

Symboly a symbolika regionu Regional Symbols and Symbolism

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Creating the symbolic shape of a region is the basis of one of the key phases in the formation of a region (process of institutionalization). During this process, the region takes on its "symbolic shape", is identifiable as different from others not only because of its territorial delimitation, but also because of its name, given visibility to historical roots, natural and cultural uniqueness, or traditions. All of the elements (natural, pertaining to the landscape, social, etc.) that contributed to the formation of its symbolic shape thus become regional symbols. When they are combined, they become the region's symbolism. This symbolism not only represents, but also influences its image (inwardly and outwardly) and contributes to the region's reproduction in time. Symbolism thus becomes part of the region's developmental strategy/tools – regional marketing and branding.

The research on regional symbols and symbolism and their significance during the process of the region's formation is still in its early phase. In connection to the emancipation of regions of various scales or the construction of new regions, we are witnessing the production of a new (primarily graphic) symbolism. It often does not use the potential of existing symbolism and does not reflect the reality, which symbols are considered by the territorial community as their own. Each region has its own "content", which can be symbolically expressed. It depends solely on what sense this content takes on in the space-time and social context. Specific components of the region (sculptures, buildings, rivers, names) become carriers or mediators of thought, feelings, or value the moment they become imbued with meaning and may obtain the status of a regional symbol (typical for the given region).

Analyzing regional symbolism (and the meaning ascribed to the symbols) helps evaluate the role of symbols in the process of region's formation and the construction of its identity and image. It also shows to what extent the symbolism is used as a tool of the power relationships in the region and what importance it has in the formulation of the strategies of regional development. One can use the iconographical and semiological analysis of the content of the graphic symbols as a source of historical geographical information about the region. One can compare, for example, what types of symbols are employed in the creation of the symbolism of continually settled regions as opposed to regions with disrupted development, or one can reconstruct historic regions according to the legacy of the noble family that held several neighboring municipalities (aristocratic manors and the territories within their purview)

The symbolism of localities (municipal emblems) emphasizes their local particularity, difference from others, which is often difficult to read. The symbolism of regions and microregions is more unified and readable (based on clear and generally accepted symbols).

Utváření symbolického tvaru regionu je podstatou jedné z klíčových fází formování regionu (procesu institucionalizace). Ten v jejím průběhu získává svou "symbolickou podobu", stává se identifikovatelný vůči jiným nejen prostřednictvím územního vymezení, ale např. i názvem, zviditelněním historických kořenů, přírodních a kulturních jedinečností či tradic. Všechny prvky (přírodní, krajinné, sociální ad.), jež se podílejí na formování symbolického tvaru, se tak stávají regionálními symboly. Jejich souborem je regionální symbolika. Ta území nejen reprezentuje, ale ovlivňuje i jeho image (uvnitř i vně) a přispívá k reprodukci regionu v čase. Symbolika se také stává součástí strategií/nástrojů rozvoje regionů – regionálního marketingu a brandingu.

Výzkum regionálních symbolů a symboliky a jejich významů v procesu formování regionů je stále v počátcích. V souvislosti s emancipací regionů různých měřítek či vznikem nových regionů jsme svědky produkce nové (především grafické) symboliky. Ta mnohdy nevyužívá potenciál symboliky stávající a nereflektuje skutečnost, které symboly územní komunity považují za své. Každý region má svůj "obsah", který lze symbolicky vyjádřit. Záleží jen na tom, jaký smysl tento obsah získává v časoprostorovém a společenském kontextu. Konkrétní součást regionu (socha, budova, řeka, jméno) se v okamžiku, kdy je obdařena významem, stává nositelem či zprostředkovatelem myšlenky, pocitu či hodnoty a může získat statut regionálního symbolu (typického pro dané území).

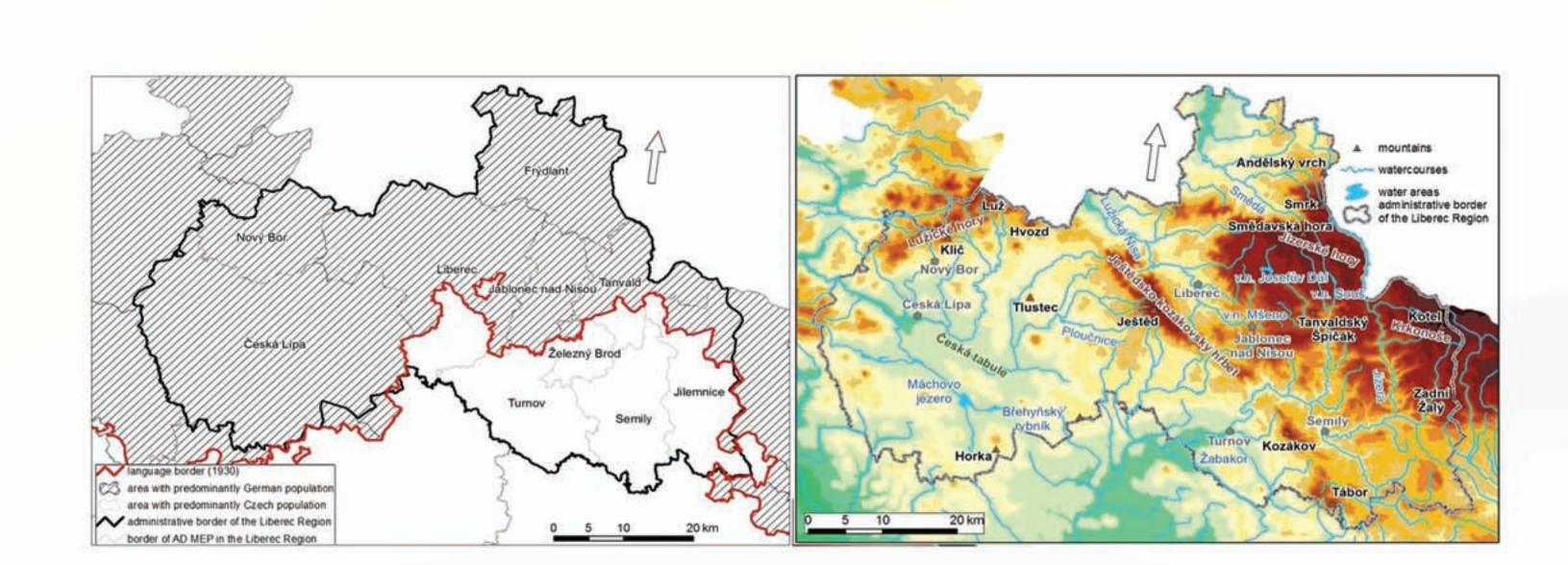
Analýza regionální symboliky (a významů přisuzovaných symbolům) pomáhá zhodnotit roli symbolů v procesu formování regionu a utváření jeho identity i image. Ukazuje také, do jaké míry je symbolika využívána jako nástroj mocenských vztahů v území a jaký význam má při vytváření strategií regionálního rozvoje. Ikonografickou a sémiologickou analýzu obsahu grafických symbolů lze využít jako zdroj historickogeografických informací o území, lze např. porovnávat, které typy symbolů se uplatňují v tvorbě symboliky kontinuálně osídlených oblastí oproti dosídleným, nebo lze dle odkazu k šlechtickému rodu opakujícím se ve více prostorově blízkých obcích rekonstruovat historické regiony (šlechtická panství a území jejich působnosti).

Symbolika lokalit (obecní znaky) zdůrazňuje lokální specifičnost, odlišnost od ostatních, je často hůře čitelná. Symbolika regionů a mikroregionů je jednotnější, čitelnější (založena na jasných a obecně přijímaných symbolech).

Liberec Region: specific region for the study of regional symbolism

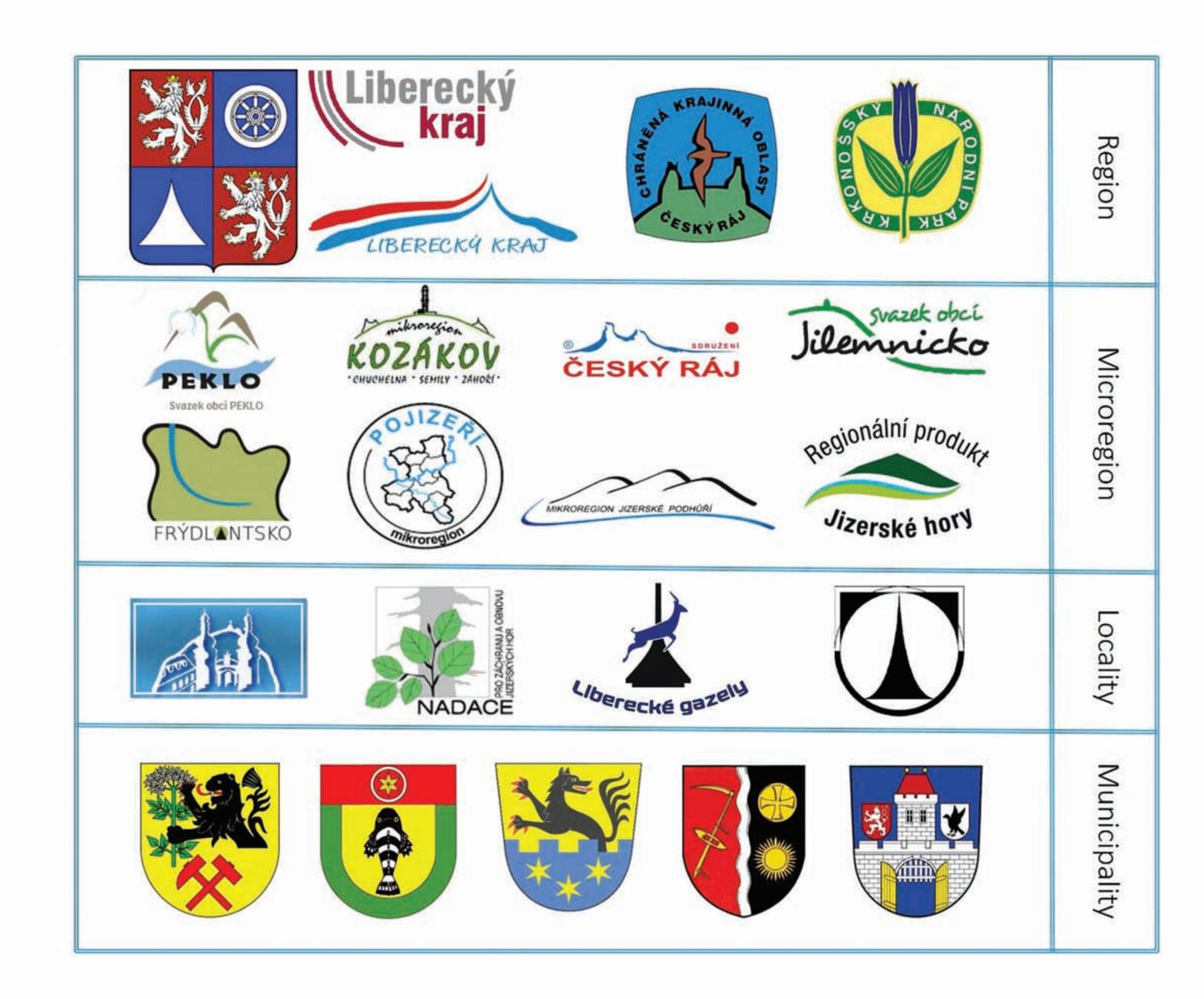
Left figure: Former language border (1930)

- Right figure: Physical-geographical conditions of the region
- The changing of the population after the WWII - Intensively transformed landscape - socialist restructuralization (industrialization), changing land use - Border region - proximity to the Polish and German borders
- Region with a rich natural and landscape heritage, heterogeneous region Newly constituted region (after the year 2000)

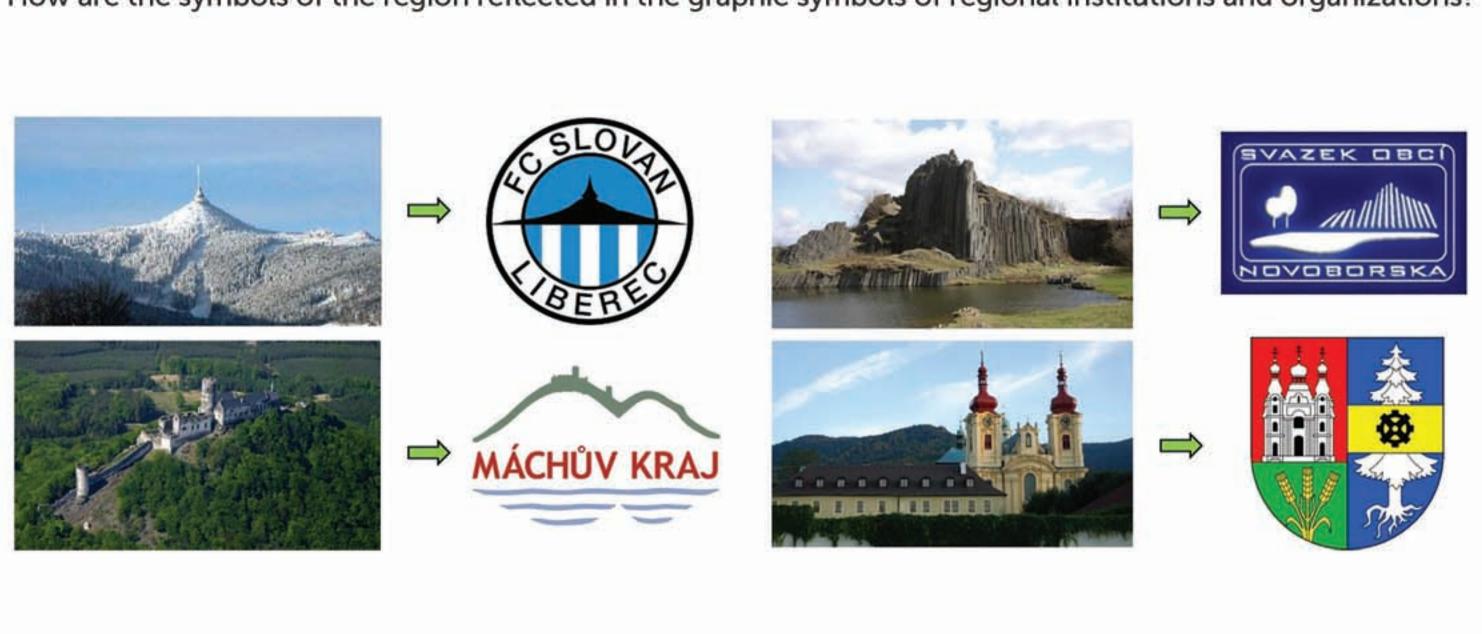


Graphic symbols of regional institutions and organizations

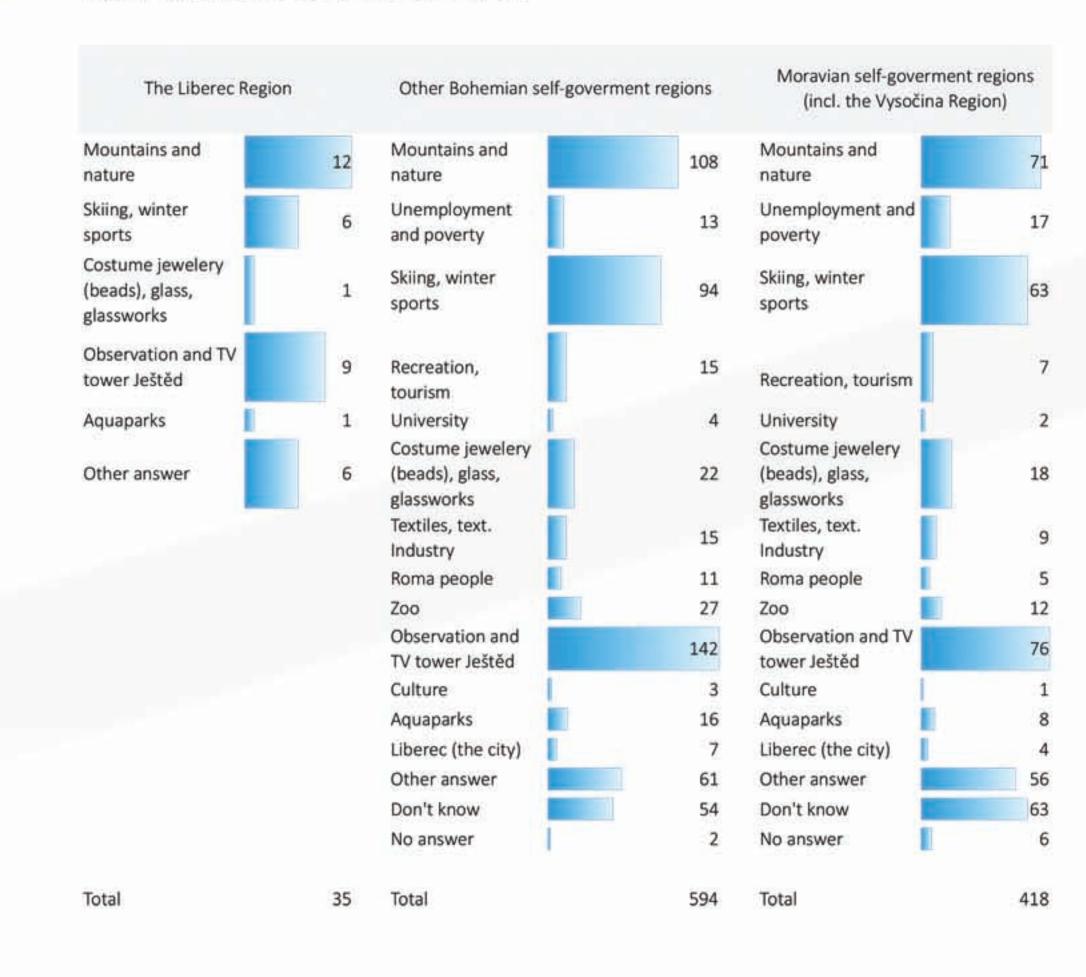
The graphic symbols of institutions and organizations are classified according to a hierarchical-scale level, in which the regional institutions and organizations are working. Types of elements/symbols (natural, pertaining to the landscape, historical, cultural, administrative, religious), which are reflected in graphic symbols, are observed.



How are the symbols of the region reflected in the graphic symbols of regional institutions and organizations?



Is the perception of the symbols of the region different within it or outside of it?



Examples of symbols used in selected municipal emblems

A - Volfartice (The wolf is a so-called talking symbol. It corresponds with the name of the municipality. The emblem and the name refer to the original German name of the municipality – Wolfersdorf.); B – Pěnčín (The apple symbolizes orchards, which are traditional in the locality.); C - Turnov (The two-tailed lion, the symbol of the Czech lands, is a symbol of the city because it was the Royal City in medieval times.); D - Bezděz (The combination of the above-mentioned two-tailed lion and the ramparts refer to the Royal Castle, which still stands in the locality.); E - Dolní Řasnice (The horseshoe and the blacksmith tongs symbolize an important historical figure. The blacksmith Ondřej Stelzig, according to a legend, "took from the rich and gave to the poor."); F – Karlovice (The red cross, an attribute of St. George, symbolizes him as a patron of the local church.); G - Nové Město pod Smrkem (The rasp and hammer refer to the former economic activity in the locality - mining ferrous metals. The second figure, the wheel, is a symbol of the aristocratic family that was important in the development of the locality and also for the wider territory within the region.); H - Slaná (The four white roses are a symbol of an administrative character. It shows that the municipality is divided into four parts.); I – Lázně Libverda (The figure of the cockerel and the water spring symbolizes a local legend about the cockerel who found a local medicinal spring.); J - Albrechtice v Jizerských horách (The spruce trees and the mountain in the background refer to the forested and mountainous area where the municipality is located.); K - Liberec (The city gate - traditional symbol of cities in general.); L - Přepeře (The blue wavy lines refer to the Jizera River, an important watercourse within the entire Liberec Region.) Source: The official register of municipal emblems, The Parliament of the Czech Republic, The Chamber of Deputies. Author's study of the meaning of symbols used in the municipal emblems.

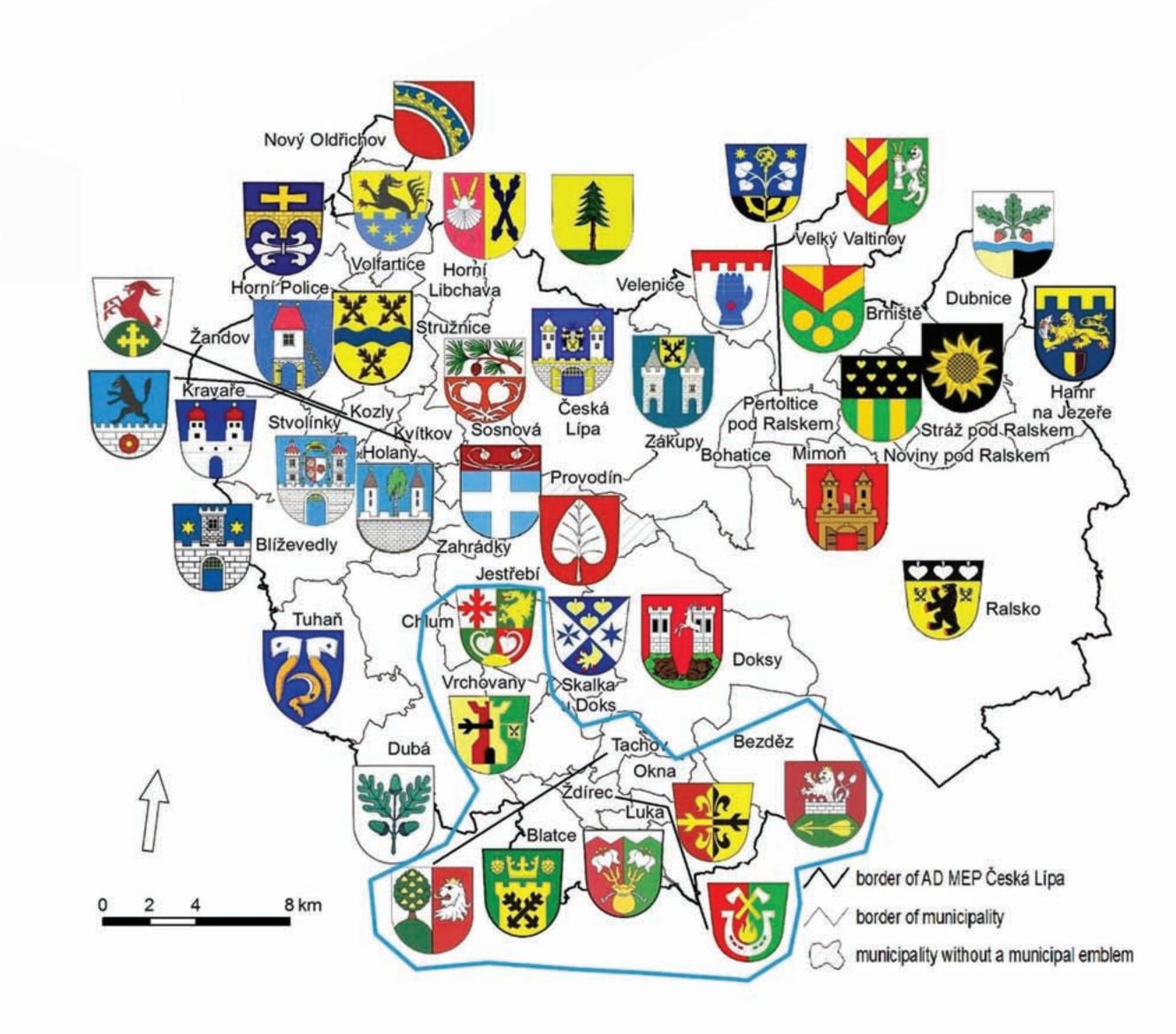


What elements are considered/can be considered the symbols of the region? Examples of elements that are/may be the symbol of the region based on an analysis of the media, regional literature, personal knowledge, etc.

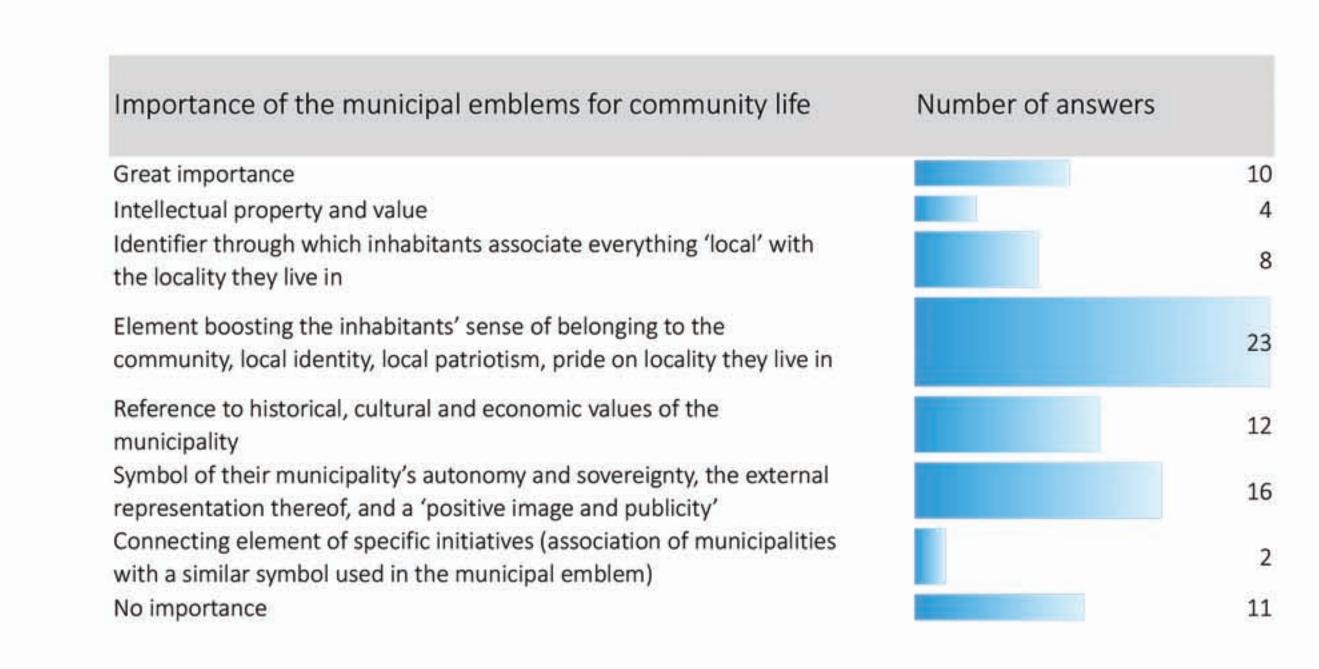


Is there a space pattern in the usage of symbols in graphic symbols?

E.g. the reconstruction of historic regions (manor) based on a link to an identical noble family in the emblems of the neighboring municipalities.



Significance of the municipal emblem for municipality life and the local community (according to municipal representatives)





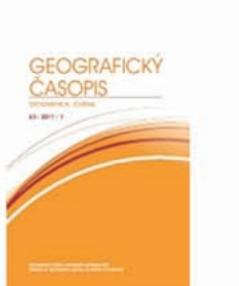
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