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Regionalism in the Light of the Personalistic Category of Participation

Abstract: Regionalism is not only a sociological phenomenon, but also an important culture-forming process influencing the development of the human person. The social thought of the Church refers to it straightforwardly as an anthropological phenomenon and interprets it as an axiological category. Referring to these assumptions, the article analyzes regionalism through the prism of the personalistic category of participation described by Karol Wojtyła in the book *The Acting Person*, the structure of which is based on two principles: solidarity and objection. These principles can serve as a criterion for assessing individual forms of regionalism in terms of answering the question of to what extent they recognize and acknowledge the subjectivity of each member of the regional community, and to what extent they refer to the key values of regional solidarity and the region's common good.

Keywords: regionalism, participation, solidarity, Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*

One of the essential distinguishing features of the Church's social teaching is its prophetic-critical dimension. Being a type of knowledge of a normative character, it establishes moral norms in the area of social activities as the main scope of its own prerogatives and performs the assessment of these activities in moral terms. Social principles and basic values are the foundation for fulfilling the above-mentioned function, and at the same time the criterion for assessing the situation, structures and social systems that form the framework of social life.

The Church has not formulated them in the framework of a single document, but in the course of the entire historical development of social science. They have been elaborated as a response to various

phenomena and social problems that occurred successively.¹ *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* describes this process as follows: “In the course of history and with the light of the Spirit, the Church has wisely reflected within its own tradition of faith and has been able to provide an ever more accurate foundation and shape to these principles, progressively explaining them in an attempt to respond coherently to the demands of the times and to the continuous developments of social life.”²

The overarching principle of social life is the principle of human dignity. It is within this principle that the foundation of all other principles and contents of the Church’s social doctrine is found. Moreover, each of the principles of social life can be regarded as a further detailed application of this principle to a specific area or aspect of social life.

Although the documents of the social doctrine of the Church do not contain a comprehensive systematization of social principles – it is rather the result of an analysis made by Catholic thinkers – nevertheless, a kind of hierarchization can be noticed in them. *The guidelines for the study and teaching of the Church’s social doctrine* recognize fundamental principles as those which “relate to the human person, the common good, solidarity and participation.”³ All other principles are closely related to and derived from them. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* emphasizes, in addition to the above-mentioned dignity of the human person, the principle of the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.⁴

The subject of this study is to gain insight into the multidimensional phenomenon of regionalism characterized by numerous denotation scopes through the prism of one of the principles of social life, specifically the principle of participation, which can become a tool for its evaluation in the spirit of the prophetic-critical function of the social teaching of the Church. It should be stressed here, that participation itself can be interpreted in two different ways. In a traditional way, as

¹ Cf. E. Colom, *Principi e valori della DSC*, 281–316.

² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 160.

³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Study*, no. 30.

⁴ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 160.

is the case in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, participation is a form of a citizen's participation "as an individual or in association with others in the community to which one belongs." It is considered a duty that must be "fulfilled consciously, with responsibility and with a view to the common good."⁵

One can also look at the phenomenon of regionalism through the prism of the personalistic category of participation, proposed and extensively described by Karol Wojtyła in his book *The Acting Person*. This concept is related to the fact of the social dimension of human existence, and in particular to the fact of "acting in association with others" or "cooperating."⁶ Wojtyła not only presented the very idea of participation but also presented two basic principles on which it should rest: the principle of solidarity and the principle of opposition, as well as two falsified forms of participation: conformism and avoidance. Both the principles and the erroneous forms of participation can stand as a criterion for assessing the extent to which particular human communities, on the one hand, recognize the subjectivity of each member of the community, and on the other hand, they are created on the basis of authentic values, in this case, solidarity and the common good. It seems that this specific axiological matrix may become an important point of reference for the phenomenon of regionalism.

After a very general description of regionalism in semantic-axiological terms [1] and the presentation of the essence and principles of the personalistic category of participation [2], the mainstream of research is mainly concerned with the analysis of individual aspects of regionalism in terms of two constitutive principles of the personalistic category of participation, i.e., solidarity [3] and opposition [4]. In the final part, attention is drawn to conceivably distorted forms of regionalism interpreted by attitudes of conformism and avoidance [5]. The above-mentioned axiological foundation of regionalism will be read on the basis of research by prof. Henryk Skorowski, who treats regionalism straightforwardly as an anthropological phenomenon and interprets it as an axiological category.⁷

⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 189.

⁶ Cf. T. Duma, "The Foundations," 453–454.

⁷ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Antropologiczno-etyczne aspekty regionalizmu*.

1. Regionalism as an Axiological Category

Regionalism belongs to the most important and interesting phenomena and processes observed in contemporary social life. Etymologically, it refers to a region, i.e., a specific territory, understood as part of a state or national territory, which is distinguished by its own distinctiveness or at least has its own characteristics in some areas.⁸ Essentially, however, it is a multidimensional phenomenon and is characterized by many semantic scopes. In this context, the understanding of a region, which in terms of its denotation goes beyond the geographical dimension, remains of the utmost importance. Apart from geographical regions, political, administrative, cultural, historical and ethnic regions have been distinguished in the traditional typology. On the other hand, nowadays, attention is drawn to statistical, symbolic and metropolitan regions, as well as subregions, ecoregions and finally network regions.⁹ In this context, regionalism can be defined as “a certain aspect of the objective reality; a space with which a person feels a certain connection.” A family-centered geographical environment, as well as a cultural or social environment may constitute such space. It becomes a source of values and models of behavior for the members of this environment.¹⁰

In the light of the personalistic vision of social life, regardless of which aspect of human life a given environment refers to, regionalism will always mean a specific area and space which is especially close to a given person. At this point, it is worth recalling the literary definition of regionalism by Józef M. Miąskowski, who understands regionalism as: “the house where a person was born, the church where the person was baptized, the school where the person was taught to read and write, forest, in which, for the first time the person said ‘I love you,’ to hear the same in reply, the hospital where the person’s son was born, the cemetery where the graves of the person’s loved ones are – an area of a common culture, common dialect, identical

⁸ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 19.

⁹ Cf. M. Markocka, “Regionalizm w Polsce,” 148.

¹⁰ H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 34–35.

customs.”¹¹ All these elements define and shape the outermost layer of human existence and growth, while being, at the same time, a carrier of essential values. The relation of closeness is also expressed by various concepts that define the specificity of the dimension, such as little homeland, hereditarily held estate and local homeland, localness, autochthone status, familiarity, etc.

Analyzing regionalism in the contemporary social thought of the Church, it can be placed in the context of two key and at the same time seemingly contradictory perspectives: one of them is the need for the unity of the world and the humankind family, as well as for interpersonal solidarity, overcoming whatever divides and differentiates people from one another. This dimension can be defined as a centripetal, integrating one, which to some extent is an expression of the fundamental equality of all people at the personal level. In the second dimension, the social teaching of the Church, emphasizing the uniqueness and autonomy of every human being, draws attention to the need to preserve diversity within social life. Unity, integration and interpersonal solidarity do not mean standardization and homogenization. Diversity, as opposed to difference, is not a negative concept and does not focus on disproportions and divisions within social life. Rather, it concerns subjectivity and subjectivity identity, regardless of whether it is a single person, a national community or a regional community.¹²

Anticipating further analyses, it should be noted here that both the above-mentioned perspectives, an integrating and differentiating one, being important for understanding regionalism, fully correspond to the structure of the personalistic category of participation. Even though regionalism is perceived today primarily through the prism of the difference or specificity in relation to other communities, which in the personalistic category of participation guarantees the right to object, the very nature and specificity of the region is determined by certain positive integrating values, depending on what type of region is referred to. They can be perceived in terms of the common

¹¹ J.M Miąskowski, “Kto się boi lokalnego patriotyzmu,” 9. Cf. H. Skorowski, “Współczesne ujęcie regionalizmu,” 148.

¹² Cf. H. Skorowski, *Europa regionów*, 13–14.

good, because each community, including a regional one, has only the common good specific to itself, thanks to which its specificity, its basic goals and tasks can be recognized. This orientation towards the common good within the regional community takes on the attitude of solidarity, which, in turn, is the second fundamental principle of the category of participation.

Interpreting the phenomenon of regionalism as an anthropological-axiological phenomenon and in the perspective of the personalistic category of participation is extremely important in the context of contemporary transformations of regionalism emphasized in the literature on the subject, especially subordinating the specificity of the region to the ideology of pan-economism or economic logic. New forms of regionalism, in contrast to the still vibrant “old regionalism,” based on traditionalist ideological assumptions and referring to the need to protect the values of the region and the development of objective elements of regional culture, such as language, folklore, dialect, ethos, customs, etc., to the territory not so much from the point of view of symbolism or the exploitation of its resources, but as a factor in constructing economic strategies. This phenomenon is a consequence of the processes of globalization, European integration, a change in thinking about the region and the weakening of the importance and role of nation states. In view of the limitation of the importance of the nation state in the field of economic policy, which will certainly be verified by the experience of the coronavirus pandemic, regions gain importance in creating a strategy for economy and competitiveness, in creating platforms for cooperation or determining opportunities and threats for a regional community.¹³ Although the ideology of pan-economism or the reduction of reality to market mechanisms and its subordination to economic processes carries a number of threats, an increase in the economic and political factor in regionalism should not be assessed negatively in advance. It certainly broadens the understanding of the common good as an element that unites the regional community, and – by triggering new forms of participation and involvement – imparts a broader understanding to regional identity, which is not limited only to the

¹³ Cf. M. Markocka, “Regionalizm w Polsce,” 151.

traditional values of a given region, but “functions as a mechanism of conscious and creative use of tradition to mobilize collective action in the face of changing market and political conditions.”¹⁴

2. Personalistic Category of Participation

Regionalism is one of the community-building factors. The community of a given region, regardless of the criteria through which it is interpreted, is characterized by a more or less developed sense of separateness and, at the same time, a bond based not only on an emotional attitude to values or factors constituting a given territory or a differently defined region. Activity for the benefit of the region is also an important indicator of regionalism, i.e., the preservation and development of its specific values at various levels of human life: social, cultural, historical, political and, finally, economic.

By comparing a so-defined regionalism with the personalistic category of participation, a reply will become necessary to the question of what significance, from the point of view of the personalistic value of an act, can be attached to the fact that people act together with others for – in this case – the benefit of the region? This question is an anthropological rather than an ethical problem, for there exists a personalistic value of an act which precedes its ethical value. The latter results from the objective relation of action to good, from the reference to moral good. Whereas the personalistic value is related to the very fact of performing an act. In other words, it is not only what a person does for the community, in this case for a regional community, but who they are in this community and how they give themselves to this community. Participation is expressed by the way in which a person maintains the personalistic value of their own act in action with others, while participating in the joint action and its results.¹⁵

¹⁴ A. Bukowski, *Region tradycyjny w unitarym państwie*, 24.

¹⁵ Wojtyła himself describes the essence of participation as follows: “The trait of participation thus shows that a human being, acting together with others, retains the personalistic value of their own act in this activity, and at the same time realizes what results from the community of action. This statement can be also reversed by saying that thanks to participation, a human being, acting together with others,

Participation turns out to be one of the fundamental dimensions of human activity, and the category of participation itself defends their subjectivity and dignity in social life. Without this dimension, a person would not be able to cooperate with others. Their relationship would be a purely external conditioning, not an opportunity to realize a person's freedom. Participation means that the joint action does not treat the other as an object and at the same time it is not treated as an object. Through participation, a person remains free, they can experience their freedom in relationships with other people and in social life.¹⁶

3. Solidarity as a Constitutive Principle of the Category of Participation

When does cooperation with others become participation? Analyzing the structure of the category of participation, Wojtyła first points out that in every human community there are different ways of behaving in relation to the common good. They determine its character. Authenticity may be ascribed to those attitudes which respect the personalistic value of action and its dynamic submission to the truth. These are solidarity and opposition. On the other hand, conformism and avoidance are inauthentic attitudes, which can be treated as a kind of mock-up of solidarity and a mock-up of opposition.

Before we need to show the relationship of both the principle of solidarity and opposition to regionalism as an anthropological-axiological phenomenon, it is worth briefly recalling their interpretation and mutual connection presented in the book *The Acting Person*. The attitude of solidarity “is the *natural* consequence of the fact that a person lives and acts jointly with others. [...] It denotes a constant willingness to receive and implement such a part as to which one is entitled to participate due to the fact, that he or she

retains everything that results from the community of action, and at the same time – through this – they realize the personalistic value of their own act” (K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 294–295).

¹⁶ Cf. M. Kosche, “The Human Person,” 16–17.

is a member of a particular community.”¹⁷ The purpose and subject-matter of this action within the community is the common good. Solidarity means readiness to actively participate in the activities of the community in the pursuit of the good specific thereto. It implies responsibility for a common objective, as well as the responsibility for the good or evil which is linked to its implementation. This attitude also implies awareness and respect for the tasks of other members of the community and their responsibilities. In this context, it is important to define and understand the common good that should be pursued through the involvement of the members of the community. A person of solidarity is the one who is ready to go beyond their own specific task if this proves necessary for the common good, who seeks self-fulfillment in the service of the common good as a conscious participant of community action.¹⁸

On the other hand, it is also important to respect the subjectivity of each member of the community, which further underscores the attitude of the opposition. Solidarity does not negate personal responsibility as an essential condition for the realization of human freedom. “Solidarity, in a way, prevents one from taking on someone else’s duty and taking over the part that belongs to someone else as one’s own. [...] Taking over part of the responsibility that does not belong to me, is in principle contradictory to the community and participation.”¹⁹

Solidarity, which specifically highlights the social nature of the human person, is a response to the interdependence between people and within the communities they create, which are indeed forms of solidarity. In the case of regionalism, it is possible to speak of regional or local solidarity, which refers to territorial community or another value defining a given region. It is worth noting in this regard that in the modern teachings of the Church, solidarity is seen not only as a determinant (principle) of social life, but also as a moral category, i.e., a virtue, which means that the various forms of solidarity should turn into relationships towards genuine ethical and social solidarity,

¹⁷ K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 311–312.

¹⁸ Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Myśl Karola Wojtyły*, 248–249.

¹⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 312.

which is a moral requirement enshrined in all human relationships.²⁰ Then it is seen as “a strong and lasting will to engage on behalf of the common good, that is to say, the good of all and the good of everyone, for we are all responsible for other people.”²¹ Raised to the rank of a fundamental virtue, both a moral and social one, solidarity also becomes an element of justice, and therefore a virtue oriented towards the common good to a greatest extent.

By transferring the above theoretical considerations into a plane of *praxis*, it is important to point out the specific actions related to the phenomenon of regionalism, primarily centered on the axiological and socio-cultural identity of individual regional communities. First of all, these actions are of a macrosocial nature and are associated with respect and recognition of the fundamental fact that, as John Paul II points out, “almost in all contemporary societies there exist minorities, as communities originating from different cultural traditions, differing in racial and ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs or historical experience.”²² As regards regionalism, solidarity will mean, on the one hand, acceptance of regional diversity and, on the other, it also calls for an active concern for it, its continued support and dynamism.²³ In this context, John Paul II speaks of the constructive development of “what makes us different as individuals and as nations, what constitutes our identity.”²⁴ It seems that this is the “problem of diversity in the framework of social life and, therefore, the necessity to recognize, accept and constructively develop it, is, in fact, a cornerstone of a broadly understood regionalism.”²⁵

The second range of activities resulting from participation, expressed on the basis of solidarity and the common good, is primarily concerned with the cultural heritage of the regional community in question, so those who have a special community and cultural role in it. It is also about all measures for the development of regional culture related to customs and regional ways of conduct, regional rituals,

²⁰ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 192–193.

²¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38.

²² John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 2.

²³ H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 14.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 3.

²⁵ H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 14.

regional artistic and scientific creativity, and folklore,²⁶ as well as the promotion of specific values for the region, which identify factors such as regional axiology, regional symbolism, regional authority, regional history, or linguistic regionalisms.²⁷

It is important to emphasize in this regard that Catholic social teachings have always stressed the importance of the heritage of one's own culture for the human person, since human development is also being made through the commitment to the world of values whose carrier culture is.²⁸ In this context, Henryk Skorowski points out that this truth relates primarily to the cultural heritage of one's own environment:

However, it is often a specific culture which possesses a specific ethnic background. It is precisely the culture closest to a person that influences their development through multiple values, of which a carrier it is. [...] This is where the real value of the region's own heritage lies. It is a chance not only for the integrity but above all the naturalness of this development, which, on the one hand, corresponds to the inherent characteristics, abilities, and traditions of various groups and, on the other hand, allows for bringing up a mature person rooted in the heritage of their ancestors and thus also having a sense of their personal subjectivity.²⁹

In this perspective, it is important to highlight the particular importance of regional cultural heritage, being the closely linked to a person's upbringing. The educational role of culture is always related to the values of which it is a carrier. Thanks to them, it offers a number of important functions in the process of education: a cognitive and motivational, model and paragon, as well as a supportive one, thanks

²⁶ Cf. R. Kowalczyk, "The interdisciplinary dimension," 66–67.

²⁷ Cf. J. Grad, "Współczesny sens regionalizmu," 51–68

²⁸ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 53

²⁹ H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 17.

to which the human being is able to shape the sphere of ethical references to the reality surrounding them.³⁰

The above-listed elements indicate measures stemming not only from the principle of solidarity but also from the principle of justice, aimed at those responsible for the region and its culture. Participation, in turn, expressed through the stance of solidarity with individual members of the regional community, will mean, above all, that all those measures are aimed at strengthening the individual link between the collectivity and the region. In the first place, it will revolve around attachment to a region, and thus around a territorial and mental bond, also around identification with a region, which is manifested by awareness or regional identity as well as any form of activity for the benefit of the region, that is, any regional activity, including economic activity, which supports the development of the region.³¹

An attitude of solidarity is nothing more than constant readiness to actively participate in the life and activities of the region in order to achieve its specific common good. The awareness of this good, which should be realized through the involvement of all members of the regional community, makes a person of solidarity ready to go beyond their own strictly defined task if it turns out to be necessary for the common good. Therefore, a man of solidarity seeks self-fulfillment in the service of the good of the region as a conscious participant thereof.

4. Participation Despite Objections

The second authentic expression of participation and, at the same time, a supplement to the principle of solidarity and the attitude of solidarity, according to Wojtyła, is an attitude of opposition. It takes place, when members of the community do not identify themselves with the goals of joint action or with the form of achieving these goals: “The experience of various oppositions that have occurred and take place on the basis of human existence and action ‘together

³⁰ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Antropologiczno-etyczne aspekty regionalizmu*, 130.

³¹ Cf. R. Kowalczyk, “The interdisciplinary dimension,” 65–68.

with others,' teaches that those people who oppose it, do not want to leave the community because of that. On the contrary, they look for their own place in the community – so they look for participation and such an understanding of the common good that they can participate better, more fully and effectively in the community.”³²

It is clear that expressing an objection does not mean resigning from participation in the community, does not mean withdrawing from social life, on the contrary, it is a search for one's own place in the community and looking for full responsibility for it. It is a paradox, but sometimes only the adoption of an attitude of objection, which Wojtyła calls constructive objection, is the best testimony that the members of a given community genuinely care about the common good of a given community.³³ When it comes to natural communities, which in principle may also include a regional community, the goal is inherently positive (the very existence of a region, regional ties, regional culture). The objection most often concerns the method of its implementation, i.e., it may refer to various intermediate goals, which should serve the self-fulfillment of both a given community, in this case a region, and each of the persons making up a regional community. The objection may also refer misinterpreting the good of a given community in relation to other fundamental goods essential for a human being and the community.³⁴ In the case of regionalism, this will apply to chauvinistic attitudes that overly emphasize the good of the region in relation to the good of the nation, state or other communities, as well as cosmopolitan attitudes that depreciate the importance of regional or local heritage.

Participation through an attitude of opposition is extremely important for the full knowledge and recognition of the subjectivity of each member of the community. Moreover, only such a community that allows such opposition from its members is truly worthy of being called a community.³⁵ If there was no possibility of opposition, the

³² K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 313.

³³ Cf. J. Nagórny, “Posłannictwo chrześcijan,” 126.

³⁴ Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Myśl Karola Wojtyły*, 249.

³⁵ Cf. J. Nagórny, “Posłannictwo chrześcijan,” 126.

specific and personal responsibility for the common good would not be possible to reveal.

Participation expressed through an attitude of objection related to regionalism affects a broadly understood subjectivity: on the one hand, the empowerment of a region in relation to other social structures, especially the state, and the subjectivity of the individual in relation to the region. Each regional or ethnic group is a specific entity endowed with its subjectivity and as an entity it is aware of its subjectivity. The foundation of this subjectivity is the social teaching of the Church, which derives it from the subjectivity of each member of a given community, i.e., from their personal dignity, which is independent of regional, ethnic, cultural, national, religious beliefs, etc.: “The whole social life revolves around the human person – the main, unique participant in this life.” It is a person who is the “subject, foundation and goal” of social life, and “every way of the society’s expression should lead” towards them.³⁶

In the first place, the concept of regional subjectivity indicates the freedom of existence and action of a regional community and its individual members, without which it is impossible to take responsibility for the common good, which determines the specificity of a given region, as well as authentic capacity of taking decisions about oneself at all levels of daily existence in a state and international community. Opposition as a manifestation of responsible participation will be expressed in opposing all political, social and economic processes, whether through physical extermination, the compulsion to abandon one’s land, absorption by other communities, reducing to the level of instrumental manipulation, or through other similar means and methods which ultimately assail both the regional community as well as the personal dignity and rights of its members. Ultimately, it is about sovereignty in a broad sense: social, economic and, above all, cultural, to which multiple communities, including ethnic and regional ones, are entitled.³⁷

The concept of subjectivity does not only refer to the very fact of the existence of regional communities, but is also expressed in the

³⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 106.

³⁷ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 15.

concept of regional identity, defined by values (common good) and other elements which constitute it, above all material and spiritual culture in the form of art, customs, literature, language, history, ethos, etc. In this context, the social teaching of the Church draws attention to the right of “groups of people to a collective identity, which must be protected as required by the dignity of its individual members.”³⁸ Therefore, this law finds its foundation in the personal dignity of the human being because no person exists for themselves, but finds a fuller identity in relation to others.³⁸ In practice, this right means, on the one hand, the freedom to express one’s own identity in a free manner, and, on the other hand, the prohibition of depriving any regional group of the possibility of actually cultivating and developing what constitutes its essence and specificity, whether through conscious destruction of culture, absorption by other community or imposing a foreign culture.³⁹

With regard to the subjectivity of regional or ethnic groups, the social doctrine of the Church speaks not only of the right to collective identity, but also formulates a whole catalog of natural and inalienable rights of these communities. On the one hand, these rights are the result of the possessed subjectivity, and on the other hand, they protect it and guarantee its respect in social life. The papal message for the XXII World Day of Peace, devoted to respect for minorities, lists among these rights: the right to exist, freedom, sovereignty, development and cultivation of one’s own cultural heritage, respect for one’s life, religious freedom and the right to maintain contacts with groups of the same cultural and historical heritage, who live on the territory of other countries.⁴⁰ All these rights – which is worth emphasizing – are intended to guarantee the continued existence, autonomy and sovereignty of regional groups. These rights are interpreted similarly to human rights, which means, that they are natural rights, and therefore they stem from the same subjectivity of these communities and every human being is entitled to them.⁴¹

³⁸ John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 3.

³⁹ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 15.

⁴⁰ John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 5–8.

⁴¹ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Europa regionu*, 16.

Many of these rights refer to the relationship between minority groups, including the relations between regions and a nation, which means, that the principle of opposition as a category of participation is complemented by the principle of subsidiarity, which, similar to the first principle, protects primarily the subjectivity and autonomy of an individual or of smaller communities in relation to superordinate communities, including nations.⁴² Apart from more comprehensive analyses concerning this topic, it is worth emphasizing, that it concerns exactly this area of a civic community, which is understood as the entirety of relationships between individuals and intermediate communities, which were created owing to “creative subjectivity of a citizen.”⁴³ The network of these relationships stimulates and strengthens the social fabric and constitutes the basis for a true community of people.⁴⁴

Basic human rights are guaranteed nowadays by various documents of international and national character. Similarly, many rights (and obligations) that refer to the relationships between minority groups and a nation were codified in the form of legal principles, owing to which minorities enjoy special legal protection. However, it ought to be borne in mind, that even in the areas, where the nation ensures such protection for minorities, their members encounter actual discrimination and isolation. In such cases, the social doctrine of the Church reminds the nation about the obligation to “protect and advocate for the rights of minority groups, especially due to the fact, that peace and internal security can be guaranteed only when the rights of all those who remain within the range of its responsibility are respected.”⁴⁵

The state should indeed be vigilant, so that no new forms of discrimination could arise. It is also responsible for peace and social order in a situation, in which a certain minority group voices claims that have particular political implications, striving for independence or even more significant political autonomy. In this case the doctrine

⁴² Cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 79

⁴³ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 15.

⁴⁴ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 185.

⁴⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no 4.

of the Church suggests entering the path of dialogue and negotiations: “The willingness of the parties to mutually accept one another and participate in dialogue is a necessary condition to reaching a just solution to complex problems which may constitute a threat to peace. Whereas, rejecting dialogue can lead to aggression.”⁴⁶

Every right entails corresponding obligations. Members of minority groups also have certain responsibilities towards the community and the state in which they live. Firstly, it concerns the duty to cooperate, as any other citizen, for the common good. Secondly, a minority group is obligated to uphold freedom and dignity of every one of its members, and to respect the choices made by individuals, even if a person decides to relocate into the cultural circle of the majority.⁴⁷

5. Conformism and Avoidance as Unauthentic Forms of Participation

The rejection of any of the principles leads to unauthentic forms of participation. The main unauthentic attitude is conformity, which may be considered as superficial participation. It comes to being, when the principle of solidarity is emphasized so much, that every objection is considered to be its violation. Ultimately, conformism indicates the lack of basic solidarity, and therefore the lack of objection; it is a particular form of consenting to the reality that one is not capable of accepting in their conscience, but also lacks the courage to oppose. Conformist attitudes are by nature a contradiction to participation, in the true sense of the notion; they are an act of pretending that the solidarity exists, because the community members who adopt this attitude not only fail to contribute to their development, but rather allow themselves to be somehow directed by them; they persist in them, because it coincides with rational benefits, but they do not contribute anything in a constructive way.⁴⁸ Janusz Nagórny, commenting on Wojtyła’s writings, in this case discusses “tuning in”

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 10.

⁴⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Message for the XXII World Day for Peace*, no. 11.

⁴⁸ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 316–317.

to others without confidence and authentic involvement,⁴⁹ on the other hand, Rocco Buttiglione considers that the core of conformism lies in refusal to participate, which is then replaced by a passive acceptance of whatever happens to the community:

A person turns away from being a subject of social action and accepts being its object; they resign from involvement in social relations, therefore resigning from seeking self-fulfillment in the community. [...] Such an attitude is the root of social uniformity, but not the true unity. Society seems to live in harmony, but in reality, none of its members are concerned with the common good, and objections do not arise only because nobody wants to risk their own interests for the common good.⁵⁰

Attitudes of conformism can be related to all communities, including a regional one. Conformists pretend to be involved in the regional community and accept its goals; they pretend to be committed to its well-being. To some extent, they identify with it for rational benefits or due to their origins or place of residence, but they do not contribute a lot to become integrated with it by deepening their understanding of the regional consciousness or learning about the history or culture of the region. In some cases, the conformist attitude stems from the inability to correctly relate one's ethnicity or regionality to other communities or cultures of this type, which may also concern larger communities, such as a nation and country. People, by their very nature, are not only citizens of their own ethnic community, but also of a certain nation and country. Jan Józef Lipski discusses this subject in the context of the problem concerning two homelands, admittedly mainly national ones, but indirectly also a regional homeland, national and civil homeland,⁵¹ whereas Miąskowski discusses the problem of

⁴⁹ Cf. J. Nagórny, "Posłannictwo chrześcijan," 128.

⁵⁰ R. Buttiglione, *Mysł Karola Wojtyły*, 250.

⁵¹ Cf. J.J. Lipski, "Dwie ojczyzny, dwa patriotyzmy," 7–15; J.J. Lipski, *Dwie ojczyzny – dwa patriotyzmy: uwagi o megalomanii narodowej*.

two patriotisms, local and national or civil patriotism.⁵² Ultimately, both authors treat these problems as apparent, because in reality it is rather natural for people to belong to two homelands. Miąskowski not only fails to notice a contradiction between the self-awareness of a person's regional affiliation (local patriotism) and their national and civil self-awareness (greater patriotism), but he expresses the belief, that this awareness is based on and stems from a regional self-awareness. The conformist attitude may also be a consequence of inability to reconcile an individual's involvement for the common good with their presence in a region, where regionalism is treated as a reality isolating and separating a person. Then, the way in which a person is committed to the common good of a regional community and their existence in their own region is at best of formal character.⁵³

The second attitude of unauthentic participation is the avoidance attitude, which is a falsified form of opposition. Whereas opposition was an active form of participation and consisted in attaining the common good, avoidance denotes withdrawal, a protest without obtaining the common good. It is the lack of participation, absence in the community, feelings of resentment towards the community, not accepting the community's vision of the common good or the means to obtaining it. It is all of the above without expressing active opposition. It is a substitute attitude for a person who cannot bring themselves to solidarity (for the common good) and does not believe in the possibility of opposition.⁵⁴

Buttiglione perceives avoidance as a constitutive element of conformism, with the difference being that in conformism an individual pretends to accept commonly accepted goals, most often due to the benefits that they derive from at least nominal membership in a community, while in the attitude of avoidance an individual openly manifests their lack of interest in the goals of the community: "Avoidance is inherently akin to conformism and can even take the

⁵² Cf. J.M. Miąskowski, "Kto się boi lokalnego patriotyzmu," 9–11.

⁵³ The issue of the self-awareness of a person's ethnic affiliation in relation to the national and state awareness as well as the active presence of a person in a region and their commitment to the common good is widely discussed by H. Skorowski in his monograph *Europa regionów*, 169–192.

⁵⁴ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 317–318.

form of ‘conformist avoidance,’ which is the adaptation of a mentality which fosters lack of engagement, distrust, and criticism offering no alternatives.”⁵⁵

However, avoidance may also have a certain personalistic value. In this context, Nagórny will say that the avoidant attitude is in a sense *puer* when viewed from the moral side, because it does not pretend participating in a community, “and if it is a consciously chosen attitude, it also has its personalistic value: it is a manifestation of a given person in a specific social reality, which this person cannot and does not want to fully accept.”⁵⁶ Then it is a form of accusation against the community.

Avoidant attitudes can arise in a variety of circumstances, most often when the activity of regional movements takes the wrong direction and internal voices of criticism are imperceptible. At this point, it is possible to point to separatist movements in relation to the national or state community, or the phenomenon of creating so-called ethnic ghettos, and thus the isolation and closure of ethnic groups to the outside world. A similar situation may arise when a minority group raises claims with specific political implications, seeking independence or even greater political autonomy. In some conflict cases, terrorist groups are the ones who usurp the exclusive right to speak on behalf of minority communities. However, this way they deprive these communities of the possibility to choose their own representatives freely and openly and to seek – without the pressure of fear – appropriate solutions. Then the members of such communities, suffering from acts of violence committed unlawfully on their behalf, not wanting or being unable to object for various reasons, escape into the avoidant attitude. Adopting a conformist attitude in this case would equal acceptance of the arising lawlessness.

Avoidance may also appear as helplessness in the face of strong assimilation processes of an ethnic community under the influence of an indigenous community or a regional community under the influence of a national or state community. It consists in taking over the values and standards of life, and so the culture of the dominant

⁵⁵ R. Buttiglione, *Myśl Karola Wojtyły*, 250.

⁵⁶ Cf. J. Nagórny, “Posłannictwo chrześcijan,” 128.

group, and losing one's own. The inability to change these processes may result in the process of being shut down in micro-communities, in which it is easier to maintain cultural identity.

Conclusion

The principles of genuine participation are an ultimate confirmation of the truth whereby a person and community, including a regional one, are in a relationship of interdependence and reciprocity. The insight into regionalism through the prism of the personalistic category of participation allowed for demonstrating its new perspectives as an anthropological and axiological reality. Regionalism is not only a sociological phenomenon, but also an important culture-forming process influencing the development of the human person. Participation in a regional community based on the principle of solidarity and opposition creates a space not only for the integral development of the human being, but also conditions the personalistic value of existence and taking action therein.

Inclusion in the regional community in the spirit of solidarity and opposition allows a human person to maintain a personalistic value of their own deeds in joint action with others, and at the same time participate in conducting a joint action and in its results. Participation also means that regionalism excludes treating another person as an object and, at the same time, being treated as an object. This is the case when the actions of a regional community are aimed at the true common good of the region and are undertaken as a result of the responsible participation of all the members of a given regional community.

Regionalizm w świetle personalistycznej kategorii uczestnictwa

Abstrakt: Regionalizm to nie tylko zjawisko socjologiczne, ale także ważny proces kulturotwórczy mający wpływ na rozwój osoby ludzkiej. Myśl społeczna Kościoła wprost mówi o nim jako fenomenie antropologicznym i interpretuje go jako kategorię aksjologiczną. Odwołując się do tych założeń, artykuł analizuje regionalizm przez pryzmat personalistycznej kategorii uczestnictwa, opisanej przez Karola Wojtyłę w książce *Osoba i czyn*, której struktura oparta jest na dwóch zasadach: solidarności i sprzeciwu. Zasady te mogą pełnić kryterium oceny poszczególnych form regionalizmu pod kątem odpowiedzi na pytanie, na ile rozpoznają i uznają one podmiotowość każdego z członków wspólnoty regionalnej, a także w jakim stopniu odwołują się one do kluczowych dla regionalizmu wartości solidarności regionalnej i dobra wspólnego regionu.

Słowa kluczowe: regionalizm, uczestnictwo, solidarność, Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*

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