REGIONAL CULTURE AND EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL ASPECT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Referring to the role of culture in the development of the region, we should start with the statement that culture is one of the key areas of socio-economic life. It builds regional identity based on cultural heritage and contemporary challenges, stimulates economic development, increases the attractiveness of the region not only for its residents, but also for investors and tourists. Culture creates new jobs; it is one of the main elements of the promotion of the region, and also an important factor for the growth of its competitiveness. However, not everyone is aware of the incredible potential that lies in the realm of human activity. Therefore today we should ask ourselves about the role of culture and education in the life of modern society, especially in the context of regional development.

Key words: regional culture, regional development, investments in culture

Part 1

Discussing any issues of regional development, first we need to answer the question: what the word "region" means for us? Is it an administrative area (e.g. Lublin Voivodship), a land of geographical or cultural area? Well, the word "region" is recognized by individuals and institutions not only in the sense of territorial, but also as a picture or image of social and cultural space, specified by objective factors, in which people live in the various spheres of reality. In the broad sense, region is a universal part of the nation and the State, which defines the material basis for social life and is the principle of distinctness. Region is defined by the common territory, social bonds, and patterns of interaction that occur in the space designated by:

- structure of the settlers - cultural and economic centres, their hierarchical ordering and internal links,
- high level of social and economic integration, among others, community awareness of the cultural heritage, the identification of the territory and its inhabitants,
- high level of self-organization, characterised, e.g. by the development of self-government and local initiatives;
- the nature of borders and the degree of closing the region as a socio-cultural distinct.

Region can be for its residents a small homeland if their awareness is oriented on local values, which determine their distinctiveness. Characteristics of a small country are broadcast by the inhabitants, and so it exists only in the subjective reality
of the group, being expressed in the habitual and emotional attachment to the homeland and heritage. That is why a small homeland originally shapes identity and human personality, acting as a principal environment of his socialization. So the man, despite the effects of globalization, is assigned to the region as a small motherland. Besides, between globalisation and regionalization there is a positive relationship - synergy, because these processes represent different aspects of the same reality. They occur in parallel, mutually fuelling and balancing. The sense of the threat of a loss of identity through the process of globalisation is seen stereotypically as negative, but paradoxically it contributes to the development and strengthening of local and regional identity.

The factor that assists the development of the consciousness of "belonging" is a regional culture. It is usually, though not always, connected with a culture of nation and a broader circle of civilization (e.g. European). This happens especially when local, regional culture is the same as the culture of the entire local community, neighbours, peers and family. It is an area of the most primitive human experiences, which define the concept of self, model social perception of the world, the principles of operation and value system. Regional culture shapes the awareness of belonging to a particular social environment: the awareness of common history, common fate, common territory, sometimes also the language or religion.

Regional culture is a set of features unique and characteristic only for the area. These characteristics have developed through the centuries under the influence of many other cultures, economic, political or religious systems. We should remember, that many of these features are a derivative of the wars and conflicts (often sinister, bloody, non-free from nationalism and prejudice), that were just "interspersed with" time of relative peace. Regardless an era, each regional culture is affected by two opposing, but at the same time coexisting development trends:

• The first trend has a universal character and seeks to unify the behavioural patterns of cultural standards in social life, can be imposed by force, and enforced by the law, or by a system of rewards and penalties, but also automatically under the influence of mass communication, fashion, and globalisation. It leads to destruction of the regional culture, replacing it with a new content.

• The second trend is the need to highlight the distinctness, cultivate one’s identity and consciousness of belonging to the own, unique world. This trend can be supported or controlled by the authority of the Central Government, which is
manifested not only in legislation but also in the facilitation (or difficulties) in access to financial resources for regional development.

The first trend is characteristic for the period of communism, in which central authority was aiming for maximum unification. The tendency of the second is characteristic for modern democratic countries, where the development of regional culture is treated as a kind of "back home". The man does not reject the influence of external culture, however, is aware of their own culture, of the community where he came from. However, the return home is often difficult due to the fact that the erosion of regional culture is deep. The man subjected to the continual influence of universal culture becomes a passive participant in the life of his own community. Therefore, there appears the need of regional education, which will reveal the deep meaning of generation ties, transmission of the historical goods to his successors, strengthen a sense of regional community and arouse local patriotism. Education has also extremely important practical dimension, because the regional culture is an important factor in the development of the regional community. Thus a question appears: What is the role of culture in regional development process?

Part 2

Regional development is a multidimensional process, it refers to the natural environment, economy, social and cultural space. All these spheres are treated equal, but each of them is defined by different variables, goals and mechanisms, which are strongly correlated. Similarly, the development of each particular region can be discussed through the prism of different purposes, but, in my opinion, the most important among them is the desire to improve the quality of residents’ life. The development is a synergy of social and economic factors. It makes places attractive to live and work in, allows to accomplish complex challenges, gives a variety of choices. Thanks to that people can pursue their individual aspirations, desires and needs, can choose more satisfying and valuable existence. How to achieve this goal? Of course, there are many ways, but certainly none of them can skip the culture and care about the common heritage. Discussing the development strategies, culture is more often seen as a factor that increases the attractiveness of the regions for locals, tourists and investors. Culture and tourism are commonly said to become one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. The cultural attractiveness of the region is becoming an important mechanism for the world economy, a source of viable jobs and significant revenue. The meaning of this perfectly reflects M. McLuhan’s words
“from the era in which the business was our culture we find ourselves in an era in which culture becomes our business”. This thesis is confirmed by a study carried out on behalf of the European Commission in 2006, from which it follows that, in 2005, in the cultural sector in the European Union there were more than 4.9 million people employed (it is 2.4%), and the contribution of this sector in the creation of gross domestic product amounted to approximately 3% (more than in the chemical industry)[1]. Upward trends in this respect are observed in Poland, as well. However, culture is an important factor in social development. Thanks to cultural competence and participation in the culture, on the one hand, we build its identity, respect for tradition, a sense of belonging to the community and its history, on the other we are more creative, innovative, open and tolerant. These qualities are precisely the guarantor of the development of each society. Culture is an important factor in the construction of social capital, as resulting from the trust and the applicable standards, the ability of citizens to mobilize and combine resources. The development of regional culture favours creativity and reinforces the will of cooperation and agreement in achieving common goals. Without the potential produced by culture it is impossible to chalk out the future vision of development. Includes issues related both to the promotion of civil society, social participation in life, investing in civic and cultural education, ensuring access to reliable information and the cooperation of cross-border. Culture should be regarded as a factor supporting the increase of competitiveness of the regions, on the one hand by strengthening the functions of the centres of metropolitan areas, the other as an area which is conducive to development and the growth of the importance of sub-regional centres, by strengthening their identity, fight against marginalisation and exclusion. Investments into culture allow, not only an economic development and increase of our competitiveness, but they also strengthen social capital, the low level of which becomes a threat to the development of Poland. The development of culture and creativity means simultaneous investment into the protection of heritage, development and modernisation of the infrastructure of culture, and at the same time, and, perhaps, to a greater degree, into cultural education, training of the recipients and their cultural competence.

The role of culture is growing, because as a result of the transformation of civilization it has become a primary resource, from which individuals and entire communities derive, to build its identity and subjectivity. Without this, it’s hard to imagine any action, including economic activity. Adam Smith, the creator of modern
economics, knew it. In Poland, discovering capitalism once again, we find that many of the barriers hampering development momentum have their roots in the culture. The spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, accepting risk, the ability to work depends largely on cultural competence. Should Polish cities instead of stadiums build museums and local Governments, instead of the road, should contribute more in libraries? 80% of public expenditure on culture comes from general government budgets. It’s not only about money, but it is also about changing the mindset. In Lublin, the efforts for the title of the European Capitals of Culture have shown that such change is possible. Culture liberated civic activity, it became the theme and an excuse for social debate about public space, common good, quality of life and for development.

Although for Lublin these efforts failed, the joint effort in the preparation revealed great energy in a community, which launched a "chain reaction". The result is a growing number of social initiatives, and as an example might be organized every year "Night of Culture" which program fills dozens of events organized within one night. Thousands of people participate in them, and the Lublin Old Town resembles a crowded tram. Chances of the development of Lublin region must be seen in the development of culture as a tourist product, as attractive, interesting cultural offer is a powerhouse of tourism. The modern tourist not only expects relaxation and regeneration of forces, but also is looking for new sensations and experience.

Time of simple recipes for regional development has come to the end. Although there is no recipe for success it should be considered that in the regions where the lack of industry, financial and technological centres, investment in the development of regional culture is the guarantee of the effective allocation of funds. 21st century economy is primarily the service sector, including tourism, which is stimulated by the interesting, original culture. Therefore it should be one of the most important factors of development and modernization. Meanwhile, it is not so obvious as, in the universal consciousness, it’s very rare culture to be combined with the problem of regional development. Culture is rather thought as a spiritual addition, a noble and necessary, but often last on the list of the priorities demanding financial support. This is a big mistake, as desiring regional culture has become competitive export goods, still need to invest in its infrastructure. Expenses in this sphere increase, which is caused by increasing the inhabitants participation in the culture, the influx of tourists from the country and from abroad, promotion of the cultural values of the
region, the influx of external measures in the implementation of restoration works. European funds also allow to increase investing in culture, thus it is necessary to determine the most important areas and directions of cultural development. In Poland, cultural investments using funds from the European Union enabled pre-accession programmes such as Integrated Operational Program of Regional Development, where activity 1.4 was just the development of tourism and culture. Its aim was:

• to increase the importance of tourism and culture as factors that stimulate socio-economic development of the regions taking into account the need to ensure the sustainable development and protection of the environment;

• to facilitate access to the objects of culture and tourism, through the development of infrastructure and a comprehensive cultural and tourist information system;

• to extend the tourist season;

• to increase foreign tourism to Poland and domestic tourism by improving the competitiveness of regional tourism and cultural products both on foreign markets, as well as on the national level. [2]

Currently within Regional Programmes for Regional Development, the development of culture and tourism is the third priority axis, which is provided for the implementation of projects aimed at enhancing economic and investment attractiveness of the region through investments in the sphere of culture, and thus tourism. The European Union financial support enabled the implementation of many objectives, which because of the volume of this article cannot be replaced. For example, you can only specify that in Lublin with the help of the European Union the Centre Meeting of Cultures for more than 50 million euros is built. The investment will not only generate new jobs, but will become a powerhouse of improve the residents’ lives quality and will contribute the competitiveness of the entire region. In Poland there are plenty of similar investments, which prove that culture begins to play an important role in the whole process of social development. These actions allow to hope the role of culture will pull out into higher positions in the planning process of the regional development strategy in the future.

This type of practices are common in modern Europe, where there is no genuine regional development without the culture development. Of course, the degree of culture participation in the regional development process is different and depends on many factors, including the specifics of the region, its potential. But still it is
important that among all the priorities of development, culture must be present and what is more, it should become a factor of integrating and stimulating interaction between them all. Nowadays, effective regional and local development policy is not possible without modern cultural policy. It is worth investing in culture, because it has a significant impact on the development of the whole socio-economic potential of the region.

**Bibliography:**


**Региональная культура и образование как социальный аспект регионального развития**

**Резюме**

Культура является одним из ключевых составляющих общественно-экономической жизни. Воссоздаёт региональную самобытность, стимулирует развитие экономики – возрождает привлекательность региона не только для его населения, но и для инвесторов и туристов. Создаёт новые рабочие места, является одним из основных элементов продвижения региона и важным потенциалом, служащим росту его конкурентоспособности. Также культура является важным фактором создания общественного капитала. Развитие региональной культуры в дальнейшем способствует творчеству, воспитывает волю сотрудничества и взаимопонимания в достижении общих целей. Культура создаёт потенциал, без которого невозможно начертать визицию будущего развития региона, так как способности предпринимательства, творчества, а также способности к сотрудничеству, зависят в большей части от культурных компетенций. Однако, не каждый замечает этот потенциал, заложенный в человеческой деятельности, что может привести к непоправимым последствиям в недалеком будущем.