008) also attributes a sufficient degree of representation to the television news: "Agenda-setting research shows that the thematic structure of media content across media does not differ much ... „ (translated from the Czech language). Basically, the news media's thematic agenda overlaps across media. Based on the results of several studies of Czech and foreign news media, it can be concluded that the agenda of television stations also largely represents the agenda of print and radio news media. Nečas (2008) refers, for example, to the work of Dearing and Rogers (1996).

TV reporting still has one of the highest degrees of impact on the wider public and is sufficiently represented. This is doubly valid for the period we analysed, i.e., 2004–2011. That is why the article is conceived as a historical study of the creation of the image of agriculture in the period from 2004 to 2011.

However, in the years following the analysed period, internet media have been increasingly replacing traditional TV coverage. Since internet media are of an interactive nature, they facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression. Although methods evaluating internet media are not yet established, future research directions should specifically consider internet media, as their influence is rapidly increasing.

The qualitative part of this research focused on the analysis and evaluation of individual news articles related to the studied region. These contributions were synthesized into 30 thematic categories according to their character. Agriculture represents one of these categories. In total, 54,667 contributions were monitored. The primary focus was on individual events that attracted media attention.

Media contributions are not interpreted subjectively, but according to a predefined methodology, the so-called coding book. Data for this codebook are obtained in a uniform way. Not only information classification is studied, but also information rooting and interpretation. Media Tenor's internal materials highlight the high validity and reliability of this data.

Content analysis was utilised for the classification and structuration of individual regionally oriented contributions in national TV coverage (see Malhotra 2010 or Drisko, Maschi 2016). Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

The classification of individual contributions was undertaken based on a methodological approach using a coding book with the aim of limiting the subjective distortion of the information thereby communicated. The classification was not performed automatically, but by experts from the Media Tenor company. Individual contributions were subsequently aggregated into larger units called thematic categories. Based on the keywords, agriculturally oriented contributions were identified.

A total of 12 detailed agricultural topics were analyzed. These topics were sorted into four logical units, which can be considered as thematic categories. The composition of the individual categories from the given topics can be seen in Table no. 3. The categories are as follows:

- Category I – animal and crop diseases
- Category II – water management, pond farming and fish farming
- Category III – economic aspects of agriculture
- Category IV – other agricultural topics

The quantitative part of this work was based on the analyses provided by Media Tenor, as well as on publicly accessible sources of statistical data provided by the Czech Statistical Office. The number of news contributions devoted to agriculture and related to individual self-governing regions of the Czech Republic in specific time periods was studied. The share of the news covering agriculture on the entire amount of news is investigated as well.

To interpret the results appropriately, it was necessary to capture regional variation in the importance and characteristics of agriculture in the regions. The database related to agriculture at the level of regions is quite broad; however, it is necessary to use outputs of different institutions (Czech Statistical Office; Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre; Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic) and to respect different time anchoring. The indicators have been established to reveal the different conditions of the territory for agriculture, the importance of agriculture for the economy and social structure, and the different specialization of agriculture. The specifics of the chosen indicators are presented in Table 2. It is the understanding of the real differences of agriculture in the Czech regions that will allow us to interpret the results of the analysis of the content of television news appropriately.

Tab 2. Characteristics of Regional Differentiation of Agriculture in Czech Regions. Source: own processing

Purpose	Characteristics	Year	Institution	Source
Conditions for agriculture	Share of agricultural land in mountain area [%]	2010	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic	Půda 2009
Importance	Share of agricultural land [%]	2010	Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre	Summary reports on the land fund
	Share of economically active persons in the primary sector [%]	2011	Czech Statistical Office	Public Database
	Agricultural production per 1 ha of farmed agricultural land (current prices in thousands CZK)	2012		
Specialization	Share of arable land [%]	2010	Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre	Summary reports on the land fund
	Share of land in organic farming [%]	2010	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic	Yearbook 2010 – Organic farming in the Czech Republic
	Share of organic farmers [%]	2010		
	Cattle stocking rate [heads per 100 ha of farmland]	2010	Czech Statistical Office	Public Database

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Dimension

From the empirical perspective, the share of contributions oriented to regional agriculture on the total amount of regionally oriented contributions broadcasted within a national TV coverage reached only 0.99%. This fact confirms that the attention of the national TV reporting related to regional agriculture is insufficient and does not correspond to the real importance of agriculture for society. Although agriculture is gradually losing its productive function, the transition to a multifunctional concept of agriculture has the potential to raise issues in the media related to its non-productive functions, such as landscape maintenance and protection or tourism (Holmes, 2006; Kabrda and Jančák, 2007; Wilson, 2007; Potočník-Slavič, I. and Schmitz, 2013; Hrabák and Konečný, 2018). Interestingly, similar low scores have also been reached in the case of other important domains within national TV coverage, such as European issues (see also Sucháček, 2014). This fact confirms that despite its significance, agriculture is underrepresented within national TV coverage.

If we adopt a regional perspective and compare the size and importance of agriculture in the regions and share of agriculture-oriented news, adequate media reflection is hardly identifiable within the regional mosaic. The highest numbers of people working in agriculture, forestry and fishing can be found in Central Bohemia, South Moravia, South Bohemia, and Vysočina self-governing regions. These regions also recorded the highest agricultural production per hectare, although all territories were still exceeded by the Pardubice region. The smallest amounts of those working in agriculture, forestry and fishing can be found in Prague, Karlovy Vary and Liberec self-governing regions.

The agriculture production per 1 ha of cultivated land and the number of people working in agriculture in individual self-governing regions are not consistent with TV contributions related to these self-governing regions. Nearly one-fourth of all contributions related to agriculture was devoted to South Bohemia, which could be ascribed primarily to the bird flu. A significant number of contributions exceeding the proportion of monitored characteristics can be found in the capital city of Prague. This can be

attributed to the presence of decisive agricultural institutions in the capital city on the one hand and the fact national TV media are concentrated only in Prague on the other.

In other cases, it there turned out to be differentiated shares of people working in agriculture, forestry and fishery and shares of TV contributions, respectively. Nonetheless, they were largely disproportional and the balance between shares of agricultural production, shares of workers in agriculture, forestry and fishery and shares of TV contributions could be barely found in respective self-governing regions.

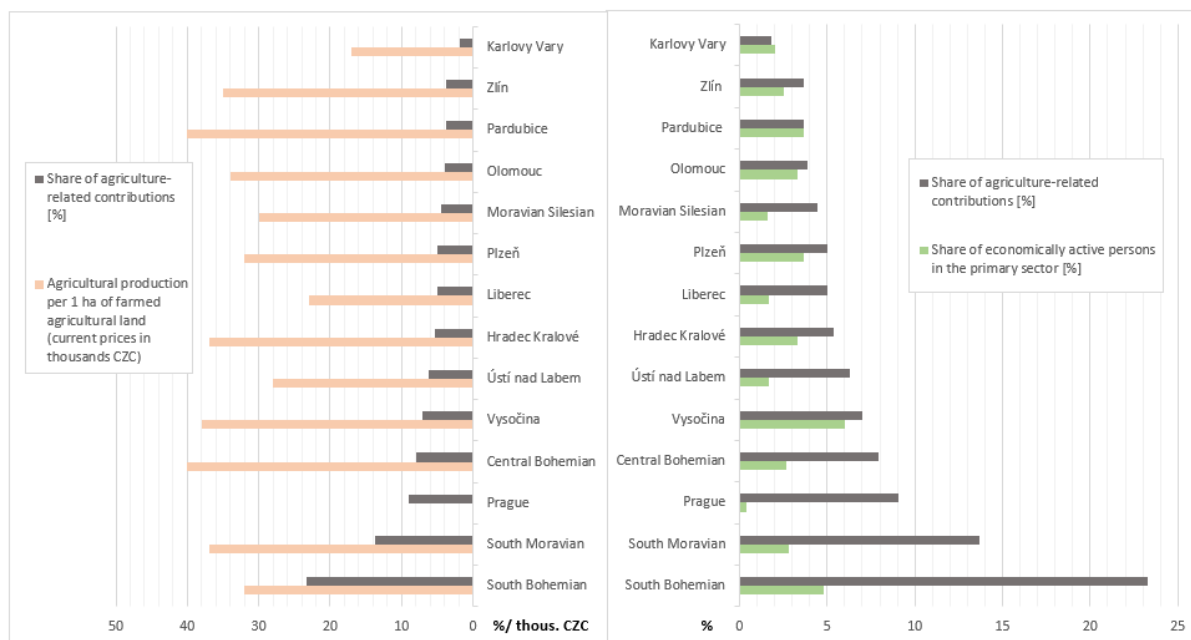


Fig 1. The share of the number of agriculture-related contributions in respective self-governing regions on the total amount of agriculture-orientated contributions and the share of workers in agriculture, forestry and fishery in individual self-governing regions on the entire number of workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (right)/agriculture production per 1 ha of cultivated land (current prices in thousands Czech crowns) (left). Source: own calculations

4.2 Qualitative Dimension

This subsection uses the thematic categories that were mentioned in the methodological section of the article. Category I (animal and crop diseases) was very strongly represented in the media coverage. This coverage was predominantly focused on the South Bohemian Region. In 2006, a high number of news stories, 84, were included in this category, mainly between March 27 and May 19, 2006. These news contributions were primarily focused on the incidence of bird flu.

In the Moravian Silesian Region, more significant attention was focused on Category II – water management and fisheries. This attention was mainly occurring in 2008 because of the intense media coverage of the Nové Heřminovy water reservoir. The preparation for the construction of the dam understandably caused increased emotions and controversy. The topic of water resources management is sensitive to the current manifestations of climate change (especially the negative ones) and these were overshadowed by other topics in the period in question and were discussed intensively only after 2010.

In Category III – agricultural economies and subsidies, the media coverage focused mainly on the Pardubice, South Moravian, and Olomouc Regions, but no single specific topic attracted increased attention. Although the economic dimension of agriculture is undoubtedly relevant, it surprisingly did not receive a high level of attention in TV coverage. The topic of subsidies, the economics of agriculture, and rural transformation resonated during the period of the Czech Republic's integration into the EU and was also reflected in the number of publications that dealt with them (Svobodová, Bečvářová and Vinohradský, 2011; Věžník, Král and Svobodová, 2013; Konečný, 2017).

The capital, Prague, represents a specific region which was mainly evident in Category IV. A typical topic for Prague is, the Land Fund, specifically a topic of land speculation covered in the media in 2005.

The involvement of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in that case attracted a lot of attention in the media. The news programs “Události” and “Události, komentáře”, broadcast by the Czech Television, covered this topic very extensively.

Media coverage in the Ústí nad Labem, Liberec, and Zlín Regions was not significant. The thematic profiles of these regions are similar, including the proportional structure of individual categories. Subsequently, these regions are largely unknown within the media.

Tab 3. Distribution of agricultural topics into individual categories. Source: own calculations

Diseases	n.	Water management and fisheries	n.	Agricultural economies and subsidies	n.	Other agricultural topics	n.
Category I	162	Category II	174	Category III	102	Category IV	104
Animal and crop diseases	162	Water management	147	Yields of farmlands and economy of agricultural enterprises	52	State institutions covering agriculture (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture, Land Fund)	31
		Pond farming and fish farming	27	Prices of agricultural products	26	Wine-growing	10
				Agricultural subsidies	24	Protective measures in agriculture	8
						Ecological agriculture, biological foodstuff	6
						Forestry and hunting	24
						Other topics (agriculture, forestry)	25

By analyzing the broadcasted contributions according to individual news programs, it is evident that public Czech Television was the one devoting most of its coverage to agriculture, namely in the “Události” and “Události, komentáře” programs. Such media coverage is commendable, and it shows how important agriculture is for a society and individual regions. On the other hand, mainly tabloid topics focused on extraordinary events that were covered. Ordinary topics related to agriculture are perceived as marginal from the point of view of television news. Such an approach applies both to the news presented by the public television and its commercial counterparts (see Table 4).

It can be stated that the most frequently mentioned topics in agriculture, which appeared in national television news and were linked to a specific region, have to do with one or a few events. The research analysis showed that TV news indeed tends to favor specific events in agriculture that are negative or unusual in nature. For example, the topic of diseases of farm animals and crops was often mentioned in connection with the occurrence of bird flu. Another example was the topic of water management mainly connected to the controversies surrounding the construction of the Nové Heřminovy reservoir. On April 21, 2008, the government decided to build the dam on the Opava river, which would result in some areas of the village Nové Heřminovy being flooded, and the affected houses would be expropriated. A long-term construction ban was executed in the village. In a local referendum on August 30, 2008, the residents of the village obliged the town hall to use all legal means to prevent the construction of the proposed dam. These findings have been consistent with previously conducted research (see Sucháček et al, 2014, 2015 or 2016). Thus, one or several events can significantly influence the media image of a city or self-governing region from a spatial point of view, or a media topic from a functional point of view.

Tab 4. Agricultural themes according to self-governing regions and TV news reporting divided into public and commercial TV news.
Source: own calculations

Region	Public TV		Commercial TVs		Total
	Události, komentáře	Události	Zprávy FTV Prima	Televizní noviny	
Prague	8	17	4	20	49
Central Bohemian	0	8	18	17	43
South Bohemian	15	45	37	29	126
Plzeň	0	8	11	8	27
Karlovy Vary	0	5	1	4	10
Ústí nad Labem	0	9	12	13	34
Liberec	2	5	8	12	27
Hradec Kralové	1	11	3	14	29
Pardubice	0	6	9	5	20
Vysočina	2	14	8	14	38
South Moravian	4	26	29	15	74
Olomouc	2	7	8	4	21
Zlín	1	8	3	8	20
Moravian Silesian	0	8	9	7	24
Total	35	177	160	170	542

The character of other topics, such as the prices of agricultural products or subsidies to farmers, was of a more general nature and did not specifically focus on a single event. The potential reason for such phenomena is the aforementioned concept of gatekeeping when these topics, from the point of view of the broadcasters, do not appear to be attractive enough to the viewers.

Television news tends to focus on negative and/or controversial issues, as negative events tend to be generally unambiguous and newsworthy. The same holds true for the news in agriculture. There exists nothing like special gatekeeping in the case of agriculture. Gatekeeping is just the general conception that covers all spheres of life as they appear within media coverage.

Agriculture does not bear any specific features in terms of media reporting, primarily because the domain is wide enough to include events and/or phenomena of various kinds. An event that unfolds within a news medium's publication cycle is more likely to be selected than one that takes place over a long period of time. Agriculture comprises both kinds of these events, i.e., short and long evolutions.

Gradual erosion of the soil appears to be less attractive for media coverage simply because there is not sufficient room for a detailed description of these complicated processes. This concerns TV coverage even more, as individual TV contributions are typically only a few tens of seconds in duration. On the other hand, collision of two harvesters will be probably covered expeditiously, as it is quite easily communicable and attracts the attention of the audience.

Furthermore, the article clearly shows that TV news usually tend to select a single event, which can lead to the labelling of whole regions due to its persistent occurrence within media reporting. One or more single events (such as the Nové Heřminovy water reservoir or bird flu) subsequently tend to affect TV news portrayals of entire regions. Naturally, this might be detrimental from the point of view of the image of the region.

The research question formulated in the introduction can be answered in a similar way: national television news mostly reports about negative regional events (such as bird flu) or controversial events (such as the Nové Heřminovy reservoir or land speculation in the case of the Land Fund). Such a conclusion is consistent both with previous studies (see Sucháček et al, 2014, 2015 and 2016) and also with the concept of gatekeeping.

The next important feature of national and regionally related TV coverage is that it does not reflect important and actual themes, such as common agricultural policy, bio and local products or ecological agriculture. Topics such as organic farming and quality local (organic) food, despite their increasing importance (Spilková a Spilková, 2013; Chalupová, Prokop a Rojík; Hrabák and Zagata, 2020; Hruška et al. 2020), did not receive much attention in the national TV news. For instance, a mere six contributions have been devoted to the ecological agriculture and biological foodstuffs during the period investigated. The topic of the link between agriculture and tourism (Potočník-Slavič, I. and Schmitz, 2013), which has the potential to appeal to potential TV news viewers, also appeared quite sporadically among the news.

5. Conclusions

From an empirical perspective, the ratio of contributions oriented to regional agriculture to the entire amount of regionally-bound contributions broadcasted within national TV coverage reached only one percent. This finding confirms that the attention given to agriculture by TV reporting is insufficient and does not correspond to the real importance of agriculture for society. This is despite the fact that in the period of the Czech Republic's accession to the EU and its adaptation to the common European market, the topic of the Common Agricultural Policy was one of the main decisive topics.

The most frequented topics are represented by animal illnesses – more precisely by the bird influenza that appeared in South Bohemia in 2006. The same applies to the water management and controversies around reservoirs built in Moravian-Silesian region in 2008. This indicates the answer to the research question posed at the beginning of the paper: national television broadcasts are most frequently characterized by negative regional events or controversial events. TV news reporting tends towards the preference of those events and phenomena that are negative and unusual. Important themes, such as Common Agricultural Policy, short food supply chains, or organic farming were not reflected by national and regionally related TV news reporting. Some relevant topics, such as food sovereignty, have not been addressed within television coverage at all.

Furthermore, the difference between virtual portrayals and genuine agricultural characteristics are symptomatic for the majority of investigated self-governing regions. According to the size of agricultural production and numbers of people working in agriculture, it can be assumed that the highest share of agriculture related news will appear in the Central Bohemia, South Moravia, South Bohemia, and Vysočina self-governing regions. However, adequate media reflection can scarcely be found within the above-mentioned expected regional pattern.

Therefore, the importance of agriculture in individual self-governing regions is not in accord with TV contributions related to these self-governing regions. Nearly one fourth of all contributions related to agriculture was devoted to South Bohemia, which could be ascribed primarily to bird influenza. The significant number of contributions exceeding the proportion of employment in agriculture can be found in the capital city of Prague. This can be attributed to the presence of decisive agricultural institutions in the capital city on the one hand and the fact that national TV media are concentrated only in Prague on the other.

Consequently, real agricultural characteristics of Czech self-governing regions do not find their adequate media reflections. This holds true both quantitatively – embodied by the number of contributions, as well as qualitatively – epitomised by the content composition of regionally-bound TV news reporting. Obviously, one cannot assume that the wider public automatically perceives, evaluates and memorises all media information related to regions. This concerns agricultural information and those that are relevant to other territories with even higher intensity. Nonetheless, certain specific events that strongly and repeatedly resonate within the media world can reinforce or create our association to the respective territory.

More realistic coverage of regional agriculture might be promoted through the use of some marketing instruments. Remote or specific agricultural regions might invite journalists for a weekend and show them the nature of the agriculture in their territory. Afterwards, the journalists can potentially (or likely will) produce contributions that more accurately depict the character of the territory they visited.

In the case of agricultural events and phenomena – and similarly, of other researched media categories – it has been found that the media select one event, which can, via its persistent occurrence within media reporting, label the whole regions. One or more single events usually tend to influence media portrayals of whole territories. Thus, media portrayals of individual territories are gradually losing their unique, regional character, which would be consonant with the varieties of activities and life in these territories. There also appeared a distinct lack of news oriented to genuine local and regional development.

The limitations of this study should also be considered. In this paper, there was insufficient space for more contextual handling of the issue. Wider framing would indeed be beneficial, but requires a much larger space. Territorial complexities are only partially reflected within TV coverage and it is questionable to what extent they can be adequately portrayed within TV reporting. In our case, the issue is even more sensitive as individual regions have been mirrored within national TV coverage. Another limitation is the absence of the analysis of internet media that are increasingly superseding traditional TV coverage. Undoubtedly, future research directions should accentuate internet media, while recognizing that the methodical approaches in this area are still developing.

Academic references

- [1] Anholt, S. (2011). Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations. *Exchange: the Journal of Public Diplomacy*, 2(1), 6–12.
- [2] Berelson, B. (1952). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- [3] Bičík, I. & Jančák, V. (2005). *Transformační procesy v Českém zemědělství po roce 1990*. Prague: Charles University.
- [4] Cairol, D., Coudel, E., Knickel, K., Caron, P. & Kruger, M. (2009). Multifunctionality of Agriculture and Rural Areas as Reflected in Policies: The Importance and Relevance of the Territorial View. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*. 11(4), 269–289. DOI: 10.1080/15239080903033846.
- [5] Chalupová, M., Prokop, M. & Rojík, S. (2016). Regional Food Preference and Awareness of Regional Labels in Vysočina Region (Czech Republic). *European Countryside*, 8(2), 109–122. DOI: 10.1515/euco-2016-0009.
- [6] De Fleur, M. L. & De Fleur, M. (2009). *Mass Communication Theories: Explaining Origins, Processes, and Effects*. London: Pearson.
- [7] Dearing, J. & Rogers, E. (1996). *Agenda-setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [8] Dill, K. (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of Media Psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [9] Drisko, J. & Maschi, T. (2016). *Content Analysis*. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press.
- [10] Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. (1965). The Structure of Foreign News. The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2(1), 64–91. DOI: 10.1177/002234336500200104.
- [11] Gould, P. & White, R. (1986). *Mental maps*. London: Routledge.
- [12] Groseclose, T. & Milyo, J. (2005). A Measure of Media Bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 120(4), 1191–1237. DOI: 10.1162/003355305775097542.
- [13] Herot, P. (2012). *Percepce životního prostředí Ostravska a její dopad na vybrané socioekonomické procesy* [Ph.D. thesis]. Ostrava. University of Ostrava.
- [14] Holmes, J. (2006). Impulses towards a multifunctional transition in rural Australia: Gaps in the research agenda. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 22(2), 142–160. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2005.08.006.

- [15] Hrabák, J. & Konečný, O. (2018). Multifunctional agriculture as an integral part of rural development: Spatial concentration and distribution in Czechia. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift*, 72(5), 257–272. DOI: 10.1080/00291951.2018.1532967.
- [16] Hrabák, J. & Zagata, L. (2020). Development and regional differentiation of organic agriculture in Czechia. *Geografie*, 125(1), 69–92. DOI: 10.37040/geografie2020125010069.
- [17] Hruška, V., Konečný, O., Smutná, Z. & Duží, B. (2020). Evolution of Alternative Food Networks in an Old Industrial Region of Czechia. *Erdkunde*. 74(2), 143–159. DOI: 10.3112/erdkunde.2020.02.04.
- [18] Huxford, J. (2007). The proximity paradox: Live reporting, virtual proximity and the concept of place in the news. *Journalism* 8(6), 657–674. DOI: 10.1177/14648849070831.
- [19] Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D. & Smith, D. (1994). *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- [20] Kabrda, J. & Jančák, V. (2007). Impact of selected political and institutional factors on Czech agriculture and landscape. *Geografie*. 112(1), 48–60. DOI: 10.37040/geografie200711.20.10048.
- [21] Kitchin, M. R. (1994). Cognitive maps: What are they and why study them? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 14(1), 1–19. DOI: 10.1016/S0272-4944(05)80194-X.
- [22] Kitchin, R. & Blades, M. (2002). *The Cognition of Geographic Space*. London: Tauris.
- [23] Klusáček, P., Navrátil, J., Martinát, S., Charvátová, K. & Krejčí, T. (2021). From large-scale communist agricultural premise through abandoned contaminated ruin to organic farming production: The story of successful post-agricultural brownfield regeneration. *DETUROPE*, 13(3), 32–57. DOI: 10.32725/det.2021.018.
- [24] Konečný, O. (2017). Prostorová polarizace zemědělství Česka v období začleňování do Evropské unie. *Geografie*. 122(3), 257–280.
- [25] Kovárnová, I. (2016). Kraje mají své zemědělské „specializace“. *Statistika a my*. 6, 22–23.
- [26] Kuypers, J. A. (2014). *Partisan journalism: A history of media bias in the United States*. Lanham, MA, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- [27] Lowery, S. & De Fleur, M. (1995). *Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- [28] Malhotra, N. (2010). *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*. London: Pearson.
- [29] McCombs, M. (2014). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [30] McCombs, M. & Reynolds, M. (2002). News influence on our pictures of the world. In Bryant, J. & Zillmann, D., eds., *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 1–18). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- [31] McQuaill, D. (1994). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. London: Sage.
- [32] Navrátil, J., Martinát, S., Krejčí, T., Klusáček, P. & Hewitt, R. J. (2021). Conversion of Post-Socialist Agricultural Premises as a Chance for Renewable Energy Production. Photovoltaics or Biogas Plants? *Energies*, 14(21), Article ID: 7164. DOI: 10.3390/en14217164.
- [33] Nečas, V. (2008). *Mediální kontext české zahraniční politiky*. In Kořan M., ed., *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2008* (pp. 41–48). Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů.
- [34] Potočník-Slavič, I. & Schmitz, S. (2013). Farm tourism across europe. *European Countryside*, 5(4), 265–274. DOI: 10.2478/euco-2013-0017.
- [35] Renting, H., Rossing, W. A. H., Groot, J. C. J., Van Der Ploeg, J. D., Laurent, C., Perraud, D., Stobbelelaar, D. J. A. & van Ittersum, M. K. (2009). Exploring multifunctional agriculture. A review of conceptual

- approaches and prospects for an integrative transitional framework. *Journal of Environmental Management*. 90, 112–123. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2008.11.014.
- [36] Rijnks, R. & Strijker, D. (2013). Spatial effects on the image and identity of a rural area. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. 36, 103–111. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2013.07.008.
- [37] Shoemaker, P. & Reese, S. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. Harlow: Longman.
- [38] Shoemaker, P. & Vos, T. (2009). *Gatekeeping Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- [39] Spilková, J. & Perlín, R. (2013). Farmers' markets in Czechia: Risks and possibilities. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 32, 220–229. DOI: 10.1016/j.rurstud.2013.07.001.
- [40] Sucháček, J. (2014). European Themes within National TV News Reporting in the Czech Republic. In: Honová, I., Hon, M., Melecký, L. & Staníčková, M., eds., *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on European Integration* (pp. 644–650). Ostrava: VŠB – Technical University.
- [41] Sucháček, J. (2015). TV Reporting and Self-governing Regions in the Czech Republic. In Nijkamp, P., Kourtit, K., Buček, M. & Hudec, O., eds., *5th Central European Conference in Regional Science Proceedings* (pp. 979–986). Košice: Technical University.
- [42] Sucháček, J., Sedá, P., Friedrich, V. & Koutský, J. (2014). Media Portrayals of Regions in the Czech Republic: Selected Issues. *E+M Ekonomie a Management*. 17(4), 125–140. DOI: 10.15240/tul/001/2014-4-010.
- [43] Sucháček, J., Sedá, P., Friedrich, V. & Koutský, J. (2015). Regional Dimension of Security and Accidents and their TV Reflection in the Czech Republic. *Transformations in Business and Economics*. 14, 3C, 544–563.
- [44] Sucháček, J., Sedá, P., Friedrich, V., Wachowiak-Smolikova, R. & Wachowiak, M. (2016). From Regional to National Clouds: TV Coverage in the Czech Republic. *PLoS ONE*. 11(11), Article ID: e0165527. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0165527.
- [45] Svobodová, E., Bečvářová, V. & Vinohradský, K. (2011). *Intenzivní a extenzivní využívání přírodních zdrojů zemědělství ČR*. Brno: Mendelova univerzita.
- [46] Tuan, Y. F. (1974). Images and Mental Maps. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 65(2), 205–213. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8306.1975.tb01031.x.
- [47] Věžník, A. & Konečný, O. (2011). Agriculture of the Czech Republic after Accession to the EU: Regional Differentiation. *Moravian Geographical Reports*. 19(1), 50–60.
- [48] Věžník, A., Král, M. & Svobodová, H. (2013). Agriculture of the Czech Republic in the 21st Century from Productivism to Post-Productivism. *Quaestiones Geographicae*. 32(4), 7–14. DOI: 10.2478/quageo-2013-0029.
- [49] Wilson, G. A. (2007). *Multifunctional agriculture: a transition theory perspective*. Wallingford: CABI.

Other sources

- [50] CSO. *Public database – Census of population, houses and dwellings*. [online]. [cited 2023-03-07]. Available from: <https://vdb.czso.cz/vdbvo2/faces/cs/index.jsf?page=statistiky#katalog=30713>.
- [51] CSO. *Public database – Number of livestock - inter-regional comparison*. [cited 2023-03-07]. Available from: https://vdb.czso.cz/vdbvo2/faces/cs/index.jsf?page=vystup-objekt&z=T&f=TABULKA&skupId=2746&katalog=30840&pvo=ZEM07B&pvo=ZEM07B&c=v3~2__RP2010MP04DP01.
- [52] Media Tenor, spol. s r.o. (2011). *Interní databáze společnosti Media Tenor, s.r.o. za roky 2005–2011*.

- [53] Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. *Soil 2009*. [cited 2023-03-04]. Available from: http://eagri.cz/public/web/file/45535/puda_11_2009.pdf.
- [54] Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. *Yearbook 2010 – Organic agriculture in the Czech Republic*. [2023-01-24]. Available from: <https://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/zemedelstvi/ekologicke-zemedelstvi/dokumenty-statistiky-formulare/rocenky/>.
- [55] SALSC. *Summary reports on the land fund from the data of the Cadastre of the Czech Republic*. [cited 2023-02-22]. Available from: <http://www.cuzk.cz/Periodika-a-publikace/Statisticke-udaje/Souhrne-prehledy-pudniho-fondu.aspx>.