

REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE INHABITANTS OF SMALL TOWNS IN LOWER SILESIA

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify and assess the regional identity of the inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia in the context of different types of territorial identity.

Design/methodology/approach: The research design employed qualitative and quantitative approaches. The desk research determined the state of research on the regional identity of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia. The quantitative research employed an online survey, carried out on a sample of 579 residents of small towns in the region. Data analysis was performed in the Statistica program.

Findings: The survey of the inhabitants of small towns in the Lower Silesian region has made it possible to assess the regional identity of the residents and relate it to other types of territorial identity. Based on the study, the sense of regional identity among the surveyed residents is quite strong. The respondents identify themselves as members of the Lower Silesian community more strongly than members of the local and European communities. However, national (Polish) identity is still stronger than regional identity among the inhabitants of small Lower Silesian

Research limitations/implications: The research is limited to determining the regional identity of the region's inhabitants based on the self-identification related to the sense of territorial belonging. Identification of territorial identity is related to selected variables: demographic characteristics, the degree of participation in the life of the local community and interest in the region's history. The research has a diagnostic character, so future studies could indicate changes in the regional identity of the inhabitants.

Originality/value: The research determined the regional identity of Lower Silesia inhabitants related to identifying the sense of territorial belonging. The analysis of the research results made it possible to assess the regional identity of the inhabitants of small towns in relation to other types of territorial identity.

Keywords: regional identity, territorial identity, identity measurement, Lower Silesia.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, when the image is an important aspect of territorial competition, the importance of identity, linked to the search for safer anchor points and more sustainable values in a changing world, is increasing. Regional identity and the associated socio-cultural distinctiveness in many regions result from many years of history and tradition. The essence of regional identity is a sense of belonging and identification with a territory and its community. Strong identity can affect both the emotional connection to a region and the desire to participate in activities for regional development.

Understanding identity is complex and necessitates systematic research, especially in regions that have developed social and cultural distinctiveness later than others. Such a region is Lower Silesia whose various territorial units and places have a long history, but due to the complex situation and changes resulting from historical, geo-political, social and cultural conditions, its regional identity began to take shape after World War II.

To date, there are few studies on the region's identity, much of it of a fragmented nature, and the last broader study referring to the identity of the inhabitants was conducted in 2011 (Żuk, 2011). Previous regional identity studies did not focus on residents of small towns in Lower Silesia. Such research is important, because residents of smaller territorial units play an important, although often underestimated, role in shaping the regional identity and co-building the region's image. Especially since the currently implemented image strategy of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship emphasizes the urgent need for actions to promote small towns of the region (Strategia komunikacji..., 2021).

The article aims to identify and assess the regional identity of the inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia in the context of different types of territorial identity. The research design employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The desk research determined the state of research on the regional identity of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia. The quantitative research employed an online survey, carried out on a sample of 579 residents of small towns in the region. The research focuses on determining the regional identity of the region's inhabitants based on the self-identification related to the sense of territorial belonging. The measurement used a modified identity measurement scale proposed by Sobecki (2018).

The analysis of research results made it possible to assess the regional identity of the residents and relate it to other types of territorial identity. Identification of territorial identity is related to selected variables: demographic characteristics, the degree of participation in the life of the local community and interest in the region's history.

2. Regional identity and related concepts

Regional identity refers to individuals' close ties to a particular region and is reflected in a sense of belonging and commitment to that region. Regional identity is rooted in the region's history, its landscape, its dominant language or dialect or other specific regional characteristics (Pohl, 2001). Regions are not immutable but dynamic in time and space. The same applies to regional identity, which can be subject to change and reinterpreted. Regional identity formation is a process involving phenomena of a social, spatial, historical and cultural nature that is associated with both stability and change (Raagmaa, 2002).

Regional identity is close to self-identity, which does not exist for itself, but is formed in social interactions. Personal identity is linked to individuals' social environment. In the same way, regional identity is not only a personal feeling towards a place but is part of a collective. There is no personal identity without being embedded in a community, and there is no collective identity without reference to the self-definition associated with the belonging of individuals (Pohl, 2001).

From a personal perspective, territorial identity can be seen as part of self-identity and the expression of personal attachment to a region. Personal ties to the region can vary in intensity: from a vague sense of belonging, close attachment, and strong and confessed identification to active engagement in the region (Pohl, 2001). Self-perception in the context of regional identity is influenced by knowledge of others having similar feelings for the region.

Regional identity is shaped by social interactions and is closely tied to collective identity (Pohl, 2001). Within this view, regional identity is closely linked to the concept of community, a relatively stable group of people who share common beliefs and values in direct and multilateral relationships (Taylor, 1982). Community members may differ individually, but communities are always rooted in the space in which they operate (Raagmaa, 2001). In a social context, it is also worth noting that territorial identity is linked to the attachment to a community and can influence engagement in the development of a region (Lewicka, 2005).

Both in a personal and collective sense, regional identity refers to consciousness and the answer to the question 'Where do we belong?' (Paasi, 2003). The belonging to a region relates to the area at the mesoscale and is, therefore, somewhere in the middle between local identity and national identity (Pohl, 2001). Local, regional, and national identities are interconnected constructs that reflect the complex ways individuals relate to their communities and nations. According to some authors, territorial identity refers to larger areas such as continents. It is, therefore, possible to speak of a European identity, referring to self-identification in the context of a transnational group of people based on the possession of common cultural roots and living in the same area - the continent of Europe (Miluska, 2007; Sobecki, 2018).

The distinguished types of territorial identities can coexist as defined constructs with varying degrees of relationship. The research can also identify the dominant territorial identity of a region's inhabitants. For example, in some regions, subnational identities may challenge national identification, indicating a complex interaction of territorial identities among citizens (Schnaudt et al., 2016).

Previous research has approached the issue of differences in territorial identity between residents of rural and urban communities, focusing on community type as a determinant of territorial identity (Belanche et al., 2021). Research has shown that there is no difference between the two communities in terms of cognitive place identity. However, residents of rural communities show higher levels of affective and evaluative place identity than urban residents. Furthermore, age moderates the effect of community type on the affective and evaluative dimensions of place identity. The study found the importance of community type and personal meaning. The research helped to clarify how territorial identity is developed differently in rural and urban locations (Belanche et al., 2021). However, there is a lack of research that addresses regional identity in the context of the type and size of urban communities.

3. Lower Silesia characteristics and the state of research on regional identity

Lower Silesia is a region that covers the south-western part of Poland. It is the seventh largest voivodeship in Poland in terms of area, which is 19,947 km², and has a total population of 2.9 million. The Lower Silesian area includes 92 towns, 73 of which are small towns. In recent years, these towns have undergone significant transformations, evolving from centres serving the surrounding agricultural areas to typical service hubs (Litwińska, 2011). Due to diverse natural landscape and numerous historic architectural sites, the Lower Silesian province is an attractive area from the perspective of the tourism industry. Located in Lower Silesia, the high level of medicinal and thermal waters favours the development of health and recreational tourism (Strategia Rozwoju..., 2023).

Lower Silesia is a region with a rich but complex history that has influenced both its territorial, cultural and social definition. After the end of the Second World War, many Central European countries revised and changed their territorial borders. As a result of the Potsdam Conference in 1945, Lower Silesia, which had previously belonged to Germany, was incorporated into Poland (Kacprzak, 2010). This decision resulted in demographic and social changes in the region. One of the most important consequences of the incorporation of Lower Silesia into Poland was changes to the region's population, including the exodus of some and an influx of new residents.

Migration movements concerning the region were complex and included, among others, forced resettlement of Germans and planned settlement actions of Poles coming from different areas of the country as well as from the former eastern borderlands (Damurski, 2006; Szarota, 1969). New communities were established in Lower Silesia, often finding the unfamiliar or distant cultural landscape (Chylińska, 2022). The formation of a common regional identity was hampered by the fact that the inhabitants of the region as a whole were not united by common values and elements of cultural and historical heritage referring to a common past (Kocój, 2015).

The adaptation of the inhabitants in the Lower Silesian areas resulted, among other things, in the disposal of elements of German culture and heritage, which were remnants of the previous inhabitants of the area (Banaś, 2009). Over the years, the new inhabitants of Lower Silesia progressively formed their own regional identity, different from the one that existed before 1945. The creation of a new regional identity was a process dominated by the transformation of space and the adaptation of existing structures to the new, Polish reality, while at the same time building a social community on the basis of the experiences and different traditions of the migrants, rather than the old historical ties to the area (Nowosielska-Sobel, 2015).

The identity of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia was also influenced by the top-down historical policy of the region's authorities from the second half of the last century, which in the cultural context was geared towards the Polonisation of the area and the consolidation of Polish history and customs (Nowosielska-Sobel, 2015). As late as the 1990s, the national narrative began to be abandoned in creating the identity of the Lower Silesian Voivodship. It was then that a concept began to be implemented, on the basis of which Lower Silesia was to be seen as an original cultural mix compared to the rest of the country (Wiszewski, 2021). It should be emphasised that for many years the region was commonly perceived through the prism of its capital, Wrocław, whose identity and image was supposed to refer to a "multicultural Central European metropolis" (Traba, 2007, pp. 45-46).

The contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia are descendants of second-, third- or fourth-generation migrants (Thum, 2011). Since the post-war era, they have faced the challenge of reinterpreting and shaping their own regional identity (Kurpiel, 2018), which is largely due to a break in natural historical, cultural and social continuity. Therefore, research on both the state and changes in the regional identity of Lower Silesia is so important.

To date, the most comprehensive study on the regional identity of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia remains the survey conducted in 2011. The survey among Lower Silesian residents found that more than half of the respondents were unable to identify regional commonalities, and one in three had no associations associated with the region they lived in. Nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents (75%) felt proud to be a Lower Silesian (Žuk, 2011).

In the current image communication strategy of Lower Silesia for 2021-2030, one of the strategic goals set is to support the building of a distinctive regional identity for the inhabitants (Strategia komunikacji..., 2021). The strategy's authors encourage a discussion on the current

emerging identity of the inhabitants, which is important from both a social and an image perspective.

In the context of the conducted research, it is also important to refer to the objective included in the region's image strategy, which refers to increasing the attractiveness of small and less popular Lower Silesian towns. Smaller towns play an important but often underestimated role in shaping the Lower Silesian identity. Furthermore, on the basis of the literature review, it has been noticed that there is a lack of scientific studies relating to the regional identity of the inhabitants of small Lower Silesian towns.

Researchers dealing with the issue of territorial identity also point to the need for research on the identity of Polish regions due to the narrative dominating the Polish public space for many years about a homogeneous, collective national identity resistant to cultural diversity (Sidorenko, 2019). At the same time, academic studies also emphasise the importance of research relating to the identity of regions that became part of Poland again after the Second World War, such as Lower Silesia (Chylińska, 2022). Lower Silesia is a special region due to its unique history of migration and population exchange, which meant that the new inhabitants had to not only adapt to a foreign space but also gradually build their regional identity from scratch.

In researching the identity of Lower Silesia consideration should be given to the complicated situation of the inhabitants in terms of regional identity compared to other Polish voivodships. Due to social and historical changes, identifying and defining the regional identity that exists among the inhabitants of Lower Silesia is interesting from a scientific and cognitive perspective, as well as from a management perspective. Based on a review of available sources, a research gap in regional identity focused on the self-perception of residents of the small towns was identified. This also applies to previous studies on Lower Silesia that have largely overlooked the identity of small-city residents.

4. Regional identity of Lower Silesian residents in the context of other types of territorial identity

4.1. Research methodology

The empirical study aimed to identify and evaluate the regional identity of residents of small towns in Lower Silesia. The research design employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. An analysis of the content of strategic documents of the Lower Silesian Voivodship supported the review of previous publications on the identity and image of the region. The desk research enabled identifying the current state of research on regional identity and recognising of a gap in research on measuring the identity of residents in small towns. Due to the region's history and multicultural character, the measurement of regional identity was related to other

types of territorial identity. The research used a partially modified scale by Sobecki (2018), which was developed by the author to diagnose the profile of socio-cultural identification. Ten categories of the original version of the scale included those related to territorial space and religious community (Sobecki, 2018, p. 96).

In this study, the authors focus only on regional identity and related types of territorial identity. The study identified territorial identification profiles, based on the four types identified: European, national, regional, and local. The dominant profile of territorial identity among residents of small towns in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship was identified using a quantitative approach. Regional identity was assessed by measuring the self-identification of the inhabitants in terms of territorial affiliation (sense of territorial belonging), based on 4 scale items:

1. Member of the European community (European).
2. Member of the nationwide community (Pole).
3. Member of a regional community (Lower Silesian).
4. Member of the local community (city dweller).

For each item of the territorial identity scale, respondents rated it using a 5-point Likert scale with assigned values. The Likert scale items were described as follows:

1. I definitely do not feel connected to this community.
2. I rather do not feel connected to this community.
3. It's hard to say.
4. I rather feel connected to this community.
5. I definitely feel connected to this community.

The survey was conducted through phone, interviews using a computer script with previously designed questions (CATI). The collected data was analyzed using Statistica software. The research was carried out on residents of small towns in Lower Silesia Voivodship.

According to Statistics Poland (Polish National Statistical Office), in 2023, there were 73 small cities, defined as territorial units with city rights and less than 20000 inhabitants. Based on data from the Local Data Bank, the total population of the 73 small towns studied was calculated to be 485,712, as of 31.12.2023 (Local Data Bank, 2024). Based on the formula for determining the minimum sample size considering the known population size (Jabłońska, Sobieraj, 2013, p. 46), the required sample size was found to be 384 people. Ultimately, 579 respondents participated in the study, which resulted in a maximum error of 4% at a confidence level of 95%.

Table 1.
Characteristics of the sample

Residents of small towns in the Lower Silesian Voivodship		
Respondents by gender	n	%
Female	309	53,4
Male	270	46,6
Respondents by age	n	%
18-29	81	13,98
30-39	101	17,44
40-49	124	21,42
50-59	124	21,42
60 and more	149	25,73
Respondents by level of education	n	%
Primary education	44	7,6
Vocational education	178	30,7
Secondary education	223	38,5
Higher education	134	23,1
Respondents by duration of settlement in a current city of residence	n	%
1-5 years	60	10,4
Over 5 years	376	64,9
Since birth	143	24,7
Total	579	100

Source: own elaboration.

The study involved 579 adult residents from all 73 small cities in Lower Silesia, 309 women (53,4%) and 270 men (46,6%). Among the five age groups, the largest group of respondents was people aged 60 and over (25,7%). The smallest number of respondents belonged to the youngest group of 18-29 years (14%). Among the surveyed residents of small towns, people with secondary education predominated (223). The next question regarding the length of residence in the city was a single-answer question. People who had lived in the city for less than one year did not participate in the survey. 178 respondents had vocational education (30,74%), 134 participants had higher education (23,14%), and 44 had primary education (7,6%). Respondents were also asked about the longevity of settlement in their cities of residence. Residents living in their city for at least one year participated in the survey. Most respondents (64,9%) have lived in the small Lower Silesian city since birth, 143 people for over 5 years (24,7%), and 60 people for 1-5 years (10,4%). The detailed characteristics of the sample are summarised in Table 2.

The research made it possible to define the regional identity of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia in the context of other types of territorial identity. The analysis related to the determination of the dominant identity was related to the characteristics of the sampled residents and was also linked to an assessment of the degree of participation in the life of the local community and interest in the region's history.

4.2. Research results

The regional identity of the inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia was determined by defining their territorial identity, by self-identification of the territorial belonging. The assessment referred to four types of territorial identity: European, national, regional and local. In the first stage, the dominant, declarative sense of territorial identity among all respondents was analysed. The variables presented on the Likert scale, referring to the individual types of identity, were treated as ordinal variables. National identity was dominant among the surveyed residents of small Lower Silesian towns (4,62). The average assessment of the sense of being a member of a regional community (Lower Silesian) was 4.2 (Fig. 1).

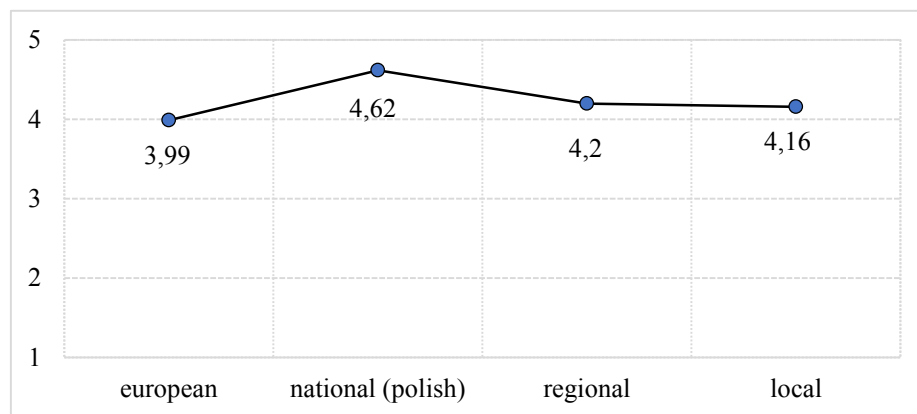


Figure 1. Territorial identity of respondents.

Source: own elaboration.

Next, it was checked whether there were any differences in the sense of territorial identity due to the age of the respondents. For this purpose, the average values of the individual types of territorial identity were determined in each of the 5 age groups. Again, national identity was the strongest among all groups, regardless of age. The difference in profiling is visible among the youngest age group. This group is the only one with a higher sense of belonging to the European identity than the local one. At the same time, local identity is the weakest in the case of the youngest group of respondents. Regional identity is second among most groups, except those aged 50-59. The most significant differences occur between the youngest and oldest age groups. Figure 2 graphically presents the average values of the territorial identity of the respondents according to their age group.

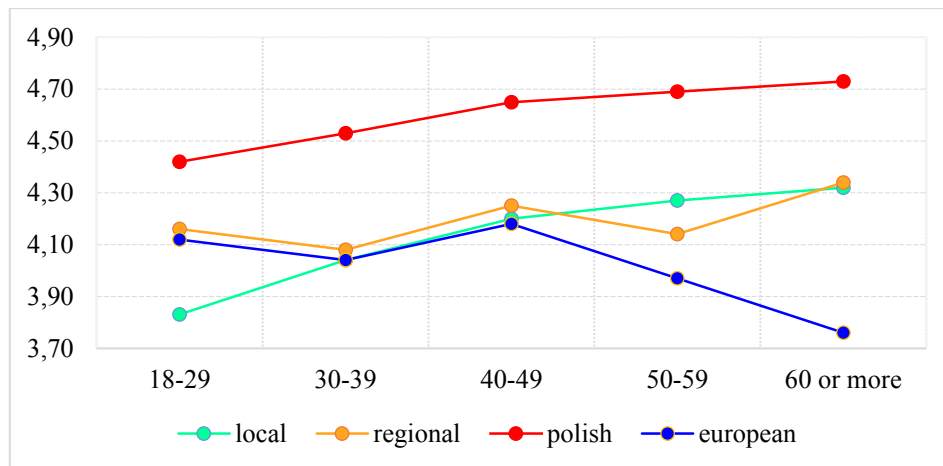


Figure 2. Self-assessment of the territorial identity of inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia - average values by age groups.

Source: own elaboration.

The relationship between the age group of respondents and the degree of dominant territorial identity was analyzed using a nonparametric chi-square test of independence. The strength and direction of the relationships between variables were then determined. The analysis found no statistically significant relationship between age and the degree of identity as a Pole or a member of a regional and local community ($p > 0,05$). However, there is a statistically significant relationship between age and identification as a member of a European community ($\chi^2 = 20,09$; $p < 0,01$), with a weak, negative correlation ($R_s = -0,11$). This indicates that younger people identify more strongly as members of a European community.

The study also identified differences in terms of a sense of territorial identity depending on the length of residence in the hometown. Regardless of the city's residence length, the national profile dominates among all respondents. The average level of sense of identity as a member of a regional community is the highest among people who have lived in a small Lower Silesian town since birth (Fig. 3).

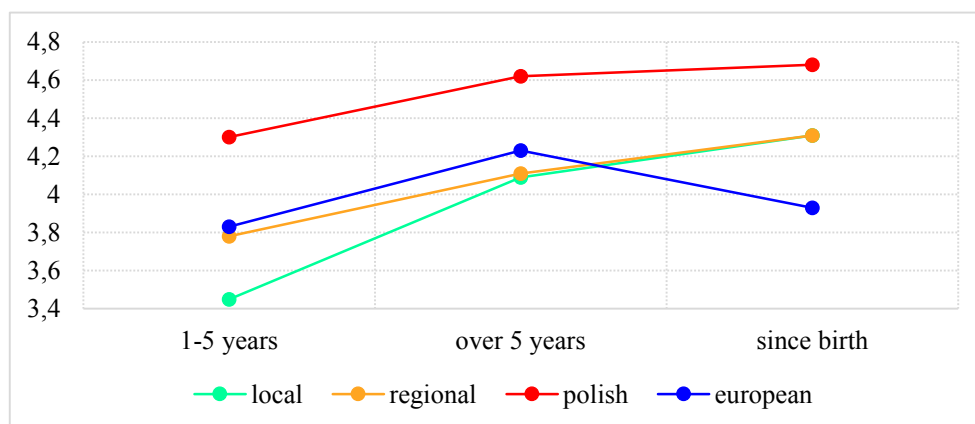


Figure 3. Self-assessment of the territorial identity of inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia - average values by length of residence in the city.

Source: own elaboration.

Based on the chi-square test, it was found that there is a statistically significant relationship between the length of residence and the degree of identification as a member of the national ($\chi^2 = 35,12$; $p < 0,001$), regional ($\chi^2 = 23,06$; $p < 0,001$) and local ($\chi^2 = 40,53$; $p < 0,001$) community. Then, the strength and direction of the relationships were measured. There is a positive but rather weak relationship between the length of residence and identification as a member of the national ($R_s = 0,18$), regional ($R_s = 0,18$), and local ($R_s = 0,21$) community at the given significance level of $p < 0,05$. The highest correlation between variables concerns the length of residence in the city and the degree of identification as a local community member.

Respondents were also asked about their participation in the city's local life. The question used a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "definitely not" and 5 "definitely yes". The average response to the question was 2,93. The most common response was "rather not" (144 people), while the least common was "definitely yes" (71 people).

In the analysis the respondents' sense of territorial identity was linked with the degree of participation in the city's local life. The national identity was dominant among the respondents with different involvement in the local community. The most significant differences were observed between those who actively participated in the city's local life and those who did not participate at all (Fig. 4).

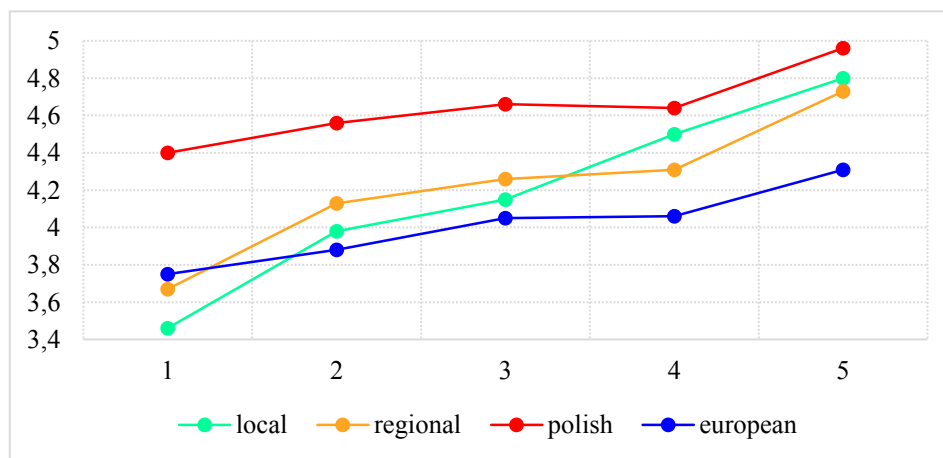


Figure 4. Self-assessment of the territorial identity of inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia - average values according to the degree of participation in the city's local life.

Source: own elaboration.

Based on the chi-square test, it was found that there is a statistical relationship between participation in the local life of the city and the degree of identification as a member of the European community (European) ($\chi^2 = 18,96$; $p < 0,05$), national community (Pole) ($\chi^2 = 26,33$; $p < 0,001$), member of the regional community (Lower Silesian) ($\chi^2 = 64,23$; $p < 0,001$) and local community (resident of the city) ($\chi^2 = 88,94$; $p < 0,001$). A positive, moderate correlation occurs to the highest degree between the sense of local identity and participation in the city's local life ($R_s = 0,36$). A positive, relatively weak, but statistically

significant correlation also occurs between participation in the city's life and regional identity $R_s = 0,28$.

Respondents were asked if they were interested in the history of the region they inhabited. The question implemented a 5-point Likert scale, where one indicated "definitely not" and five indicated "definitely yes". On average, the response to the question was 3,09. The most common response was "rather yes" (144 people), while the least common was "definitely not" (78 people).

The distribution of the respondents' average values of the sense of territorial identity was determined according to their interest in the region's history. Again, national identity was dominant among the respondents with different interests in regional history. The highest differences were noticed between individuals who were not interested in Lower Silesia's history and those who declared the highest interest (fig. 5).

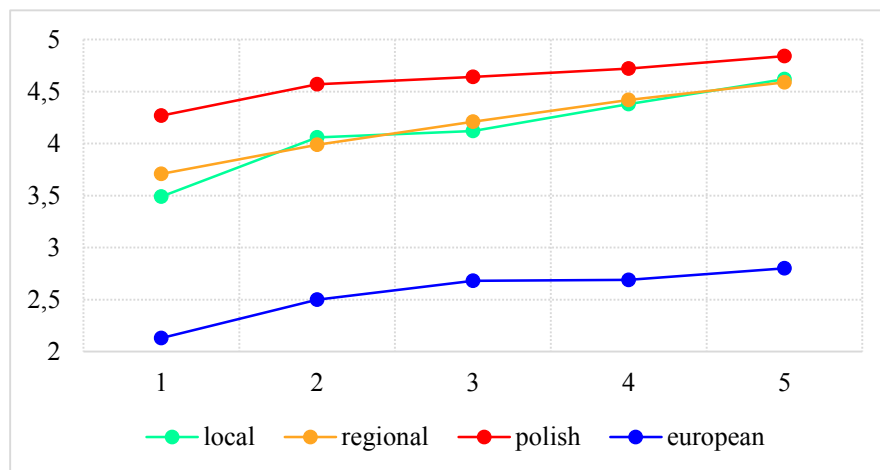


Figure 5. Self-assessment of the territorial identity of inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia - average values according to their interest in the region's history.

Source: own elaboration.

According to the chi-square test conducted, it was determined that there is a statistically significant relationship between the interest in the history of Lower Silesia and the level of identification as a member of the European community ($\chi^2 = 76,69$; $p < 0,001$), national ($\chi^2 = 53,92$; $p < 0,001$), regional ($\chi^2 = 89,74$; $p < 0,001$), and local ($\chi^2 = 81,8$; $p < 0,001$). Additionally, there is a moderately positive correlation ($R_s = 0,29$) between the interest in the region's history and regional identity. This indicates that the degree of identification as a member of the Lower Silesian community increases with the interest in the history of the region.

The last of the variables analyzed in conjunction with self-evaluation of territorial identity is education (fig. 6). Also, in this case, among all groups of residents with different levels of education, national identity was the strongest. Based on the data and the graphical interpretation of the distribution of average scores, it can also be noted that a sense of regional identity is highest among respondents with primary education. As the analysis shows, European identity is lower among those with vocational education.

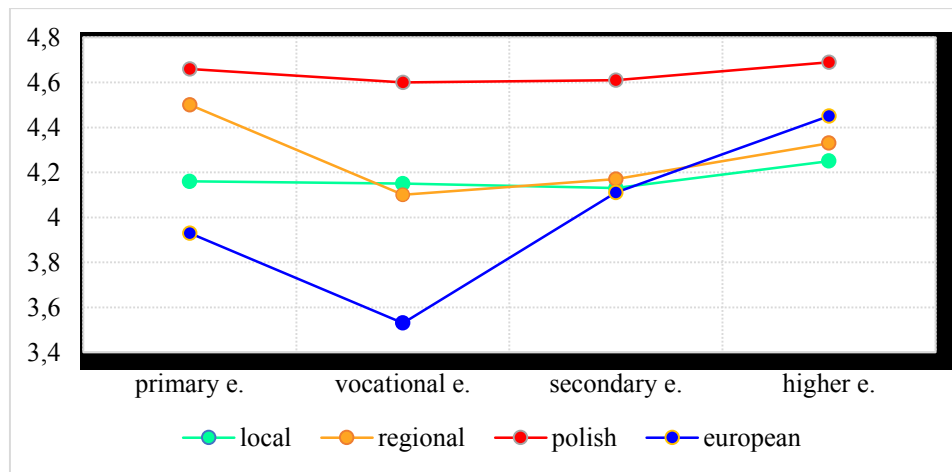


Figure 6. Self-assessment of the territorial identity of inhabitants of small towns in Lower Silesia - average values according to the level of education.

Source: own elaboration.

Based on the chi-square test, a statistically significant relationship between education and the sense of territorial identity occurs only regarding the degree of feeling as a member of the European Community ($\chi^2 = 38,31$; $p < 0,001$). There is a positive, low, statistically significant correlation ($R_s = 0,16$) between the level of education and the identification of residents as Europeans. This indicates that with the increase in education, the degree of identification as a member of the European community increases.

A nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to check the existence of other relationships between professional groups and territorial identity. This type of test was the basis for determining whether the answers given among different professional groups differed statistically significantly from the others.

Table 2.

Kruskal-Wallis test with average rank values

To what extent do you consider yourself a member of the European community?	Kruskal-Wallis test: H (3, N= 579) =45,79988 p = 0,0000			
	Higher e. R:349,06	Secondary e. R:299,84	Vocational e. R:230,46	Primary e. R:301,16
Higher education	-	0,043	0,000	0,596
Secondary education	0,043	-	0,000	1,000
Vocational education	0,000	0,000	-	0,072
Primary education	0,596	1,000	0,072	-

Source: own elaboration.

A nonparametric ANOVA test was conducted for the variable grouping *education* and the degree of sense of belonging to the European community (table 2). The significance level of the test ($p = 0,000$) allows us to state that at least two professional groups differ in a statistically significant way in their answers to the question regarding the degree of identification as European. Then, an equivalent of the post-hoc test was conducted (multiple comparisons of mean ranks for all groups). People with higher education ($R = 349,06$) significantly more often than people with secondary education ($R = 299,84$; $p = 0.04$) and

vocational education ($R = 230,46$; $p = 0.00$) identified themselves more strongly as members of the European community.

5. Conclusions

The survey of the inhabitants of small towns in the Lower Silesian region has made it possible to assess the regional identity of the residents and relate it to other types of territorial identity. Based on the conducted study, the sense of regional identity among the surveyed residents is quite strong. The respondents identify themselves as members of the Lower Silesian community more strongly than members of the local and European communities. However, national (Polish) identity is still stronger than regional identity among the inhabitants of small Lower Silesian.

The results of our study cannot, of course, be directly compared with studies on regional identity carried out by other researchers, due to differences in the scope and methodology of the research. However, it is worth noting that the conclusions of the study conducted in 2011, suggested that the regional identity of Lower Silesians is relatively weak and is rather in the building phase than occurring (Żuk, 2011).

The research allowed us to describe the relationship of self-identification of regional identity and other types of identity with other variables. The relationships were noted between the regional identity of the surveyed residents and the length of residence in the city, education, participation in the city's local life, and interest in the region's history.

However, regardless of belonging to a specific group due to demographic characteristics, the strongest among residents of small Lower Silesian towns is national identity. The reason may be the long-standing policy of the region focused on nationality, homogeneity and emphasising the features characteristic of Polish culture.

The study's results may be relevant from the perspective of the authorities of the Lower Silesian Voivodship and small territorial units. They justify continued support for programs and initiatives to strengthen the regional identity, which is one of the goals of the currently implemented image strategy of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. Given that a strong regional identity affects the competitiveness and uniqueness of the region, managers of territorial units should actively encourage the members of the regional community to increase interest in the region and participate in regional life.

The research focused on the regional identity of Lower Silesia inhabitants related to identifying the sense of territorial belonging. This represents both a value and a limitation of the study related to its scope. In future research, the scope can be widened in order to gain a deeper understanding of the different dimensions of regional identity. The assessment of the

regional identity of the inhabitants in relation to other types of territorial should be carried out in the long term, which suggests carrying out studies of a cyclical nature.

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