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**Title:** Regionalism - identity - pro-social attitude

**Author:** Ewa Budzyńska

**Citation style:** Budzyńska Ewa. (1995). Regionalism - identity - pro-social attitude. W: W. Świątkiewicz (red.), "Region and regionalism : culture and social order" (S. 33-42). Katowice : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.



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EWA BUDZYŃSKA

## REGIONALISM — IDENTITY — PRO-SOCIAL ATTITUDE

### Introduction

Modern civilization, beside undoubted achievements in economy and technology, has also brought negative consequences for a man — both in the individual and social aspects. Disseminating culture among the masses, its homogenizing due to the mass media, and, eventually, unification of the society meaning decay of traditional norms and values that constitute the basis for local social ties, and also loss of social activity — are only some of the negative phenomena. One has to add also these connected with the appearance of big, anonymous human agglomerations, that include: sense of loss, alienation, eradication, losing control over civilization-related processes and losing sense of self-identity. In this way civilizational transformations, separating a man from the place and environment of his origin, contributing to increasing his spatial and social mobility, instead of giving him happiness coming from the increased possibilities of choosing different, competitive to one another, values and getting away from local community control, they have only brought this man anxiety and sense of loss when faced with the difficulty in differentiating between right and wrong.<sup>1</sup> These transformations have also made a man experience deterioration of kindness and willingness to help in interpersonal relations and lose the feeling of safety and belonging, while the anonymity resulted in lack of responsibility for the environment in which

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<sup>1</sup> J. Mariański, *Moralność w procesie przemian. Szkice socjologiczne [Morality in the Process of Transformations. Sociological Essays]*, Warszawa 1990, p. 57.

he/she lives. In the social aspect these transformations have led to the morality crisis that manifests itself in loss of ethos, anarchy and lawlessness, relaxing discipline and order, relativism, scepticism and moral decadence.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up this problem, we can draw the conclusion that civilizational development has brought positive effects for a man only in the intellectual-cognitive aspect, not in the personality or moral-social ones, as here it has rather contributed to moral degradation, sense of loss and unhappiness. Under such circumstances we should not be surprised by the currently observed turn back towards rebuilding local communities bearing the following characteristics: strong social bonds, community spirit based upon a specified area, social-cultural separateness manifested by specific values, norms and behaviours. Today, we already know that every human being, in order to be able to live with dignity and develop, needs this specific "rootedness"<sup>3</sup> in a given region that means not only a certain geographical area but also the community of people living and functioning in this region and culture (material and symbolic), generated by this community as well as influencing them.

## Region-Centred Attitudes

In the literature on the subject the notion "region" is not explicit. Thereby various authors use different definitions.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this paper I accept the synthetic definition of the region given by J. Damrosz: "a region is a set of  $x$  cultural features within the  $v$  area based on the relevant human background  $z$ ".<sup>5</sup>

The notion of regionalism corresponds with the notion of region, somehow emerges from it, meaning the attitude towards all the elements constituting the region. The name: attitude will be used from now on. If we look at the attitude in the structuralist way<sup>6</sup> then the notion of regionalism will include views and knowledge about the region (cognitive component) as well as

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> H. Skorowski, Fr., SDB, *Antropologiczno-etyczne aspekty regionalizmu [Anthropological and Ethical Aspects of Regionalism]*, Warszawa 1990, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> Different notions of the region and regionalism are presented in the paper "Region and Regionalism as Cultural Values" written by W. Świątkiewicz, contained in the present volume.

<sup>5</sup> J. Damrosz, *Region i regionalizm. Studium interdyscyplinarne [Region and Regionalism. Comprehensive Study]*, Warszawa 1987, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> S. Mika *Psychologia społeczna [Social Psychology]*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 115—116.

emotional ties with the region expressed by loving “little homeland” and being close to it (emotional component) and also the whole range of activities in favour of the region (behavioural component). This region is usually the country of one’s childhood, associated with everything that is “homely”, as for example: feeling of safety, family warmth, being loved and accepted, wealth and variety of customs, religious and moral behaviours, and products of material culture.

The above expressed attitude towards the region may be classified as one of the moral-social attitudes, defined by H. Muszyński.<sup>7</sup> The central point of these attitudes is a welfare of a given social group (nation, ethnic group). Development of these attitudes proceeds on two planes: 1) acquiring by an individual, through identifying oneself with the closest information, the views and behavioural patterns uniting the community (national, regional), 2) personal experiences of an individual connected with belonging to his/her own ethnic group and encompassing contacts with other groups.<sup>8</sup> In literature, this kind of attitudes is often called sociocentric attitudes<sup>9</sup> or social attitudes focused on realizing common well-being<sup>10</sup> of a given social group.

The second type of attitudes connected with region are interpersonal attitudes (often called altruistic or allocentric<sup>11</sup>) related to other individuals’ good. Presently we take into account the attitudes concerning the people belonging to their own regional group (so-called “folks”) and people staying outside this group (so-called “strangers”).

Finally it is time to mention the last kind of region-oriented moral attitudes: intrapersonal ones, where the sense of one’s own regional identity and emotional relationship with oneself as a member of this particular regional community (self-acceptance) become very important.

It is beyond doubt that certain relations among these three types of region-centred attitudes can be observed. It seems, however, that the prerequisite of the first two (socio- and allocentric) ones is formation of regional self-identity. This will enable an individual to classify people as “folks” and “strangers”, then will help to generate different moral attitudes towards these

<sup>7</sup> H. Muszyński, *Rozwój moralny [Moral Development]*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 150—162.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> J. Mariański, “Postawy prospołeczne i egoistyczne w społeczeństwie polskim w świetle badań socjologicznych” [“Prosocial and Egoistic Attitudes in Polish Society in the Sociological Perspective”], *Collectanea Theologica*, fasc. 1, 1985, pp. 46—47.

<sup>10</sup> J. Majka, Fr., “Wychowanie chrześcijańskie — wychowaniem personalistycznym” (“Christian Education as Personalistic Education”), in *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej [Education in Christian Family]*, ed. F. Adamski, Kraków 1982, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> J. Reykowski, *Motywacja, postawy prospołeczne a osobowość [Motivation, Prosocial Attitudes and Personality]*, Warszawa 1986, p. 259.

groups, and eventually will become the basis for creating the attitude towards one's own "little homeland" and acting in its favour.

To fine our considerations regarding the region-centred attitudes, it may be well to add that beyond regional identity (connected with "private homeland") there is national identity (connected with "ideological homeland").<sup>12</sup> But the problem of interdependence among these identities is beyond the scope of this paper.

## Dimensions of Identity

The sense of self-identity is the awareness of one's own separateness, cohesion and continuity,<sup>13</sup> and strong belief that one will stay the same in the constantly changing world.<sup>14</sup> The process of developing the sense of self-identity is determined by social conditions, especially the process of socialization. According to Berger and Luckmann, "[...] identity may be objectively defined as a position in a given world and only together with this world may it be subjectively acquired".<sup>15</sup> In other words, the sense of self-identity may develop on the basis of such objective elements as culture, community, area, constituting "actual universe that we inherited as given to us beyond our will and knowledge".<sup>16</sup> Formulating that in another way, we can say that there are some factors promoting creation and development of self-identity, namely all these combining to the notion of psychosocial niche, such as all the roles and positions of an individual in connection with the ecological and social circumstances under which he/she lives and functions.<sup>17</sup>

Psychological determinants of self-identity include self-schemes and self-definitions (being the generalized knowledge about oneself)<sup>18</sup> as well as

<sup>12</sup> S. Ossowski, *O ojczyźnie i narodzie [Of the Homeland and the Nation]*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 26—27.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Zaborowski, *Psychospołeczne problemy samoświadomości [Psychosocial Problems of Self-Consciousness]*, Warszawa 1989, p. 263.

<sup>14</sup> J. Koziński, *Psychologiczna teoria samowiedzy [Psychological Theory of Self-Knowledge]*, Warszawa 1986, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> P. Berger, Th. Luckmann, *Spoleczne tworzenie rzeczywistości [the original title: The Social Construction of Reality]*, trans. J. Niżnik, Warszawa 1983, p. 207.

<sup>16</sup> J. Prokop, "Polskie universum" ["Polish Universum"], *Znak*, 390—391, 1987, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Z. Zaborowski, *Psychospołeczne problemy samoświadomości [Psychosocial Problems of Self-Consciousness]*, ..., p. 275.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277—279.

the sense of one's own value and locus of control.<sup>19</sup> Human identity is very strongly connected with a man's confidence about his own separateness and his conviction that he is not completely similar to or the same as other people.<sup>20</sup> It appears that every man has a need to "understand the specific character of his own self, that is to grasp his own objective uniqueness delimited by the body limits and individual mental features".<sup>21</sup> Simultaneously, apart from the need for one's own separateness, there exists another need for belonging to the group, maintaining the ties and sense of community. Conflict between these two dimensions of identity may be resolved thanks to the fact that people, trying to have regard for the social standard of egalitarianism, perceive themselves as a person better than others fulfilling the social standards requirements. This perception of oneself as "a better conformist" was defined by J. P. Codol as *primus inter pares* effect.<sup>22</sup> These two key dimensions of identity are also mentioned by the authors of papers concerning regional identity. The dimension of belonging refers to everything that determines the specific character of a given area, defined by a given community, culture and geographical area itself. Therefore regional identity would include the awareness of belonging to the regional community, as well as to the area of specific regional culture and one's homeland.<sup>23</sup> The second identity dimension, on the other hand, would refer to the awareness of ethnic or regional difference in terms of community, culture and territory.<sup>24</sup> According to H. Skorowski, both dimensions intermingle and create an inseparable whole.<sup>25</sup> The same author adds one more identity dimension to the above, namely identification. It means accepting the universe, that is community, culture and territory in their axiological aspect, as his/her own and, thus, being a form of participating in it.<sup>26</sup>

While considering different dimensions of the sense of identity, one more problem should be taken into account: their intensity and interrelations. The results of psychological research and sociological observations constitute the basis for drawing the conclusion that both extreme similarity and extreme separateness "me — others" is a source of negative tension and the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>21</sup> M. Jarymowicz, "Spostrzeganie samego siebie: porównywanie 'ja — inni'" ["Self-Perception: Comparison 'Me — Others'"], in *Psychologia spostrzegania społecznego [Psychology of Social Perception]*, ed. M. Lewicka, Warszawa 1985, p. 241.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>23</sup> H. Skorowski, Fr., SDB, *Antropologiczno-etyczne aspekty regionalizmu [Anthropological and Ethical Aspects of Regionalism]*, ..., p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

tendency to avoid it. Extreme similarity — due to difficulties in orientation concerning the specific character of one's "self" — may lead to general confusion and troubles with functioning, extreme separateness, on the other hand — to fear of social rejection or to the sense of deviation. Besides, the lack of sense of separateness may result in depersonalization, loss of the feeling of one's own individuality and identity, what, in consequence, may cause substantial functional disorder due to the loss of subjective control over oneself (e.g. aggressive behaviour, stolidity to other people's suffering, lack of solidarity and readiness to help, tolerating theft).<sup>27</sup> The sense of one's own separateness determines also the sense of responsibility for other people's lives.<sup>28</sup> Summing up the data presented above, one can say that the sense of separateness favours pro-social orientation<sup>29</sup> while social uniformization, leading to limiting the autonomy of one's "self", generates conditions reducing the possibility of an individual's subjective involvement in social matters.<sup>30</sup>

A slightly different role is played by the sense of belonging, based on similarity to other people. This similarity is a source of self-confirmation reducing uncertainty about oneself, good frame of mind connected with being accepted and approved of by the environment, feeling united with the members of the group. Inability to find similarities between oneself and the members of one's group may result in strong anxiety and troubles with social functioning.<sup>31</sup> The perceived similarity "me — others" constitutes a psychological basis for dichotomization of social world into "folks" and "strangers". This factor plays a vital role in lightening the assessment of anti-social actions performed by the similar people, it stops the aggressive reactions towards them, intensifies helping activities, increases the level of empathy and sympathy and interpersonal attractiveness.

Concluding the considerations regarding the sense of identity, one can say that it is definitely fundamental for a man's effective functioning in the world, provided that a balance between the two dimensions: sense of separateness and belonging (similarity) is maintained. At the same time, both have to keep certain optimum.

<sup>27</sup> M. Jarymowicz, "Spostrzeganie samego siebie: porównanie 'ja — inni'" ["Self-Perception: Comparison 'Me — Others'"], ..., pp. 249—250.

<sup>28</sup> M. Jarymowicz, "Czy jesteśmy egoistami?" ["Are We Egoists?"], in *Złudzenia, które pozwalają żyć. Szkice z psychologii społecznej* [*Illusions, which Allow to Live. Essays of Social Psychology*], eds. M. Kořta and T. Szustrowa, Warszawa 1991, p. 138.

<sup>29</sup> Z. Zaborowski, *Psychospołeczne problemy samoświadomości* [*Psychosocial Problems of Self-Consciousness*], ..., p. 293.

<sup>30</sup> M. Jarymowicz, "Spostrzeganie samego siebie: porównanie 'ja — inni'" ["Self-Perception — Comparison 'Me — Others'"], ..., p. 252.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 236—240.

## Pro-Social Attitude

The notion “pro-social attitude” means focusing on non-individual, non-personal objectives, comprising the activities performed in order to support, protect and develop other people, groups, communities or institutions, that means: social objects.<sup>32</sup> The term is related to such notions as: altruism, general friendliness, trust, brotherhood, helping others, compassion, etc. Pro-social attitude may also be defined as a positive extreme of social attitude. The latter also includes asocial attitude (as indifference towards others) and anti-social one (negative extreme).

It is generally believed that the origin of pro-social attitude lies in empathy (meaning emotional sensitivity to signals received from other people), syntony (based on psychological similarity “me — others”), internalized standards (manifested by sense of duty and honour, fear of remorse), and, finally, feeling of one’s own value and dignity.

Let us now try to analyse the relation between regionalism and pro-social attitude. It seems that this relation will be strongly connected with dichotomization of social world into “folks” and “strangers”. However, when relating it to regionalism, the basis for classification will be not psychophysical qualities — like in case of forming the sense of self-identity — but cultural features and, more specifically, separate value systems<sup>33</sup> experienced within social contact. The categories of “folks” and “strangers” are reflected by positive (towards “folks”) and negative (towards “strangers”) stereotypes, being schemes or patterns for qualities concerning a given social group with an additional element of valuation. The stereotypes are passed and developed in the process of socialization and are known for their high level of stiffness and persistence. They can also become a source of prejudice manifested by animosity against the groups of strangers with excessively positive attitude towards one’s own group.<sup>34</sup> In the context of these data it seems obvious that the attitudes towards “folks” will be the pro-social ones, rising from the feelings of bond, integration, cohesion and solidarity, centred around symbols, values, standards and, resulting from then, behavioural patterns.<sup>35</sup> However, there is

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<sup>32</sup> J. Reykowski, “Nastawienia egocentryczne i nastawienia prospołeczne” [“Egocentric and Prosocial Dispositions”], in *Osobowość a społeczne zachowanie się ludzi* [*Personality and Social Behaviour of Man*], Warszawa 1980, p. 173.

<sup>33</sup> F. Znaniecki, “Studia nad antagonizmem do obcych” (“Studies on the Antagonism to Strangers”), in *Współczesne narody* [*Modern Nations*], Warszawa 1990, p. 300.

<sup>34</sup> T. Mądrzycki, *Deformacje w spostrzeganiu ludzi* [*Deformations in Person Perception*], Warszawa 1986, p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> W. Świątkiewicz, “‘Swoi’ i ‘obcy’ jako kategoria opisu społecznego świata (Z badań współczesnej problematyki kulturowej Górnego Śląska)” [“‘Ours’ and ‘Strangers’ as the Cate-



one question that has to be addressed: is it only fear of social sanctions — in case of acting against the accepted moral code — that lies at the base of pro-social attitude towards “folks”, or: is there another, equally probable mechanism connected with the similarity to one’s “self” (syntony)? Besides, there is one more source that cannot be ignored here, namely the sense of one’s own regional identity that also contributes (as I have already shown) to making pro-social attitudes dynamic. Now there appears another question about being pro-social towards “strangers” — both in case of culturally homogenous region (more and more difficult to find) and multi-cultural one existing due to mass people’s migrations (e.g. Upper Silesia). Some authors, on the basis of empirical research, indicate the attitudes of mutual animosity, hostility, blaming each other for the degradation of the region;<sup>36</sup> while the others — on the basis of cultural transformations within societies of the U.S., Canada and Australia — say that regionalism not only does not isolate a person and does not lead to ethnocentric monism (apart from individual exceptions), but it actually opens the person in relation to other ethnic realities.<sup>37</sup> Therefore the problem of pro-social attitude towards the so-called “strangers” remains unsolved and requires further research.

## Conclusion

The compiled sources and conducted analyses show that regional identity is a factor positively influencing an individual in the personal aspect as well as in the social dimension. On one hand, it not only puts him/her in a good frame of mind by neutralizing the negative effects of modern civilization, but also reinforces his/her locus of control and responsibility for other people’s lives and course of events. On the other hand, the sense of belonging, by giving the feeling of “rootedness” and satisfying the essential social needs, by causing the feeling of safety and support of the people “like him/her-self”, stimulates pro-social actions in favour of these people whom we accept as “folks”. The pro-social attitudes towards “strangers”, however, require further research. In case of discovering negative relations, the pro-

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gory of Society Description (From Researches on Modern Cultural Problems in Upper Silesia)”, in *Na pograniczach (kultura — ludzie — problemy)* [*On the Borders (Culture — People — Problems)*]. Materials from the Scientific Conference “Culture Clashes and Overlapping on the Borders”, Suchy Bór, 26—27th Nov., 1990, ed. Z. Jasiński, Opole 1991, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24—32.

<sup>37</sup> H. Skorowski, Fr., SDB, *Antropologiczno-etyczne aspekty regionalizmu [Anthropological and Ethical Aspects of Regionalism]*, ..., p. 205.

blem of changing the negative stereotypes of “strangers” should be considered, as these stereotypes are most frequently the reason for anti-social attitudes towards this group of people. In order to reach the ideal of openness and pro-social character of mutual relations, it is worth to bear in mind A. Rodziński’s guidelines: “Each culture and cultural community needs sufficiently wide margin of tolerance, pluralism in generous affirmation of everything that is human, that agrees with human dignity; otherwise, a tragic determinant of its fate may be its own one-sidedness — stiffened, ‘shocked with change’, facing new and new different situations and threats. Therefore ‘loving other people’s identity as much as one’s own’ is so precious, almost essential within every community and culture.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> A. Rodziński, “Karola Wojtyły — Jana Pawła II komunijnistyczna wizja kultury” [“Carroll Woytyla — John Paul II Communionistic Vision of Culture”], in *Osoba. Moralność. Kultura* [Personality. Morality. Culture], Lublin 1989, p. 373.

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## REGIONALIZM — TOŻSAMOŚĆ — PROSPOLECZNOŚĆ

### Streszczenie

Współczesna cywilizacja — przynosząc osiągnięcia w dziedzinie gospodarki i techniki — prowadzi równocześnie do ujawnienia się wielu negatywnych zjawisk związanych ze sferą osobowościową i społeczną człowieka. Efektem uświadomienia sobie tych zjawisk jest zwrot ku próbom odbudowy społeczności lokalnych, dających jednostce szansę “zakorzenienia”, czyli ukształtowania postaw regionocentrycznych. Do postaw tych zaliczono: postawę socjocentryczną — skoncentrowaną na regionie, czyli tzw. małej ojczyźnie, postawę interpersonalną (allocentryczną) — odnoszącą się do zamieszkujących dany region ludzi, ocenianych jako “swoi” lub “obcy”, wreszcie postawę intrapersonalną (egocentryczną) — odnoszącą się do samego siebie jako osoby utożsamiającej się z danym regionem.

Warunkiem powstania postawy socjocentrycznej i allocentrycznej w odniesieniu do regionu jest ukształtowanie się własnej tożsamości regionalnej, na którą składa się poczucie własnej indywidualnej odrębności, jak i podobieństwa (przynależności) do innych. Wydaje się, że silne poczucie tożsamości regionalnej będzie intensyfikować pozostałe postawy regionocentryczne. Natomiast powstaje pytanie, czy tożsamość ta jest w stanie wyzwolić postawy prospołeczne wobec ludzi nie należących do własnej grupy regionalnej oraz “ojczyzny ojczyzn”, czyli całego kraju. Ta kwestia wymagałaby dalszych badań.

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## REGIONALISMUS — IDENTITÄT — URGESELLSCHAFT

### Zusammenfassung

Die heutige Zivilisation — außer daß sie Erungenschaften in Wirtschaft und Technik mit sich bringt — verursacht zugleich, daß sich viele negative Phänomene, die mit der Persönlichkeits- und Gesellschaftssphäre des Menschen verbunden sind, bemerkbar machen. Resultat des Bewußtwerdens dieser Phänomene ist der Versuch des Wiederaufbaus der lokalen Gesellschaften, die dem Individuum die Chance geben, "Wurzeln zu schlagen", d.h. Regionalzentrische Verhaltensweisen zu gestalten. Zu diesen Haltungen wurden gerechnet: die soziozentrische Haltung, die sich auf der Region konzentriert, d.h. die sog. kleine Heimat; die Interpersonalhaltung (die Allozentrische), die sich auf die eine gewisse Region bewohnenden Leute bezieht, die als "Unsere" oder "Fremde" bewertet werden; endlich die Intrapersonale Haltung (die Egozentrische), die auf sich selbst gerichtet ist, als die Person, die mit der gegebenen Region gleichgestellt wird.

Die Bedingung der Herausbildung der soziozentrischen und allozentrischen Haltung im Bezug auf die Region ist das Entstehen der eigenen regionalen Identität, die aus dem Gefühl der eigenen, individuellen Eigentümlichkeit besteht wie auch das Ähnlichsein (der Zugehörigkeit) den anderen. Es scheint, daß das starke Gefühl der regionellen Identität andere regionalzentrische Haltungen intensivieren wird. Es wirft sich jedoch die Frage auf, ob diese Identität im Stande ist, progesellschaftliche Haltungen den Leuten gegenüber auszulösen, die nicht zu der eigenen regionalen Gruppe und der "Heimat der Heimaten", d.h. dem ganzen Land zugehören. Dieses Problem bedarf weiterer Forschungen.