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REGIONALISM VERSUS DECENTRALISATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE (part I)

Summary

The above considerations concern the analysis of various concepts and definitions allowing the conclusion that, apart from the geographical understanding of region, an economic approach can be identified, which actually predominates in the theory, accompanied by political, administrative and legal approaches. The economic approach presents the region as a centre of economic activities. Therefore, one can talk about mining, agricultural, industrial or forestry regions. It is, however, also approached from the perspective of spatial management. From the political science point of view, the region is an instrument that enhances the efficiency of authorities. It is a territorial unit granted its own prerogatives and political power vested by citizens. It is an essential issue whether the region can solely operate within the confines of a single state, or can encompass territories of different states.

Key words: region, regionalism, regionalization, economic approach to region, region in political science, administrative and legal approach to region

Regionalism is an idea and process of a socio-cultural character with an economic and political dimension (Słobodzian, 2003, p. 175 ff.; Kosman, 2000, p. 202 ff.). Regionalism can be expressed in terms of ideas, ideologies and political programmes and employed by social, political and religious movements. It is also undeniably an area of academic studies, and a linguistic as well as literary phenomenon. Regionalism is also associated with architectural styles, construction, material culture and social behaviour (Chudziński, 2013, p. 7 ff.). It is also an expression of individual identity (Bokszański, 2003; Szczepański, 1999, p. 76; Rembowska, 2006, p. 27; Szczepański, 1999, pp. 184–185) reflecting one's attitude to the region he or she inhabits (the ‘little homeland’ in Polish) (Sulima, 2001, p. 139; Łukowski, 2002, *passim*; Bednarek, 1996, p. 6). Regionalism is a certain attitude, a state of consciousness of the inhabitants of a certain territory, characterised by their attachment to some traditions, their attitudes to the past and identification with the community (Kwiatkowski,

1984, p. 143). Regional consciousness is obviously neither homogeneous nor universal (Chojnicki, Czysz, 1993, pp. 31–32). As a social movement, regionalism is about fostering and developing cultural heritage, promoting knowledge about the history of the region, cultivating customs and folklore, taking care of nature, historical monuments and all the objects of material culture (Mańkowski, 1990, p. 260 ff.; Wrzesiński, 1995, pp. 11–21; Herbst, 1956, pp. 456–468; Łatoszek, 1993; Wanatowicz, 1995, *passim*; Ćmała, Kwiatek, 2010, *passim*; Kowalska, 2010, *passim*; Damrosz, Konopka, 1994, *passim*). Regionalists seek to guard the economic interests of their region and ensure its position within the state (Szepietowski, 2011, p. 67 ff.; Greta, 2003, p. 151; Parysek, Stryjkiewicz, 2008, *passim*). Regionalism is also expressed by regional press and writers addressing regional topics in their work (Kowalczyk, 2013a, *passim*; Kowalczyk, 2013b, *passim*; Kowalczyk, 2008, *passim*; Dziki, Chorążki, 2000; Dziki, 1986, p. 38; Dziki, 2000; Chorążki, 2005, pp. 23–43; Skoczek, 2010, pp. 57–68; Skoczek, 2009, p. 125 ff.; Balcerowicz, 1998, pp. 73–119; Flankowska, 2001, pp. 127–130; Gierula, 2007, pp. 109–120; Gierula, 2005, *passim*; Załubski, 1983, pp. 120–121). In Poland, the latter mainly concerns the regions of Silesia, Podhale and Białostocczyzna.

From the historical point of view, the term region initially referred to a territory located within the confines of a single state (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 13). At present, however, it is perceived as a territory that goes beyond the territory of one state and is identified on account of certain geographical, economic or cultural properties. This is a consequence of certain political processes, mainly wars, resulting in the division of territories that constitute a geographical unity and are inhabited by ethnically uniform or related populations, sharing similar cultural characteristics, and speaking the same or similar languages by the borders of neighbouring countries (Pietrzyk, 2000, p 206, 213; Zorska, 1998, p. 41; Hveem, 1999, p. 86). The recently emerging integration processes, particularly in Europe, seeking to abandon customs controls and introduce a single currency, are conducive to regions becoming special territories that bond across neighbouring states. In Europe this process is supported by international organisations, such as the European Union and Council of Europe.

The concept of the region is exceptionally vague. It is applied by a variety of scholars in different fields: lawyers, political scientists, sociologists, cultural studies experts, ethnographers, historians, linguists, geographers and economists. Academic literature refers to economic, geographical and ethnographic regions. In everyday language, the region stands for the sur-

rounding land, an area, a “demarcated, relatively uniform territory distinguished from the adjacent areas by specific natural or acquired properties.” (Szymczak, 1989, p. 34) In a broad sense, a region is a conventionally demarcated, relatively homogeneous territory distinguished from others by defined natural properties (uniform region) or socio-economic properties (functional region) (Kaczmarek, 2005, pp. 186–188). The delimitation of a region is the foundation of the geographical concept of the region, therefore a region can be deemed to be a spatial unit (Żelazny, 1997, p. 65 ff.; Kwilecki, 1992, p. 37 ff.), delimited from a larger territory by specific criteria, and which is uniform or coherent in terms of these criteria (Borecki, 2005, p. 63). The concept of the region emerged in modern times and is rooted in the Latin *rego* (-*rexi*, -*rectum*, - *regno*) – to control, govern, rule, determine the borders between neighbouring lands (Sondel, 2006, p. 830; *Słownik*, 1964, p. 426; *Nowy słownik*, 1931, p. 734). As concerns a unit of territorial division, the concept of the region came into use as late as the end of the 19th century in France (*région*) (Malec, 2000, pp. 81–87; Izdebski, 1996, pp. 122–123; Górska, 2002, pp. 242–245; Wiedmann, 1995).¹ At this time, the concept of the region began to refer to other spatial units of geographical, historical, economic, cultural and ethnic character, which mostly did not overlap with administrative divisions. This coincided with the process of identifying special administrative units whose borders did not overlap with the territorial division of the state.

Difficulties that are noted when defining the concept of the region and the related concepts of regionalism and regionalisation to a large extent result from the fact that these concepts are parts of the conceptual frameworks of different disciplines: law, administrative sciences, political science, economics, cultural anthropology, sociology and geography. Each approaches the above-mentioned concepts in a slightly different manner and mostly fails to provide a normative definition of these concepts that would be legally valid.² These difficulties were further increased by dif-

¹ The territory of France was divided anew in 1790. The highest unit of territorial division was the department, the lowest – communes, towns or villages. The division into departments was made on the basis of rational criteria developed in advance. This division did not take into account the historical division of France into provinces. Albeit heavily criticised, this system lasted until 1982. The concept of regions first emerged in the proposals of territorial reforms of the Third Republic.

² Definitions of regional units are unique, as exemplified in the EU legislation by rozporządzenie (WE) nr 1059/2003 Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 26 maja 2003 r. w sprawie ustalenia wspólnej klasyfikacji Jednostek Terytorialnych dla Celów

ferent understandings of regionalism by theoreticians studying the matter within individual academic fields.

In legal doctrine, the region is “the highest level unit of administrative division, usually granted considerable independence approaching autonomy.” (Dubisz, 2003, p. 910) It is stressed that the region, understood as the largest unit of territorial division of the state, should be characterised by a relatively high degree of accumulation of development factors, a relatively large area and population, certain natural resources and products of human economic activities, which together allow independent economic, social and cultural policies to be carried out by a regional self-government or autonomous institutions established for this purpose (Elżanowski, Maciołek, Przybysz, 1990, p. 60 ff.). The literature distinguishes between regions with linear borders, whose territories can be precisely determined, such as administrative regions, and those with non-linear, quite flexible borders, such as cultural, historical, ethnic, ethnographic and linguistic regions (Malarski, 2000, p. 14 ff.).³

Legal doctrine applies the concept of the statistical region, an artificial construct serving the purpose of the systemisation of reality, which is typically established in order to facilitate management. There are also relic, or archival, regions whose specific nature is a result of a certain past (e.g. Catalonia, Volyn, Mazovia, Hesse), political regions with historical origins which have retained some political identity and function as more or

Statystycznych (NUTS), Dz. Urz. UE L 2003, Nr 154, s. 1; rozporządzenie Komisji (WE) nr 11/2008 z dnia 8 stycznia 2008 r. wykonujące rozporządzenie (WE) nr 1059/2003 Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 26 maja 2003 r. w sprawie ustalenia wspólnej klasyfikacji Jednostek Terytorialnych do Celów Statystycznych (NUTS) dotyczącej przekazywania szeregow czasowych dla nowego podziału regionalnego, Dz. Urz. UE L 2008, Nr 5, s. 13; rozporządzenie Komisji (UE) nr 1046/2012 z dnia 8 listopada 2012 r. wykonujące rozporządzenie (WE) nr 1059/2003 Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady w sprawie ustalenia wspólnej klasyfikacji Jednostek Terytorialnych do Celów Statystycznych (NUTS) w zakresie przekazywania szeregow czasowych dla nowego podziału regionalnego, Dz. Urz. UE L 2012, Nr 310, s. 34; rozporządzenie Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady (UW) nr 1301/2013 z dnia 17 grudnia 2013 r. w sprawie Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju Regionalnego i przepisów szczególnych dotyczących celu “Inwestycje na rzecz wzrostu i zatrudnienia” oraz w sprawie uchylenia rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1080/2006, Dz. Urz. UE L 2013, Nr 347, s. 289. The national level can be exemplified by ustanowiona z dnia 7 listopada 2008 r. o europejskim ugrupowaniu współpracy terytorialnej, Dz. U. 2008, Nr 218, poz. 1390.

³ According to this concept, a region is a certain functional entity concentrated around a centre, typically around a larger town.

less autonomous units of territorial division of a given state, and ethnic regions distinguished by their cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences (Gorzelak, Jałowiecki, 1998, pp. 20–22). Sociological regions are distinguished with reference to the sense of their inhabitants' national identity, their bonds within the group and a bigger or smaller distance from other groups (Suchocka, 1998, p. 102).

Political definitions of the region prevail. Walter Żelazny distinguishes politico-legal regions, which constitute an administrative part of a state that is subordinated to central government, and integral regions, which also are an administrative part of the state, but which bear some political and identity-related differences and are also ethnically, linguistically and culturally different (Żelazny, 1998, p. 65; Żelazny, 1997, p. 66; Scartezzini, 2000, p. 15 ff.).

The difficulties are even greater, as the concept of region is associated with that of ‘regionalism’. This concept is another one with multiple meanings. Geographically, it is related to the territorial division of the state, which is divided for different purposes. The literature stresses that geographical regionalism seeks to distinguish and consider the objects and phenomena that occur in the ‘inherent’ regions or provinces (Pawlowski, 1934, p. 3 ff.). Sometimes regionalism is also perceived as the position of a given region “in terms of its identity and unity, analysed in order to determine the direction of its evolution and, consequently, to change the manners in which this area is defined.” (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 14) The concept of regionalisation is also understood as a certain social tendency, or a social movement rooted in local needs, desires and culture. It stems from a sense of cultural distinctness, the conviction of having a unique history, distinctiveness as regards tradition, art, cuisine, dialect, clothes and even specific psychophysical characteristics. In cultural terms, territory is determined by such factors as history, material culture, symbolic culture and social consciousness. Here, regionalism stands for an “actual cultural distinctness,” manifested by the attitudes of regional community members, their approach to the region and its inhabitants’ ideas related to the location and functions of the region (Wódz, Wódz, 1999, p. 376). Interestingly, regionalist ideas and the sense of bonding with the region are shared not only by the actual inhabitants of a given region, but also by the descendants of the people who left this region for various reasons (for instance, members of the Polish Highlanders’ Community in the US, or members of German homeland associations). Regionalism also refers to the structure of economic and social interests, business activities and the permanent

structure of regional interests. However, the cultural, economic, ethnic and religious identity does not always translate to a region's distinctness in political and administrative terms. Regions, frequently called 'little homelands' in Polish, are a significant heritage of the cultural and historical identity of Europe that has been torn apart by internal struggle and ethnic, linguistic and economic conflicts (Piskozub, 2000, p. 8; Piskozub, 1998, p. 80). Regional movements demand that central authorities grant particular privileges to them, they demand autonomy and in extreme circumstances they make separatist demands.⁴ At present, regionalisation means the activities aiming to determine a certain regional division and the existing territorial division that results from these activities (Chojnicki, Czyż, 1992, p. 8; Chojnicki, 2000, pp. 261–277; Chojnicki, 1996, pp. 7–43).

The literature points to the necessity to distinguish between folk and political regionalism (Jałowiecki, 1993, p. 38 ff.). It is observed that contemporary regionalism results from threats to the socio-economic structure of a region and to the socio-cultural heritage of a regional community whether it is recognised by the state or not (Bassand, 1990, p. 85). It is also emphasised that regionalism is based on a more or less clearly perceived sense of group identity (Remy, Voyé, Servais, 1978, p. 20). Sociology defines an area inhabited by a given ethnic-cultural group as a socio-cultural region, which is also sometimes distinguished by the level of economic development, social structure, political and even religious profile (Markowski, 2000, pp. 145–162). European regions differ with respect to the level of structuralisation. This ranges from a loose sense of identity at the level of folklore (Polish highlanders from Podhale are a common example of that) to a sense of linguistic and cultural identity (as is the case of the Kashubians), to separatist aspirations (as is the case of the Flemish and Basque peoples) (Stanek, 2004, pp. 51–68). Regions whose inhabitants demand separation are frequently referred to as 'great regions' in sociology. This term is applied to territorial units located within a given state which constitute a certain separate entity characterised by its own culture,

⁴ There is a somewhat controversial opinion indicated in the literature that regional consciousness is a manifestation of regionalism, as long as it does not make any political demands. The moment such demands are voiced, separatism emerges, that is seeking to assume the role of a national community (Cf. Ślugocki, 1990, p. 47). This point of view is hardly acceptable. Making political demands is not always related to separatism, to tearing the region away from its present state. Even demands for autonomy do not always have such a nature.

as well as by an established socio-political system (this was the case of Slovakia and Slovenia before they won independence, and at present Flanders, Alsace and, in some opinions, also the Basque country have these characteristics) (Poche, 1993, *passim*). The division of regions with respect to the level of their structuralisation is of course a matter of convention. There are also intermediary forms. Regionalist movements are not always based on linguistic differences (Żelazny, 2006, pp. 63–84; Żelazny, 2002, pp. 57–86; Wojciechowski, 2002, pp. 87–97).

Regionalisms can stem on the one hand from a sense of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and economic identity, on the other – from a sense of injustice resulting from experiencing a worse economic condition than the rest of a country, or, ironically, from a sense of one's higher economic status, better infrastructure and higher productivity than in the remaining area of the country (Bassand, Guindain, 1983, p. 23; Tychy, 1993). In Poland, this type of regionalism based on economic differences is characterised by Wielkopolska and Silesia, whose inhabitants make more or less open claims that their contribution to the state is larger than the other regions, while they receive fewer resources from the centre, even though they could make better use of them. Regionalist movements are typical of practically all West European states.⁵ It can be generally said

⁵ It is stressed in the literature that the weakest regionalist movements limit themselves to demanding cultural autonomy, but a majority demand territorial autonomy. The concept of autonomy, however, is far from how lawyers understand it, who interpret it as an administrative and legislative independence which other territorial units of the same state do not enjoy. In this approach, autonomy typically involves establishing independent autonomous bodies of a legislative or governmental character, or of a special representation in the state's legislative body. Some regionalist movements demand a separate state. Other regionalist movements demand that immigration be stopped for fear of newcomers from other parts of their country, or from other EU countries. Such claims are voiced by Scottish separatists, on the one hand, and Padanian autonomists on the other. Regionalist movements seek the official recognition of their languages, try to win influence over the mass media, fighting for their language to be spoken on radio or television. They also create their own schooling system, either as Sunday schools, or trying to introduce their language in state primary and secondary schools. It is a frequent demand, which is sometimes fulfilled, for regional universities to be set up (such as the Flemish University in Ghent or the Corsican one in Corte). The objective of regionalist movements with a strong autonomist slant is to preserve, revive, and sometimes even create a regional culture (for this purpose regional museums are established, festivals are organised, national holidays are celebrated, local folklore costumes, music and cuisine are promoted, as well as regional sports). A majority of regionalist movements attach a great importance to insignia.

that the concept of the region is applied to distinguish an area in terms of different aspects and criteria of historical, geographical, ethnographic, economic and political character.

The literature distinguishes five levels of regionality. The first is geographical area, typically determined by natural borders which form isolated communities allowing increasingly strong trans-local relations to emerge. This area can alter under the influence of the processes of further regionalisation. The second level stems from the relations developed between the groups operating within the regional space. Its dominant feature is a sense of security. The third level is expressed by the organisational model of the economic, cultural, political and military dimensions. The level of formality of this level can range from tighter to looser. On the fourth level, ‘regionality’ is understood as a ‘regional community’ which emerges when “permanent organisational (more or less formal) structures foster social communication and the convergence of values and activities within the region, thereby creating a trans-regional civic society characterised by social trust also at the level of the region.” (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 15). The above-mentioned convergence can occur within the political system as well as within the economic policy and the area of security. The fifth level emerges when an institutionalised regional administration begins to function in a given region (Hettne, 2003, p. 28 ff.). It is stressed that the concept of ‘regionality’ is treated as an “analytical instrument of comparison applied in order to understand the structure of regions, their strengthening and the emergence of actors in the historical perspective. The increasing range of ‘regionality’ is a result of regionalisation.” (Söderbaum, 2003, p. 34 ff.; see also: Söderbaum, Shaw, 2003, *passim*)

The literature distinguishes between the concept of regionalism and that of regionalisation. A majority of authors understand the former as

They adopt flags, anthems, coats of arms (as exemplified by the Occitan flag featuring the crosses of the Counts of Toulouse, the Corsican flag with a Moor’s head and the Red Hand of Ulster flag). Autonomists try to become the spokespersons of the socio-professional groups predominant in a given region (miners and steelworkers in the Basque Country and Wales, fishermen in Brittany and sheep farmers in Sicily). Regional trade unions are even set up for this purpose. A significant area of regionalists’ activities concerns the protection of the natural environment, and many of them are environmentalists seeking to preserve a region’s landscape. Regionalists’ political activities are primarily manifested during election periods. Extremist groups are separatist in nature and do not refrain from resorting to violent measures. See: Tomasiewicz, 1997, p. 295–317; Bielecki, 1977, p. 163 ff.; Stefanowicz, 1977, p. 195.

a sense of identity and of ideologies related to regional projects. Regionalism is understood as a state-controlled process. Regionalisation, however, stands for the development of regional interactions that emerge as a consequence of the operation of structures controlled by non-state entities (Söderbaum, 2003, p. 7). Sometimes the role of ideology in shaping regional identity is stressed, and it is indicated that regionalism leads to regionalisation, which in turn results in regional structures managed by the private sector emerging in the economy (Dieter, 2007, p. 5). Regionalisation is sometimes treated as a “geographical manifestation of global or international economic processes” and regionalism is perceived in terms of political structures that both reflect and shape the strategies of governments, corporations and non-governmental organisations and political movements (Katzenstein, 2002, p. 5). J. A. Camilleri notes that “regionalization refers to the diverse flows and processes, be they economic, technological, or socio-cultural, that bind together the constituent entities of any given region.” (Camilleri, 2003, p. 12, quote for Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 16) Regionalism stands for the tendency of a region or its constituents to preserve or “expand the benefits of regional interaction by developing institutions and mechanisms of various kinds that set, monitor and enforce the standards of interaction.” (Camilleri, 2003, p. 12)⁶ J. U. Wunderlich perceives regionalisation as a process that is defined by governments and state entities, whereas regionalism tends to be an unplanned phenomenon influenced by private business entities as well as non-governmental political and social organisations (Wunderlich, 2007, p. 3).⁷

It was noted quite early in the literature that regionalism is analysed on the basis of the degree of coherence of four dimensions, that is social, economic, political and organisational coherence. The first typically encompasses ethnic and racial groups as well as language, religion, culture and the awareness of common heritage. The economic dimension refers to

⁶ C. M. Dent expresses a similar view when he says that regionalism is made up of the structures, processes and decisions which increase the cohesion within a framework of a defined international region in economic, political, socio-cultural terms as well as in terms of security of others. Cf. Dent, 2008, p. 7. In his view, regionalism is a centrally controlled political process, whereas regionalisation is inspired by grass-roots social phenomena.

⁷ J. U. Wunderlich stresses the fact that both these processes are complementary. T. Nakamura seems to share the same opinion indicating that regionalism is political in nature and it seeks to establish a new unit of intergovernmental political relations in a given macroregion. See: Nakamura, 2009, p. XVI.

trade, investment, finance and the complementarity of economies. The political one – to the political system and ideologies shared. What is significant in the final, organisational one, is the presence of formal regional institutions (Hurrell, 1995, p. 38 ff.). Five types of regionalisation processes have been identified. Type one is regionalisation distinguished by tight social integration within a region, driven by the markets, businesses and the private sector. Type two is regional identity and the awareness stemming from it. The third one accounts for inter-state cooperation, both formal and informal. Type four is regional integration fostered by a state and expressed in terms of concrete political decisions. Type five, is ‘regional cohesion’ leading to the emergence of a united and consolidated territorial unit (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 17). Hveem is of a different opinion, when he observes that regionalisation can be a consequence of regionalism, but it does not have to be. He indicates that ‘regionalism’ refers to an ideological programme, to a situation where there is a “clear concept of the region and a set of goals and values related to it.” Regionalisation is the real and actual process of increasing exchange, contact and cooperation within a given region. H. Hveem points to three types of regionalisation: (1) hegemonic, which is in his opinion related to colonisation, the post-colonial period and the division of the world at the time of the Cold War; (2) international, based on inter-state agreements and (3) transnational. The latter occurs in two variations: corporate regionalisation and societal regionalisation (Hveem, 2003, pp. 81–98). As far as economic aspects are concerned, it is sometimes stressed that regionalisation is a process resulting in the high integration of the economy and society in a given region. Regionalism is about the emergence of formalised regions, which is approved by the participating parties due to inter-governmental dialogue or international agreements (Higgott, Reich, 1998, p. 16).

When stressing the importance of the ideological dimension, it is sometimes observed that regionalism is shaped by the language and political discussion which generates the concepts, metaphors and analogies thereby determining how the region is defined (Jayasuriya, 1994, p. 412). Numerous concepts associate regionalism with the liberalisation of trade, stressing it sometimes that this phenomenon results from a defined policy of the state or states (Bhagwati, 1999, p. 3; Grilli, 1997, p. 194; Munakata, 2004, p. 3; Gilson, 2002, pp. 2–3; Mansfield. Miner, 1999, p. 591; Ravenhill, 2001, p. 6 ff.).

Regionalisation is sometimes perceived as an economic process, and regionalism as a political one, leading at least two states in a given geo-

graphical area to conclude agreements and undertake other types of activity (Moore, 2007, p. 36 ff.).⁸ In his emphasis on the political aspects, D. Camroux stresses that regionalism should be perceived as the development of convergent, or even identical structures over the borders (Camroux, 2007, p. 11 ff.). The political aspects are also stressed by D. C. Bach, who notes that owing to a common strategy and its implementation programme, regionalism frequently leads to the emergence of joint structures. Regionalisation can be correlated with these structures, but it does not have to be (Bach, 2003, p. 22). The literature points to the vertical and horizontal dimensions of regionalisation. The former concerns the sub-regional level, that is the relations between central authorities and the global order, and the relations between a state and the local authorities. This can be expressed by decentralisation or re-centralisation. The horizontal dimension refers to relations with the authorities of other territorial structures (Sasuga, 2004, p. 5; Higgott, Reich, 1998, p. 19; Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 13). According to F. Söderbaum, there are three forms of regionalism: one aiming at market integration, one favouring regimes (present in politically weaker states) and grey zone regionalism (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 20).

Regionalism and regionalisation are related to the issue of regional integration. On this assumption, J. Misala observes that regionalism is characterised by the component of institutions and instruments, which concerns transition through the successive steps of economic integration. Regionalisation, however, is characterised by the real component concerning the deepened links between various business entities (Misala, 2005, p. 434 ff.). This concept is opposed by I. Pietrzyk, who developed the concept of *de iure* regional integration, which refers to the institutional dimension, namely regionalism, and the *de facto* integration concerning intensified economic relations, namely regionalisation (Pietrzyk, 2000, p. 31). The literature sometimes points to integration being an advanced stage of regionalisation. Therefore, regionalism may be the ultimate outcome of the regionalisation process (Stadtmüller, 2008, pp. 22–26).

Administrative doctrine points to the differences between traditional regionalism, which emerged in the late 1940s and existed until the late

⁸ He distinguishes regional bilateralism, in a situation when it comes to cooperation between two states and regional multilateralism, when the number of cooperating states is larger.

1970s, and the new regionalism born in the mid-1980s.⁹ The first wave of regionalisation was stimulated by the theory of customs union and referred to the relations within a group of neighbouring countries (Mistry, 2003, p. 117). The new regionalism is additionally stimulated by the mass media, businesses and the region itself, so it is therefore more pluralist (Bøås; Marchant; Shaw, 2003, p. 201).

In administrative law and the administrative sciences the concepts of the region and regionalisation are related to transformations of public administration at the highest level of territorial division. It should be borne in mind, however, that introducing the region as an administrative unit is not always successful, as evidenced in Poland. Law, in particular constitutional and administrative law, understands the region as the highest unit of organisation of a state's territory, regardless of its political system. The division of a state into regions is deemed to be one of the methods of decentralising and de-concentrating public administration.

There have been numerous attempts to define the concept of the region in terms of administrative law. In the opinion of Stanisław Kasznica, the region is a territorial division unit with a large area and considerable population which encompasses a territory that is homogeneous in terms of economy, geography and transport (Kasznica, 1947, p. 53). According to Marek Elżanowski, Małgorzata Maciołek and Piotr Przybysz, the region stands for the highest unit of state organisation, regardless of the political system, which has a relatively large area and fairly considerable population, which constitutes a fairly homogenous area in terms of economy, society and culture, with independent social, economic and cultural policies that take the specific nature of the region into account and are implemented by territorial institutions established for this purpose (Elżanowski, Maciołek, Przybysz, 1990, p. 60 ff.).¹⁰ Ewa Nowacka defines the region as the highest defined territorial unit within a state hierarchy, which typically encompasses a separate geographical area with strong historical, cul-

⁹ K. Klecha-Tylec observes that some scholars distinguish three waves of regionalism, assuming that the first one occurred in the 1930s, and associate the third one with the GATT Uruguay Round at the turn of the 1980s (Klecha-Tylec, 2013, p. 23; see quoted by this author: Carpenter, 2009, p. 17–23; Hettne, 1999, p. 3; Zorska, 2007, p. 39).

¹⁰ In their opinion, the region is an intermediary unit between the state and other units of territorial organisation and it should be located within the boundaries of that state. It is necessary for a region to be a legal and civil person, which provides for considerable independence from the state.

tural, economic, societal and – frequently – ethnic bonds, which runs independent economic, social and cultural policies accounting for the collective interests of the community in a given territory (Nowacka, 1998, p. 65).

The above considerations concern the analysis of various concepts and definitions allowing the conclusion that, apart from the geographical understanding of region, an economic approach can be identified, which actually predominates in the theory, accompanied by political, administrative and legal approaches. The economic approach presents the region as a centre of economic activities. Therefore, one can talk about mining, agricultural, industrial or forestry regions. It is, however, also approached from the perspective of spatial management (Domański, 2007, pp. 23–31; see also: Domański, *Rozwój*; Domański, 1972). From the political science point of view, the region is an instrument that enhances the efficiency of authorities. It is a territorial unit granted its own prerogatives and political power vested by citizens. It is an essential issue whether the region can solely operate within the confines of a single state, or can encompass territories of different states.

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Streszczenie

Artykuł poświęcono analizie rozmaitych koncepcji definicyjnych pozwalają na stwierdzenie, że poza geograficznym pojęciem regionu wyróżnić można ujęcie ekonomiczne, dominujące w gruncie rzeczy w rozmowaniach; politologiczne i administracyjno-prawne. W ujęciu ekonomicznym region przedstawiany jest jako centrum aktywności gospodarczej. Stąd też mowa o regionie górnictwym, rolniczym, przemysłowym, leśnym. Ujmowany jednak bywa także w perspektywie gospodarki przestrzennej. W perspektywie politologicznej region stanowi instrument zwiększenia skuteczności działania władzy. Jest to jednostka terytorialna mająca własne kompetencje oraz władzę polityczną pochodzącą od obywateli. Bardzo istotną kwestią jest to, czy region może działać tylko w ramach państwa, czy też jest jednostką skupiającą obszary różnych państw.

Słowa kluczowe: *region, regionalizm, regionalizacja, ekonomiczne, politologiczne i administracyjno-prawne ujęcie regionu*

Резюме

Статья посвящена анализу различных понятийных концепций, позволяющих утверждать, что за пределами географического понятия региона можно выделить экономическое истолкование, доминирующее в рассуждениях; политологическое и административно-правовое. С экономической точки зрения регион представлен как центр экономической активности. Отсюда речь о горнодобывающем, сельскохозяйственном, промышленном, лесном регионе. Однако иногда выражается также в перспективе пространственного планирования.

В политологической перспективе регион является инструментом увеличения эффективности действий власти. Это территориальная единица, имеющая собственные компетенции и политическую власть, происходящую от граждан. Очень важным вопросом является то, может ли регион работать только в пределах государства, является ли единицей, сосредоточивающей территории разных государств.

Ключевые слова: регион, регионализм, регионализация, экономическое, политологическое и административно-правовое истолкование региона

Анотація

Стаття присвячена аналізу різноманітних концепцій поняття регіону. окрім географічного значення цього терміну, можна виділити ще економічне, політологічне та адміністративно-правове. З економічної точки зору, регіон визначається як центр економічної активності. Відповідно, є регіони шахтарські, сільськогосподарські, промислові та лісові. З політологічної точки зору, регіон становить інструмент збільшення результативності роботи влади. Це територіальна одиниця, яка має власні компетенції та політичну владу, що походить від громадян. Важливим є питання: регіон діє в рамках країни чи зосереджує навколо себе області інших країн.

Ключові слова: регіон, регіоналізм, регіоналізація, політичне, адміністративно-праве та політологічне значення