

Abstract

It has been approximately three decades since „new“ approaches to studying regions began to appear in the context of socio-cultural turn in geography. From the perspective of the so-called new regional geography, the region does not represent a naturally given spatial unit nor a semantically empty construction of the analysis of the society's spatial organization. The „new“ regional geographer perceives regions as dynamic social structures linked to a collective consciousness. In this respect, the research of regions represents a study of the social organization of space. While research of the spatial (geographic) organization of society in Czech geography has a rather long tradition, a similar statement cannot be made regarding the research into the social organization of space (the other side of the relationship between space and society). Despite the fact that even in Czechia the number of academics interested in the process of the institutionalization of regions is gradually growing, i.e. about how and why regions are constructed/deconstructed as a part of social life, domestic research of the social organization of space is still only in its early stages.

The present doctoral dissertation represents a relevant contribution to the current debate regarding the issues of the social organization of space and the institutionalization of regions. The concept of regional identity is employed when examining the institutionalization of regions, allowing the grasping of regions as complex socio-spatial processes containing several interrelated dimensions. In the dissertation paper I follow perhaps the most famous concept of regional identity, created by the geographer Anssi Paasi.

The work is organized into two basic parts. The first part introduces individual publishing outputs that generate the contents of the second part of the work. In addition to the theoretical and methodological debate regarding regional identity issues, it contains the characteristics of the present studies and the final discussion. The monothematic set of studies presents research on the multiple dimensions of regional identities in different geographical scales, and it is focused on the regional identities institutionalized in the area of northern Slovakia. On the one hand, the research on the regional identities of various types and geographical scales institutionalized in the given territory allows the search for certain rules in „life“ (institutionalization) of the regions in general, on the other hand it offers substantial unique information

on the social organization of space in this territory, which can be used in concrete decision-making processes. The work thus contributes not only to a discussion on the issues of the social organization of space and its laws, but it also answers issues related to the specific social organization of the space of northern Slovakia.

Key words: regional identity, institutionalization of region, northern Slovakia, social organization of space, identity of region, regional consciousness, new regional geography