

NEW REGIONALISM IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONDITIONS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND GLOBALISATION

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Abstract: The article analyzes new regionalism in the context of regional development in the conditions of European integration and globalization. In the first part of the study, traditional (“old”) regionalism was characterized as a cultural and pragmatic context of the region’s functioning and development, as well as a starting point for shaping the concept of new regionalism. Next, the discourse of new regionalism was presented as a theoretical concept, as well as a political and socio-economic doctrine, used in practical activities in the field of status changes, functions and conditions of development of modern regions. The last part of the article focuses on the analysis of new regionalism as a development paradigm. It has been shown, that in the condition of European integration and globalization, new regionalism, as a development strategy, creates new opportunities and promising perspectives in overcoming the problems and development inequalities of regions. The analysis and characteristics of the subject matter were extended to include elements of the critique of the new regionalism paradigm. This allowed to give practical meaning to theses and postulates of this concept and to show its weaknesses and limitations related, among others, to the change in the role of nations and the diversity of forms and content of region’s interests in the European Union.

Keywords: new regionalism, regional development, European integration, globalization.

1. Introduction

Regionalism, as a term in both scientific literature and common language, is understood in at least two ways. This is a result of two different meanings of the term “regionalism”. First of all, the term means a part of a particular state (country). Secondly, it is a part of the world, e.g. a continent, a part of a continent, a group of countries. Definitional designation of the term as a part of a country – essential from the perspective of an issue discussed in this paper – takes the form of an expression, according to which regionalism consists of social ideas and activities focused on keeping, strengthening or demonstrating a certain region’s autonomy. Autonomy may relate to various dimensions of region’s functioning. Mostly, it may be seen in

the sphere of culture, society and nation. The postulates are formulated in relation to those three subjects and, at the same time, those are the receivers of the results of activities taken within certain regionalisms (Szul, 2007, pp. 114-115).

In scientific analysis, there is a difference between traditionally understood regionalism and the new regionalism (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008; Sönderbaum, 2015). Traditional European regionalism, sometimes defined as the “old” one, is seen as a rank-and-file movement, based on a traditional ideological premise, referring to the need to secure certain qualities attributed to regional community and its environment (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008, p. 356). In this case, it is important to focus on objective cultural factors, such as folklore, ceremonies, customs, dialect etc., deciding about the diversity and specificity of a region. The aim of the traditional movement for the region is to gain a certain status within the dominating national state. A *welfare* type of state, acting on the basis of centralistic rules and governing mechanisms, aims to unify different areas of its territory, thereby referring negatively to cultural diversity and any centrifugal tendencies.

The post-fordism evolution and changes caused by globalization processes were associated with the introduction of a new approach to regionalism, which suggested referring to the region in a different manner. Decentralization processes of state power and the progress of globalization made it necessary to redefine relations between the region and the state, as well as other (global) macrostructures. Regions were put in a globalized economic space, which resulted in a change of the hierarchy and the driving force of the subjects working in the political, economical and social space, creating a new context of conditioning and dependencies of the regional development processes and phenomena.

Within the general meaning, “region development” as a term refers to a dynamic aspect of regional social-territorial system functioning as a separated unit of the country administrative division, with specific human and physical resources, certain natural environment and entering into energetic exchange and information relations with its surroundings (Gorzela, 1989, p. 10). Analysis and research of region understood in this way concern mostly the issues connected with using the external resources, as well as the range and characteristics of its correlations with the surrounding, in order to optimize the direction and pace of the region permanent development.

The purpose of this article is to analyze new regionalism in the context of integration and globalization processes affecting the development of modern regions. The study used the method of reconstruction and analysis of selected issues and threads present in the scientific discourse on regionalism. On this basis, an attempt was made to answer the question whether new regionalism is a useful instrument to support and dynamize the development on a regional level.

2. Regionalism as a cultural and pragmatic context of functioning and development of regional community

In the source literature, there are several meanings of regionalism (Kwilecki, 1992, p. 42). Firstly, it is a social-cultural movement, i.e. white-collar, literary, social, connected with a specific region, being a result of regional society, which is aware of its distinctiveness and is connected by its sense of identity. Secondly, regionalism is a definition of artistic creation, referring to regional motives. Thirdly, regionalism refers to scientific research activities, the subject of which are regional communities, the connection of units and social groups with the place, the environment and the territory.

Regionalism is also sometimes treated as a form of collective consciousness, constituted by regional literary texts, integrated into local sensibilities in such way, that they present the – otherwise invisible – “cultural landscapes”, thereby integrating the members of local community (Griswold, 2008). Regionalism treated as a cultural value is understood as an activity, culturally modeled and legitimized by the power of tradition, the aim of which is to defend and promote the values of regional culture in the context of national and universal culture. Regionalism is a result of the sense of a group collective consciousness. It is a social movement referring to local culture. It rises from the needs and aspirations (also those referring to social and territorial sustainable development) of the region citizens, who demand more justice and struggle to valorize certain territory.

Regionalism refers to the state of social consciousness typical for any regional community and their opinion-forming circles, as well as to the economic, political and cultural activity of this community (Chojnicki, and Czyż, 1992; Cymbrowski, 2009). It is a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon, which is “a set of diverse properties, distinctive for communities, occurring on a certain territory and defining their distinctiveness (...). It is seen as an ideological movement, presenting the region’s program and striving for its certain institutionalization, and orientation based on this activity in various areas of social life, including strengthening the self-governing bodies” (Chojnicki, and Czyż, 1992, p. 14).

Regionalism is based on the sense of identity, which is felt, to a certain degree, by a local community. The essence of collective identity is, on the one hand, a sense of connection with a certain group, and on the other, a lesser or greater distance kept from the other groups. If the distance is limited to a small extent, the group keeps its distinctiveness and, at the same time, it has a sense of identity with a greater community. Sometimes, however, the distance may cause alienation and then, instead of a greater community, one may experience aversion or hostility. Alienation may have two sources – it derives either from the inability to accomplish certain important culture values, or the inability to accomplish important economic interests, both of which should be essential for the group (Jałowiecki, 2000, p. 283). The group which has a sense of potential “blockage” in cultural and economic areas takes actions, the aim of

which is to change its unfavorable situation. This usually results in defense reactions of other groups, as well as state structures, aiming at limiting centrifugal trends and avoiding potential conflict against this background. Two reasons for regional movements may be presented. On the one hand, they are a reaction for an excessive centralism, as well as cultural and economic uniformity, whilst on the other hand, they are an expression of cultural, ethnic and national diversity, strengthened by the differences of economic and civilization level, as well as a chance for economic development (Chojnicki, and Czyż, 1992).

In terms of political activities pragmatics, we can distinguish regionalism within the domestic activity and within international relations (Malarski, 2000). In the first case, this means the modern world's tendency for political development, consisting in "deconcentration" and decentralization of state authorities and moving the political system to lower levels. That way, we experience the increase in the economic and political autonomy of certain regions, which are economically and culturally consistent. The term and the phenomenon of regionalism, referred to the area of international relations, imply a tendency to organize political power within natural regions or attempts to create regional communities, the members of which are connected by historical ties, based on membership in smaller groups, covering a common geographical area (Malarski, 2000, p. 14).

More and more often, economic distances are becoming the background of regionalism within a fiercer international competition. They are especially apparent in economic differentiation, as well as developmental potential and pace of central and peripheral regions (Grosse, 2007; Tuziak, 2013). In the practice of mutual relations between central and peripheral regions, two situations are possible, first of which is when the region may be poor and economically underdeveloped, and then the community demands a more profitable distribution of national income for itself (e.g. in the form of grants, special developmental and support programs). Second situation occurs, when the region is the leader of economical development, but, as a result of the state redistribution policy, most of the wealth produced in its area goes to poorer regions, which obviously causes opposition from the regional community (Jałowiecki, 2000, p. 284).

When it comes to a sociological interpretation of the phenomenon of regionalism, it should be emphasized, that regionalism is a tendency, as well as a social movement, based on local culture, local needs and aspirations, which may take various forms and manifest itself on the continuum between folklore and politics. Thus, its range extends from the sense of a certain cultural distinctiveness and the will to valorize local values (such as family, art, monuments, tradition etc.), the will to cultivate own dialect, demanding certain rights for the distinctiveness, as well as more fair treatment from the nation-state, and even postulates of autonomy or separatist demands (Keating, 1988).

3. The new regionalism discourse

New regionalism, as a theoretical and ideological concept used in practical activities and the analysis of status changes, functions and conditioning of modern regions development, is very well-sourced (Keating 1998; Perulli 1998; Lovering 1999; Webb, Collins 2000; MacLeod 2001; Gren 2002; Wheeler 2002; Sonderbaum, and Shaw, 2003; Ward, Jonas 2004; Obydenkova, 2006; Warleigh-Lack, 2006; Gašior-Niemiec 2008; Rosamond, and Warleigh-Lack, 2013).

There are many issues connected with the term and the range of new regionalism, which require explanation (Gašior-Niemiec, 2008, pp. 353-354). The first issue concerns the relations between the spheres of ideology, science, as well as political and social practices. The second is the need to explain the status of “old” regionalism and mutual relations between the “old” and the “new” regionalism in Europe. Finally, the third issue is the need to explain the relations between new regionalism as an intra-European discourse and new regionalism as a global discourse. The new regionalism discourse in Europe is described as a discourse of political-administrative elites, which are rooted in the European Union institutions. It is more and more technocratic and connected with academic discourses, suggesting solutions of economic, social and political problems, which are results of the national state crisis, welfare state inefficiency, collapse of the centrally planned economic model, as well as changes and problems generated by globalization. From the European Union “decisive-expert” level (politicians, high-level administrative office workers, experts, scientists), the discourse is transmitted and retraced on a regional and local level. This does not mean a passive discourse reception, but rather its active adaptation and modification, although respecting the top-down interpretation scheme. It is important that the programs of public actions, created within the paradigm of new regionalism, implemented with the use of structural funds, result in (usually positive) changes in regional environments.

An important element of the new regionalism discourse is defining its role and meaning within the context of relations with old regionalism (Björn, 2005; Sönderbaum, 2015). It needs to be stated, that ideological character is typical for both types of regionalism. However, old regionalism is mostly typical for social and political movements, and it is usually expressed in the sphere of cultural indicators, such as artistic style, customs, traditions, dialect etc. New regionalism is more of a political, as well as social-economical, doctrine, a type of discourse, a developmental strategy and a kind of marketing construct (Gašior-Niemiec, 2008).

Between the old and the new regionalism, there are numerous relations. The Renaissance of regionalisms and localisms in the modern Europe strengthens and recovers traditional (“old”) regionalisms, which fits with the developmental rhetoric, argumentation and activities typical for new regionalism and, therefore, makes it easier to use the European funds. An important normative connector between the old and the new regionalism is the thesis stated by

neo-regionalists, according to which the regions are social-economical systems, which are best prepared for globalization challenges, as well as the demands of sustainable development. New regionalism is sometimes treated as an expression of specific political rationality, which, in the second half of the 20th century, began to play a similar role to the one played by the 19th century imperialism, both when it comes to global and local relations. Similarly to imperialism, new regionalism is not only reflected in the authorities relations model and specific space structure, but it also influences social conceptions, as well as shapes culture codes, institutional forms, social practice patterns and even language forms (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008, p. 358). Using discourses, practices and resources of the European institutions, new regionalism reorganizes spatial, political and social relations in Europe. It conditions the functioning and sustainable development of the European regions, e.g. in terms of organization, norms, identities. Moreover, it influences the aims, forms and patterns of activities for regional actors.

4. New regionalism as a theoretical and ideological paradigm of region's development

The turn of the 1980s and the 1990s is the time when a radical, almost breakthrough, change of image, status and functions attributed to regions took place (Keating, and Loughlin, 1997; Keating, 1998; Anderson, 2001; Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008). The changed perspective of perceiving regions crystallized into a developmental paradigm, which was defined in the sphere of regional policy, as well as academic and public debates, as the new regionalism (Keating 1998). The essence of this phenomenon is defined by a set of assumptions and features, which are adopted within this theoretical and ideological perspective (Gren, 2002; Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008). Firstly, it is assumed that a region is a basic subject responsible for creating sustainable development in Europe. Secondly, a region is treated as an autonomous being, acting according to rules similar to those in a company. Thirdly, a region is said to be the level of social organization, which provides the greatest developmental opportunities and minimizes dangers, being a result of the processes of European integration and globalization. The above mentioned assumptions do not meet all features of a region's functions within the urban environment, as it is still treated as the main source of innovation and competition (Jakubowska, Kukliński, and Żuber, 2007), as well as an important "player" on the global market, bearing the responsibility for prosperity and sustainability of regional communities in the united Europe.

New regionalism is a developmental paradigm, with which high hopes are associated in terms of the European integration and globalization. Practical implementation of its assumptions is supposed to make it possible for all the regions to overcome developmental problems. The thesis, which is the core of new regionalism as a developmental paradigm, takes the form of the following statements (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008, pp. 361-362):

- a) a region is both a territorial and a relational structure, which means that such issue as peripheral location is – at national, continental and world level – not important or insignificant;
- b) the main issues in developmental processes are immaterial: mostly knowledge and the quality of institutional surrounding of economic processes, therefore natural resources and technical, industrial or transport infrastructure are less meaningful;
- c) regional actors, such as regional authorities' institutions, have a significant influence on initiating and coordinating developmental processes, which decreases the significance of decisions and activities implemented by state governments;
- d) it is possible and desirable to intervene in regard to such factors as: the region's image, regional symbolism and identity; therefore, it should be allowed to take action when it comes to social engineering, implemented, inter alia, with the use of market instruments in the form of marketing, advertisement etc.
- e) regions have the ability to „learn”, which makes it reasonable and useful to use such educational methods as *benchmarking* or the systems of “good practice”.

The above indicated assumptions and expectations to materialize the promises of new developmental opportunities for regions are ideological in nature, as they refer to the imaginary and desirable vision of reality. The vision is accompanied by implementing various programs of public activities, which makes it possible – to some extent – to monitor the effects of its influence on the condition and sustainability of regions. The adequate indicators are mainly quantitative and economic in nature. They refer to the changes of regional GDP, the unemployment or employment rate, the number of patents, the role of high technology branches in the structure of regional economy. More and more often, however, the need to refer to qualitative indicators is pointed out. This would make it possible to move beyond the narrow framework of understanding development only in the economic terms.

In the context of globalization and European integration, the role of the state is changing. The expression of new trends may be seen in decreasing efficiency and relevance of the top-down planned policy towards regions, implemented by the state. The conception and practice of network development based on public-private partnership is being developed. The new type of governance policy, understood as a new style of governing, is an alternative and stands in opposition against hierarchic and traditional model of the state policy (Webb and Collins, 2000; Kukliński, 2003). In terms of new regionalism, the state should be treated as a political and decisive structure, which constitutes an obstacle in the economic development of regions (Brugger, 1986).

In relation to redefining the functions of the state and the forms of its influence on the situation and sustainability of regions, there is a question concerning the factors determining activities of regional and local communities. In response to this question, a different understanding of culture and its role in life of the mentioned communities was proposed within the new regionalism. Since the neo-regionalists culture does not only concern folklore, customs

and traditions of regions, but rather a syndrome of values, attitudes, social norms and the ways of thinking, which shape a “mental profile” of actors in certain regions, influencing the undertaken activities. Cultural accessory, in the form of accepted norms and values, create a certain perceptual filter, through which they perceive the surrounding world (Keating, 1998). Such understanding of culture emphasizes the meaning of subjective features and attitudes of individuals, which, despite being directly unobservable, significantly affect the choices, decisions and activities undertaken by regional actors in the sphere of social, political and economic life. This way, culture plays an active role in the development of regions, providing an “invisible background” for motivation, dynamics and the range of economic and social activities of the people. The understanding of culture, adopted within new regionalism, fits in with the wide term of culturally oriented analysis of economic, social and political changes (Putnam, 1995; Fukuyama, 1997; Kockel, 2002; Harrison, and Huntington, 2003; Hryniewicz, 2004; Sztompka, 2005; Castells, 2007).

Emphasizing the meaning of subjective factors in the culture is connected with another element of neo-regionalism, such as the role of regional identity in developmental processes (Geisler, 2007). In the “identity” perspective, neo-regionalism approaches regions as social constructs, created when searching for new forms of identification. Regional identity strengthens social ties and solidarity, contributing to mobilization, cooperation between social groups, as well as greater political and economic activity of regional actors. As a result, regional identity, based on homogenous, relation-forming social-cultural features, becomes an important factor of endogenous development and economic growth (Keating, 1985; Bassand 1986; Kockel, 2002). However, it should be noticed, that within the paradigm of the economy based on knowledge and the models of innovation systems, cultural diversity and regional specifics are placed above cultural and identity homogeneousness (Tuziak, 2004, 2013). These factors emphasize theoretical concepts, as well as developmental programs based on them, including practical guidelines concerning the creation of the environment of innovation, creative class, regional brand (Aydalot, 1986; Florida, 2004; Andersson, 2007; Anholt, 2007; Gąsior-Niemiec, 2013; Florida, Adler, and Mellander 2017).

Social-cultural factors (rules, regulations, cognitive structures, normative systems, role models and behaviors connected with economic activity), as well as regional identity, action strategy and social capital resources affecting the direction (way) of development and dynamics of economic growth are the effect of historical buildup of social-economic processes in the long perspective. These processes are the subject of numerous economic and social studies (North, 1981; Putnam, 1995; Fukuyama, 1997; Braudel, 1999; Mahony, 2000; Bourdieu, and Wacquant, 2001; Weber, 2002; Fuchs, and Shapira, 2005; Martin, and Sunley, 2006).

5. The elements of criticism of the new regionalism paradigm

The paradigm of new regionalism is criticized in both its analytical, as well as normative approach. The criticism recognizes its weaknesses and analyses them in terms of ideology, pragmatism and theory (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008, pp. 362-364). The analysis of situations in some European countries (e.g. Spain and Italy) shows, that the discourse of new regionalism may result in articulating and intensifying political, social and economic tension. In the perspective of promising equal opportunities for all regions, an internal discourse has begun, the center of which is the opposition: the “strong” vs. the “weak” regions. In this situation, whether the region is strong or not would be based not only on economic indicators, but also on “cultural dominance”. The presence of the idea and the rules of new regionalism in the public debate and activity programs may result in escalating the antagonistic relations between the regions and the states. Regional elites, which accept the perspective of new regionalism, show determination in supporting the processes of European integration, which is a result of striving for limiting or disobeying the prerogatives and competences of the state. Strengthening the power of regions at the expense of the state may, however, have negative effects, the scale and character of which may overbalance potential benefits. The dangers may be the result of fragmentation and political strengthening of regional particularism, expressed in, among others, various official and unofficial forms of representing the interests of regions in the European Union (Skawiński, 2008).

Creating clientelist relations between regional and state elites, as well as with the elites functioning on a European level, is also a negative aspect (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008). The patron-client relations are often associated with jurisdictional, personal and reputational expansion of regional political-administrative apparatus. There is a situation, where the capital of the region takes priority over the surrounding, which is a result of opportunities coming from distributing resources. Moreover, in regards to external subjects and structures, there is a tendency among regional politicians to treat regions as quasi countries. In the context of progressive process of globalization, networking the societies and more flexible boundaries within the world flow structure (Castells, 2007), this is a conservative approach and it does not favor including the regions in the mainstream of modern developmental processes.

The specificity and, at the same time, weakness of the new regionalism discourse is an ambivalent usage of the terms: “development”, “competitiveness”, “innovation” and “efficiency”. This ambivalence consists in the fact that, within the declaratory class, the above mentioned terms suggest the existence of an overall, balanced vision, referring to a social phenomena and processes, whilst within operational class they are mostly quantitative indicators of an economic nature (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2008, p. 364). Critical examination of new regionalism also points out giving excessive value to the role of culture in group activities and various forms of regional communities’ activities. It also raises doubts that this concept ignores

external factors – the state, legal and political limitations of activities of regional actors, international context etc. The subject of this criticism is also not a fully justified assumption of relatively homogenous regions creating their identity (Geisler, 2007).

6. Conclusion

Under conditions of globalization and the crisis of central (state) model of organization, as well as economic and social processes control, the role of regions fundamentally evolves (Markusen, 1987; Storper, and Harrison, 1991; Storper, 1997; Scott, and Storper 2003; Jakubowska, Kukliński, and Żuber 2007; Harrison, 2013). They gain more and more subjectivity, also in Poland, and become the most important territorial social-economic networks, within which development occurs (Gorzelać, and Jałowiecki, 2000; Pietrzyk, 2000; Jewtuchowicz, 2005; Grosse, 2007; Nowakowska, 2009; Tucholska, 2011; Olechnicka, 2012). The change in position, function and image of regions is an expression of transformations, which take place in a wider contexts, i.e. in political, economic and social ones, which take place in Europe and all over the world (Jakubowska, Kukliński, and Żuber, 2009; Grosse, 2012). The result of these changes, which is reflected in politics and economy, is the creation of a new developmental paradigm. It emphasizes spreading economic logic based on the rule of competitiveness, development of new (network) means of management, increasing the role of innovation (knowledge capital) and endogenous resources – social capital. It is characterized by a bigger ambivalence, with regards to territory, expressed in the opposition: global movements – local image (brand) of a place (Pike, 2011; Gąsior-Niemiec, 2013).

The new status and role of a region within this new paradigm accurately describes new regionalism, which is currently a general factual and ideological context for both the debates on the regions and programs of activities oriented at regional sustainability. This perspective is especially promising for peripheral regions, which, within global and the European Union conditions, have unique chance to increase and use its internal developmental potential in the best possible way. Leaving peripheral and marginalization state towards creating the basis of balanced, sustainable development is possible due to triggering resources of social and intellectual capital, as well as innovation and creativity rooted in regional communities and their elites.

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