

ABSTRACT

The diploma thesis deals with regional products and their labelling schemes which have rarely been studied in the context of Czech geography. The thesis aims to identify the role of regional product labelling schemes in the process of institutionalizing regions (in the sense of Anssi Paasi) as well as to discover their contribution to the development of regions. The thesis is based on a theoretical discussion which includes the concept of region and regional identity formation, the issue of regional products as a part of the alternative food networks concept and the issue of symbolism and branding/labelling. The research consists of three parts. The first part provides a database of Czech labelling schemes and an assessment of regional product labelling in Czechia. In the second part, 22 labelling schemes united by the Association of Regional Brands are assessed from different perspectives (location, structural aspects etc.). The last part verifies and completes the findings using semi-structured interviews with key actors of the labelling schemes. The existence of the relation between labelling schemes and the institutionalization of regions was verified at each scale. Regional product labelling is particularly involved in the formation of the region's territorial shape and in the strengthening of regional consciousness as well as the image of the region. Labelling schemes are likely to become efficient development tools for regions including disadvantaged ones. However, they should not be overestimated. A regional product labelling scheme works rather as an additional activity within a broader development strategy; its applicability depends on the activity of actors involved.

Key words: region, regional identity, regional development, regional products, labelling schemes