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THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN REGIONAL EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT: **Thesis/Purpose of the Article** – The purpose of this article is to examine the diverse roles played by libraries, primarily public ones, in implementing the concept of regionalism. **Method** – The text is dominated by a descriptive approach. The theoretical aspects are considered through conceptual analysis, analysis and critique of library science literature and literature on regionalism, a pragmatic-normative approach, and a compilation of practices employed by contemporary libraries within their regional offerings. **Results/Conclusions** – The scale and diversity of strategies for participating in regional culture demonstrate the significant role of libraries in regional education. These institutions not only provide and disseminate culture but also function as culture-forming centers, thus serving the region. Libraries create conditions for supporting regional development and thus act as collective social actors in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

INTRODUCTION

With socio-technological development, the number of tasks and challenges that libraries must address increases and diversifies. At the same time, in a world of globalization, they often become a bastion of regional cultural values, a center for mobilizing and stabilizing local communities. Given the above distinctions, Stanisław Kowalik proposes initiating a discussion about “glocalization, or the process of mutual support between globalization processes and regional development” (Kowalik, 2006, p. 22). This approach is realized in the principles of regional education.

The revival of the regional movement in Poland took place in the 1990s. Regional themes, the discovery of one’s own roots, and territorial activity increased in popularity. Recognizing, protecting, and celebrating regional heritage increased interest in national heritage, which in turn facilitated openness to other communities and cultures. At this point, it is important to note the comprehensive work of libraries on behalf of the region, since “public libraries, as cultural institutions, play a particularly important role in preserving territorial identity” (Furmanek, Heidinger, 2014, p. 8). A key aspect of this work will be an examination of the numerous roles libraries play in implementing the idea of regionalism. Solutions implemented primarily by public libraries will be discussed. Because certain activities are replicated in libraries with different profiles, the article will also mention other types of libraries. Protecting values and distinctive cultural features, instilling respect for them, stimulating cooperation, and engaging in regional affairs of a material and symbolic nature are just some of the activities that libraries undertake institutionally, thus aligning with the principles of regional education. The scale and diversity of strategies for participating in the region’s culture are testament to the significant role of libraries in regional education. These institutions not only provide and disseminate culture, but also function as culture-creating centers, and therefore work for the benefit of the region.

The author analyzed the components of the concept of regional education and reviewed key related terms. Situating the functioning of libraries within the context of regionalism, she utilized a theoretical approach, addressing the social role of libraries, a pragmatic-normative approach, including the applicable legal status, library organization, and methods of implementing library processes, as well as the impact of these institutions on their surroundings. The work proposes a division of library activities subordinated to regional education and a summary of practices employed by contemporary libraries within their regional offerings. This systematization is accompanied by a comparison of two innovative approaches to disseminating regional knowledge, using the example of public pedagogical libraries in Greater Poland as an example.

These issues are particularly important given that the issue of regional education in the context of the role of libraries, primarily public ones, is no longer as actively addressed in bibliological discourse as it was during the revival of regionalism in the 1990s and early 2000s. The question of the place and importance of libraries in regional education processes remains relevant. Symptomatically, concern for the region ranks high in both current guidelines for educational interventions and collaboration with the local community. These are often priority areas for public libraries today.

The discussion is dominated by a descriptive method, referencing literature, and analyzing key concepts. During the preparation for this work, collective works on regionalism in relation to education reform, exploring the problems and numerous aspects of regional education, as well as its practice, proved extremely helpful. The anthologies *Edukacja regionalna* [Regional Education], edited by Anna Weronika Brzezińska, Aleksandra Hulewska, and Justyna Słomska, and *Regionalizm, kultura i oświata regionalna* [Regionalism, Culture, and Regional Education] by Bogdan Cimała and Jolanta Kwiatek, are key. The collection proposed by the Polish Libraries Association, titled *Regionalizm w bibliotece* [Regionalism in the Library], was also undoubtedly significant. It contains a wealth of practical solutions adopted by Polish libraries, which contribute to the toolkit of the regional librarian. Due to the space constraints of this text, Piotr Petrykowski's comprehensive reflections, included in his book *Edukacja regionalna. Problemy podstawowe i otwarte* [Regional Education: Basic and Open Problems], will be instrumental in clarifying any inconsistencies. It discusses the conceptual variations surrounding the subject of regional education, the problem of situating this area of knowledge in the history of research (i.e., within the humanities), and more broadly, in the history of social practices. Electronic materials, references to the law, and regulations regulating library activities are also included. These items allowed for the creation of a cross-sectional overview, a theoretical and cultural foundation, which was then used to identify a typology of activities supporting regional education in library practice. The compilation would serve not only an educational purpose, illustrating the multifaceted nature of libraries' work for the region, but also inspire and raise awareness of the active participation of these institutions in cultural processes.

REGIONAL EDUCATION

Knowledge of and identification with the culture of a given regional community, nation, international group, or of humanity in general on a global scale is essential for full functioning in society. Jerzy Nikitorowicz emphasizes that "shaping cultural competencies, learning culture, aims to

‘inscribe’ a person into the heritage of their ancestors,” and this is achieved through “recognizing the signs, distinguishing features, and identifiers” that constitute cultural identity in both an individual and a collective sense (Nikitorowicz, 2006, p. 103). The researcher also concludes that this education “should treat the microcosm as primary and superior to the idea of global awareness, as the first and most significant stage in the pursuit of universal, timeless values” (Nikitorowicz, 2006, p. 102). Meanwhile, the starting point for “cultivating typical properties of the region” (Nikitorowicz, 2006, p. 104) is regionalism.

The term “regionalism” derives from the Latin word *regio*—meaning, among other things, “geographical location, border,” “area, region, territory” (Korpanty, 2001, p. 531). Ludwik Kozołub defines the term as follows: “Regionalism, generally understood, is an ideological concept and, at the same time, a social movement aimed at understanding and creatively utilizing the values and forces inherent in small socio-spatial complexes” (Kozołub, 2010, p. 13). The French are considered the forerunners of regionalism, with Jean Charles-Bruno considered the movement’s pioneer. French regionalism developed dynamically at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, Jamrozek, 2006, p. 115). In Poland, due to the country’s political situation, the development of the idea of regionalism was an element of the aspirations for independence. Referring to Aleksander Kazimierz Patkowski’s interwar concept of “education through and for the region,” Dorota Żołądź-Strzelczyk and Wiesław Jamrozek maintain that such educational influences aimed to “shape a sense of belonging to a specific area – a region – and a sense of obligation to this ‘small’ homeland, yet perceived at the same time as part of this ‘great’ homeland – located within the borders of the Polish state at that time” (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, Jamrozek, 2006, p. 127). The community spirit that characterizes regional initiatives is meant to distinguish, to protect against the “danger of uniformity and unification,” support a “sense of rootedness,” and strengthen the values that “identify and integrate this community” (Kozołub, 2010, pp. 14–15). Moreover, being situated in this type of system leads to “understanding one’s own social position and the corresponding scope of self-awareness regarding the immediate environment – the group and the region” (Kozołub, 2010, p. 15). A regional community shares certain thought and axiological processes, and implements specific views and goals, therefore one can speak of the influence of the correlated regional imagination and practices on social awareness. As Kozołub states: “Regional awareness is the diverse self-knowledge of people inhabiting a given region, knowledge of their culture [and] historical tradition regarding their distinctive customs and rituals, the forms and content of beliefs, their speech – dialect, way of life (games, songs, dances)” (Kozołub, 2010, p. 15). Regionalism, however, as already

mentioned, does not stop at the so-called “small homeland.” Emotional ties to the region as a microcosm open individuals to the macrocosm of the “greater” homeland, of which the region is a part, constituting the patriotic message of this movement. The assumptions of regionalism favor considering it as a “source of activity and civic engagement” (Majewski, 2010, p. 147). It thus becomes “an effective instrument for unleashing social initiative, a school of civic thinking, a manifestation of expanding citizen participation in co-governing the country” (Majewski, 2010, p. 147). Developing a regional identity can motivate action on behalf of one’s own region and nation, and in the longer term it introduces the cultural values of the regions into the realm of universal values on a European and global scale.

Regional culture is considered to be “a specific set of behavioral patterns and symbolic cultural products that are identified with a given region by the people who inhabit it and for whom they have significant value” (Kowalik, 2006, p. 22). The content of this culture is therefore composed of: spiritual and material products that exist in the region, that describe it, or that are created by people connected with the area and perhaps no longer living there (written and oral traditions, art, traditions, customs, beliefs, norms and rules of behavior, legends, myths, folklore), as well as architecture, landscape, language (dialect, local jargon), history, genealogy, people, and events. These include all distinctive features that emphasize attachment to the territory, a set of emotionally charged practices that unite the community practicing them. Kowalik emphasizes that “regional culture is recognized by its members as the basis for identification with the community” (Kowalik, 2006, p. 38).

The idea of regional education meets the guidelines outlined above. This concept encompasses “a pedagogical concept emphasizing the educational significance of local cultural heritage as an essential element of individual and social identity; it constitutes an important component of the European integration process; it promotes rootedness in the so-called ‘small homeland’” (PWN Online Encyclopedia). Tomasz Michalewski lists among its goals “shaping the basic cultural core of an individual’s personality” (Michalewski, 2010, p. 195). Zofia Pluta, Joanna Schmidt, and Alicja Nazarewska, authors of the text entitled *Moje korzenie, moja tożsamość* [My Roots, My Identity], describe this issue similarly. They point to the process of self-definition, recognizing one’s “local identity, i.e., social self,” as components of regional education. They point out that: “By awakening interest in the region and identifying with one’s place of origin and the people living there, an individual’s sense of security increases, and thus their readiness to explore the world without fear – opening up to others, accepting differences, and adopting an attitude of tolerance” (Pluta, Schmidt, Nazarewska, 2006, p. 378). The process of identification

on an individual level is achieved through exposure to cultural values characteristic of the local environment, instilling pride in one's origins, and thus engaging in the dissemination of immanent manifestations of this cultural canon. This involves not only recognizing the richness of the region but also teaching about the need to protect it, both physically and mentally – saving it from oblivion. In light of the above findings, Piotr Petrykowski focuses the factors of regional education on sustainability and ensuring the continuation of culture. He emphasizes that: "Regional education, being a component of the entire educational process, or more broadly, the upbringing process, has the same important function to fulfill as the entire process of upbringing – ensuring the cultural continuity of the group, community, society, and ultimately, humanity" (Petrykowski, 2003, p. 52).

The importance of the subject of regionalism is demonstrated by Michalewski's call in his work entitled *Kultura regionalna w edukacji szkolnej (w świetle ostatniej reformy szkolnictwa)* [Regional culture in school education (in the light of the recent school reform)], namely: "It is becoming necessary to create appropriate conditions for learning about and respecting cultural heritage, shaping an attitude open to pluralism and the distinctiveness of cultures, preparing students for creative participation in cultural and social life and creating cultural goods" (Michalewski, 2010, p. 196). In order to ensure comprehensive development of young people and facilitate their conscious functioning in culture, regional education was introduced into the curriculum pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 15, 1999,¹ on the core curriculum of general education. The presence of regional content in the educational strategy of schools focuses not only on developing students' cognitive interests but also on discovering and celebrating the local, native environment and the socio-cultural structures present within it. The cross-curricular educational path provided for in the core curriculum pursuant to the 1999 regulation aimed to "strengthen the sense of identity, cultural, historical, ethnic, and national belonging" (Majewski, 2010, p. 151). It assumed that "the methodological basis of regional education is the unity of concepts and socio-spatial ties within the broader national community" (Majewski, 2010, p. 152). These postulates are still relevant, albeit in a slightly modified form. The "Basic Directions for the Implementation of State Education Policy in the 2025/2026 School Year" includes the following path: "School as a Place of Civic Education – Shaping Patriotic, Social, and Civic Attitudes, Responsibility for the Region and Homeland,

¹ „Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 lutego 1999 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego,” *Dz.U. RP* 1999 nr 14 poz. 129. [“Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 February 1999 on the core curriculum of general education,” *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* 1999 No. 14 item 129.].

and Caring for One's Own Safety and the Safety of Others" (Ministry of National Education, 2025). This enables the development of informed citizens sensitive to regional issues. It encourages the cultivation of pluralism, the integration of people from different cultural backgrounds, and the promotion of multiculturalism.

The regional education module, encompassing, for example, regional research, animation, and the development of pro-social attitudes, serves to meet cultural and informational needs. In this context, its assumptions overlap with the statutory tasks performed by public, school, or pedagogical libraries. In her work *W poszukiwaniu korzeni kulturowych* [In Search of Cultural Roots], Anna Weronika Brzezińska categorizes libraries as institutions promoting culture. She states that "their statutory activities involve organizing and revitalizing culture," and their task is to oversee "the promotion of culture and the design of cultural activities" (Brzezińska, 2006, p. 205).

LEGAL BASIS AND MAIN AREAS OF LIBRARY ACTIVITY (REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE)

The most important document regulating library activity in Poland is the Act of 27 June 1997 on Libraries [Ustawa z dnia 27 czerwca 1997 r. o bibliotekach]. Section 1 of Article 3 states: "Libraries and their collections constitute a national asset and serve to preserve the national heritage. Libraries organize and provide access to resources of Polish and world science and culture" (Act on Libraries, 1997). According to this provision, libraries are responsible for collections important to the country's cultural heritage. They store and make available materials with a regional character, including the work of local authors, which is important both for respecting the region's heritage and for preserving the history of "small homelands" that contribute to the "greater" homeland.

In turn, according to point 1, section 1 of Article 4, the basic tasks of libraries include: "collecting, processing, storing, and preserving library materials" (Library Act, 1997). Section 2 of the aforementioned article expands the competences of libraries, providing that: "Libraries' tasks may also include conducting bibliographic, documentation, scientific research, publishing, educational, popularization, and instructional-methodological activities" (Library Act, 1997). With respect to activities related to the region, libraries make regional literature available, develop regionalist skills, and create a database for conducting regional research. They collect materials that are historical sources and, in a library setting, constitute the subject of educational processes and the object of exhibitions.

As part of their statutory responsibilities, these institutions undertake multifaceted bibliographic and informational activities, understood as

activities that significantly go beyond compiling book collections and creating bibliographic lists. Libraries function as cultural institutions serving as regional information centers, methodological centers (advisory function, database, support for education), research centers (regional publications, scholarly monographs, popular science publications, periodicals), and points of socio-cultural animation. It is worth mentioning that Brzezińska distinguishes among the activities of cultural institutions, including libraries, “permanent structures (e.g., permanent museum exhibitions, thematic sections in community centers, providing access to book collections), but also [...] one-off activities (organizing thematic exhibitions, staging performances, organizing regional poetry evenings)” (Brzezińska, 2006, p. 205).

Libraries, both regionally and nationally, are implementing the so-called “third place” concept (see National Reading Development Program, 2024), i.e., a welcoming space for spending free time and engaging with culture. They often resemble cultural centers, for example, through modernized premises that no longer house only shelves filled with books but also offer quiet reading corners and access to electronic equipment. Most importantly, from the perspective of meeting the needs of modern users, they create spaces for participation in various cultural and educational events, academic conferences, meetings, lectures, and for experiencing art in dedicated galleries, museum/regional rooms, or other spaces for exhibiting artistic works. These physical amenities facilitate educational and cultural activities, popularizing the region, disseminating its history, and promoting its values.

It is important to remember that the tasks of libraries vary depending on their type (school, pedagogical, public, research). This influences their scope of operations, territorial reach, organizational structure, and the nature of their collections. It also influences the form, accessibility, and methodology of handling regional assets. The 1997 Act does not entrust most libraries with strictly regional tasks, focusing on cultural and educational issues. In this regard, it distinguishes only public provincial libraries. Among their tasks, it lists: “collecting, developing, and making available library materials to serve informational, educational, and self-education needs, especially those related to knowledge of one’s own region and documenting its cultural, scientific, and economic achievements” (Library Act, 1997, art. 20, section 1, point 1) and “performing the function of a library and bibliographic information center, organizing the circulation of interlibrary loans, developing and publishing regional bibliographies, as well as other information materials of a regional nature” (Library Act, 1997, art. 20, section 1, point 2). Libraries collect materials that constitute the legacy of local institutions and significant individuals – activists and people of culture, science, and education. Annex No. 2 to the Regulation

of the Minister of Culture and Art of 6 March 1997 on the list of libraries entitled to receive mandatory copies of particular types of publications and the principles and procedure for their transfer² specifies the list of libraries entitled to receive publications on regional topics.

In turn, public pedagogical libraries, as educational institutions, in accordance with points 1 and 2 of Article 5 of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 February 2013 on Detailed Principles of Operation of Public Pedagogical Libraries³ may undertake educational, cultural, and publishing activities. In doing so, they fulfill the role of educators, animators, and promoters of regional values. Importantly, librarians themselves are often regionalists, animators, and even local artists. Regional offerings include open educational activities, library lessons, and author meetings. They also include workshops, exhibitions, competitions, conferences, and publications focused on the concept of regionalism. These activities aim to support regional communities, activate communities, and raise awareness of the richness of local culture.

TYPOLOGY OF ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES USED IN CONTEMPORARY LIBRARIES

The iterative nature of activities undertaken by various types of libraries to support regional education has allowed the identification of model solutions (Table 1). The systematization covers the following areas: book collections, school support, research and publishing activities, and local activation. In turn, an innovative approach to disseminating knowledge about the region is illustrated by the methods used in two public pedagogical libraries in Greater Poland.

BOOK COLLECTION

Libraries are legally obligated to compile collections that constitute cultural heritage. Library holdings also include materials with regional specificity. Regional materials comprise writings about the region and/or written by individuals associated with it, as well as various exhibits. Public libraries create databases of local publications or those dealing with

² "Rozporządzenie Ministra Kultury i Sztuki z dnia 6 marca 1997 r. w sprawie wykazu bibliotek uprawnionych do otrzymywania egzemplarzy obowiązkowych poszczególnych rodzajów publikacji oraz zasad i trybu ich przekazywania," *Dz.U. RP* 1997 nr 29 poz. 161. ["Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Art of 6 March 1997 on the list of libraries entitled to receive mandatory copies of particular types of publications and the principles and procedure for their transfer," *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* 1997 No. 29 item 161]

³ "Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 28 lutego 2013 r. w sprawie szczegółowych zasad działania publicznych bibliotek pedagogicznych," *Dz.U. RP* 2013 poz. 369. ["Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 February 2013 on detailed principles of operation of public pedagogical libraries," *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* 2013, item 369.]

a given territory, tracking and acquiring new publications in this area. Library materials related to the region are part of the open-access and reference collections, and are available for loan and in the reading room (for presentation purposes). They often come from donations, purchases, deposits, subscriptions, or are part of publishing series co-created or sponsored by the library.

Regional collections include: monographs and periodicals (including low-circulation local, district, and parish press), iconographic and cartographic collections (paintings, maps, bookplates), documents of social life (ephemera, posters, brochures, exhibition catalogs, theater programs, statutes, and other documents related to the institution's activities, occasional prints such as invitations, press clippings, and postcards), photographs, slides, microfilm, audio and video recordings, compact discs and vinyl records, family artifacts and memorabilia, and elements of collections (usually materials donated to the library by the family of a significant figure in the region) or permanent exhibitions (e.g., faithful reproductions of art studios or classrooms, including furniture and electronic equipment).

Special collections departments also digitize documents, preserving them in digital form. Users can also view these early materials, sometimes using a microfilm reader. It is worth noting that libraries collect periodicals focused on the region and published by local bodies, both current and old, including those with low circulation and those that have been discontinued. These are often donated to the library. Reading room storage rooms contain, among other things, annuals and regional bibliographies. The most valuable materials, such as manuscripts, old prints, and other rare items, are stored in the special collections department. These are available to users on-site and can also be viewed through thematic exhibitions. Furthermore, libraries often have entire private book collections donated by prominent residents of the region. These institutions also provide access to databases and online catalogs covering book collections, periodicals, bibliographies, compilations, and subject files. It is common to post regional materials on the library website.

The library space houses museum departments (see Celer, 2019) with library museum rooms (as well as memorial rooms, rooms of remembrance, rooms of tradition, and even a regional library archive) accessible to visitors during library opening hours. Users can access regional materials, for example, for research purposes on-site in a room provided by the special collections department or in dedicated regional workshops. Exposure to regional culture is also facilitated through the libraries' exhibition activities: permanent and temporary exhibitions presenting library materials as well as the work of local artists (current or legacy from private collections). Importantly, contact with regional literature can also take place directly

in the library through the new releases shelf with a dedicated regional section.

All these activities confirm the library's role as a regional information center, meeting informational, educational, and documentation needs regarding the region's heritage. They demonstrate concern for the region's historical heritage and confidence in citizens' interest in their place of origin. By providing access to knowledge about a specific area, libraries participate in regional education.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

Libraries support local educational institutions by providing them with research resources and materials needed for regional education classes. Their collections contain both substantive and pedagogical items that are useful for implementing regional content in schools. These include scholarly publications, problem-solving articles, curricula, textbooks, anthologies, authored programs, lesson plans, teacher guides, tourist guides, and guides to collections related to the region. By collecting these resources, the cultural heritage of the region to which the institution is associated is especially cultivated.

Public libraries collaborate with schools and preschools by organizing library lessons on regional themes, hosting field trips, and presenting resources related to the region, including permanent and temporary exhibitions and organizing competitions (literary, recitation, regional knowledge, and artistic). University libraries also provide similar support to schools by offering talks, author readings, lectures, observation of conferences with the library's participation (e.g., on "small homelands" in literature), and workshops with librarians presenting regional collections. However, school and pedagogical libraries play a special role in supporting education.

School libraries are tasked with supporting the educational process and school activities. They do this by providing teaching staff and students with access to a wide range of services. They implement the principles of regional education through independent activities, participation in school-wide activities, and accompanying events. These practices include: regional educational projects related to the "small homeland" or individuals who have made contributions to the region, editing school magazines, collecting and providing teaching aids, creating school newspapers that decorate classrooms and hallways, engaging students in the protection of regional assets and values by organizing exhibitions or genealogical research and presenting their results in post-competition displays, organizing competitions to test knowledge of the region and dialect, supporting students in preparing for the Kashubian language final exam (substantive database), encouraging and conducting

presentations of students' independent artistic creations, e.g., photographs of the local landscape, meetings with librarians, conducting classes at museums, regional trips, interviews, and supporting local patriotism (see Biernacka-Bryk, 2009). Librarians also engage in other activities that align with the idea of regionalism, such as visiting memorials, the resting places of individuals who have made contributions to the region, and commemorating anniversaries. Regional education then appears as an element of patriotic education.

Pedagogical libraries, in turn, will serve as methodological, advisory, and educational centers. Their responsibilities, as defined by the Act and relevant regulations, include, in addition to meeting the need for regional knowledge, promoting teacher education and development, creating regional information workshops or workshops for regionalists, and conducting training sessions, lectures, and meetings with specialists. Pedagogical libraries, like other public institutions, organize a variety of activities addressing regional issues for students of local schools. Content posted on the websites of these libraries includes materials supporting teaching in the area of regional education, digital resources, information, and articles about the library's regional collections, which constitute an excellent source of knowledge about the region, as well as current library lesson offerings. Libraries also announce library competitions on their websites, encouraging young people to engage in genealogical and historical research related to the region, which results in post-competition exhibitions.

SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING BIBLIOGRAPHY)

The cultivation of the idea of regionalism is reflected in library research and publishing activities. Library institutions (most often pedagogical and scientific ones) participate in or organize projects, training courses, conferences, and symposia about the region. These aim to stimulate interest in their area and promote regional values on both a macro and micro scale. They may also directly reference regional education or the work of regionalists. These activities result in scholarly publications, namely the previously mentioned scholarly monographs, popular science journals, publishing series about the region or highlighting figures associated with it, as well as materials, reports, conference reports, or information about these provided to the press by librarians, which are then printed in local journals or published online in their electronic versions.

Academic institutions specializing in regional activities, local universities, socio-cultural societies, associations, and groups of enthusiasts of the region (of a given territorial unit) eagerly establish relationships with libraries, and librarians are often members of such organizations or

collaborate with them in an integral way. Teacher-librarians function as creators of scholarly achievements in the field of regionalism. They edit articles in specialized journals, bibliographies, and entries on the library website or library blog. Libraries promote or independently conduct publishing activities focused on regional issues, both for their own staff and for group efforts related to a specific institution. Among the works published by these institutions are: scholarly materials, a library journal, often representing a specific region, bibliographies, chronicles, annuals, exhibition catalogs, art albums and books, lexicons focused on local issues or those related to a significant figure in the region, and reference books.

Libraries also conduct informational and bibliographic activities. Bibliographic work includes, among other things, creating records for individual articles in the subject directory, preparing lists of regional journals, assembling compilations of library materials on regional topics or bibliographies of selected individuals who have contributed to the region, and responding to library queries. These aids are prepared for research and record-keeping purposes. They are created for publication in the online library catalog or on the website. The registers are also used internally for collection and storage purposes.

These activities foster the integration of the regional library community, contributing to the creation and ongoing development of a knowledge base about the region and the methodology for teaching regional content. Library journals and scholarly works initiated or supported by these institutions facilitate the exchange of experiences, the documentation of regional achievements, and the popularization of the concept of regionalism.

ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT

Another area of activity for libraries, especially public ones, is the dynamization of local communities. Activities undertaken to create and cultivate community spirit are a key element of regional education. These activities will take individual, group, and mass forms. Their goal is to unite residents of a given area and promote empowerment regardless of age or socioeconomic status. Libraries, as meeting spaces, enable contact between people with diverse interests, abilities, and experiences, thus celebrating the diversity of the local community, supporting the exchange of information and the vitality of traditions, and acting as a mediator in showcasing regional activities. They become a tool for integration and for the promotion of regional products and values.

The activities of libraries as a source of civic activity and regional initiatives include: meetings (with authors, with local artists, with specialists, e.g. regionalists, guides, organizers or representatives of organizations conducting social campaigns promoting the region, but also of residents

of a given region or administrative unit), discussions, debates, culture corners, exhibitions of works of art, costumes, exhibits (including everyday objects), games (including field games, city games, following the footsteps of people distinguished for the region, enabling direct contact with local architecture, monuments and landscape), amusements, celebrations and festivals promoting traditions, customs and local rituals as well as celebrations of anniversaries, historical events important for the country (taking into account the participation of representatives of the local community), competitions (knowledge, literary, recitation, artistic, documentary), trips, film screenings, festivals (folklore and others), events (night in the library), library walks and picnics, evenings (poetry, memories), theatre forms (performances, salons), regional interest groups, or Friends of the Library circles, lovers of the region, fairs, and bookcrossing. It's worth mentioning that one way to stimulate local activity is to organize community archives at libraries, whose operation is based on the grassroots efforts of the region's residents. Public libraries also encourage participation in the Citizens' Budget, which these institutions use. In this way, they promote civic initiative and support the development of social awareness.

A necessary condition for these initiatives is engaging residents in cooperation. Social media currently plays a significant role in publicizing library campaigns. They facilitate promotional activities, including the popularization of regional content. Traditional media can also provide support. Field games organized by libraries often have a multimedia component, utilizing applications for testing knowledge, tracking subsequent points along the route, or for navigation. A library's visibility on social media not only creates and strengthens its image but also educates the local community about the library's rich offerings and encourages them to engage in collaborative activities with librarians. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and now TikTok are popular destinations, especially among young people, and their potential is not unknown to libraries. Short forms posted online can be a great way to popularize a region. Libraries post photo reports of events important for regional education, create posts highlighting local activists, and include calendar pages commemorating significant episodes from the region's past. Various challenges and competitions using social media, in which librarians and users participate, are also popular. Photos and videos with regional themes are published online. Video materials include recordings such as "a day at work for a librarian," as well as entertaining scenes and virtual tours during which librarians present their collections. Residents are encouraged to post photos featuring their own regional costume ideas or portraying community activists, artists, or writers associated with the region. These materials are published directly by the library or shared on its official channels with the consent of those participating in the

initiative. This is an example of a modern way of developing knowledge about the region, which, through combined fun and opportunities for self-expression, addresses the needs especially of younger members of local communities. Knowledge acquired in this way is more easily digestible. These forms make the region and its activities popular, evoking positive associations and a desire to identify with the community.

INNOVATIVE METHODS

The Public Pedagogical Library in Poznań and the Public Pedagogical Library of Alfons Parczewski in Kalisz are two institutions that, while operating in the same voivodeship and constituting the same type of library, approach the concept of working for the region differently. For the purposes of this article, we will discuss the two directions of these institutions' efforts: through creativity toward tradition and through cooperation toward expansiveness.

The Public Pedagogical Library in Poznań, based in the historic capital of Greater Poland, focuses its regional activities on municipal initiatives. The library participates in the Municipal Harvest Festival and the Bread Festival, exhibiting a booth as part of the celebrations. During the events, children can participate in games and create art projects. Library lessons for local schools include, among other things, "Wandering around Poznań – following the trail of rich history and captivating monuments," "The World of Polish Folk Papercuts," "Calligraphy in the Regional Chamber of Educational Memorabilia," "The Town of Malki – a Visit to a Jewish Town" (an educational package of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw), and "Slavic Mythology." Educational activities are dominated by solutions aimed at preserving the continuity of tradition, sharing history, and engaging the artistic sensibility. Kamishibai theater (e.g. "Leszy – Guardian of the Forest: A Slavic Fairy Tale" and Poznań legends) is also used. The institution also houses the Regional Chamber of Educational Memorabilia in Poznań, which stores materials related to education in Greater Poland, including artifacts belonging to individuals who contributed to the region.⁴

The Public Pedagogical Library in Kalisz takes a completely different approach to regional education. Like its predecessor, the Pedagogical Library houses museum collections. These include the art studio of Władysław Kościelniak (a Kalisz resident, artist, and regionalist) and the Czar School Bench (similar in profile to the Poznań Chamber). Its innovative approach to cultural development is demonstrated by the

⁴ You can follow the activities of the Public Pedagogical Library in Poznań on the official website: <https://pbp.poznan.pl/> and on the Facebook social networking site: <https://www.facebook.com/pbp.poznan>.

MODEL SOLUTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN LIBRARIES FOR REGIONAL EDUCATION		
Library	Support for schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collecting and sharing regional collections organizing access to databases and online catalogs providing a shelf (with new items) with a highlighted regional section posting regional materials on the library website creating lists of local publications or those dealing with a given territory digitizing documents organizing permanent and temporary exhibitions running museum departments (library museum rooms) 	<p>Different types of libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing materials needed for regional education classes Organizing library lessons and competitions on regional topics, hosting field trips, and presenting resources (including exhibitions) Lectures, author meetings, conferences, and training Regionalist workshops 	<p>School libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional educational projects Editing school magazines Providing a knowledge base and access to teaching aids Creating school newsletters and exhibitions of student work Organizing competitions Regional field trips Supporting local patriotism (celebrating anniversaries, visiting memorial sites)
	<p>Scientific and publishing activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> projects, training, conferences, and symposia about the region librarians as creators of (scholarly) achievements on regional topics: scientific publications, conference materials, library journals cooperation with local universities, socio-cultural societies, associations, and groups of lovers of the region information and bibliographic activities (including blogs, newsletters, and activity on the library website) 	<p>Activation activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The library as a so-called third place Discussions, debates, cultural corners, exhibitions of artwork, costumes, and exhibits related to the region, games, activities, celebrations and festivals, anniversary celebrations, competitions, trips, film screenings, festivals, events (e.g., a night at the library), library walks and picnics, evenings (poetry, reminiscences), theater, regional interest groups or groups of friends of the library, lovers of the region, fairs, bookcrossing Visibility on social media (e.g., challenges, competitions, short forms) Community archives in the library Participatory Budget voting

Table 1. Model solutions undertaken in libraries for regional education

institution's involvement in regional activities on both a micro and macro scale, often through collaboration with multiple institutions. At the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year, the library premiered a publication of student stories entitled *Kalisz in Fairy Tales and Legends – Rediscovered*. An example of its online activities is the newsletter "Something for Every Regionalist," which includes a Padlet titled "Cultural Heritage of the Kalisz Region," featuring an urban coloring book for children and a herbarium. To meet the needs of a slightly broader audience, the library publishes the professional journal "Closer to the Library. The Journal of Librarians of Southeastern Wielkopolska." Together with the Kalisz Society of Friends of Science, it coordinates author meetings related to the *Kaliszanie* publishing series. The Pedagogical Library also organizes larger events. For several years, the Wielkopolska Librarians' Forum has been held here, providing an opportunity for librarians from the region to share best practices. In 2025, the event was held under the slogan "We Act Locally – We Read Together!" The conference focused on the needs of the local community. The library also participated in the 33rd European Heritage Days, hosting an event titled "Lost City. Young Heritage Through Lenses and Research." The meeting was accompanied by an exhibition prepared by librarians, "Kalisz, the (Un)known. The City Through the Lens of Władysław Kościelniak – on the 10th Anniversary of His Death." It is worth adding that the popularization activities are supported by the use of new technologies, for example an integral part of the exhibition was an interactive map.⁵

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the situation of libraries is evolving in tandem with the development of other areas of social life. Responding to these changes, libraries are continually improving their work to best meet the needs of their users. One manifestation of this activity is the involvement of the institutions discussed in fulfilling educational tasks for and about the region.

This work aimed to explore the multitude of roles that libraries play from an institutional and personal perspective (teacher-librarians and others who co-create a space for dialogue) within the framework of regionalism. The text explored the role of libraries in regional culture broadly understood, which was achieved by examining the concept of regional education and its related concepts, taking into account the applicable legal framework,

⁵ More information about the activities of the A. Parczewski Public Pedagogical Library in Kalisz can be found on the official website: <https://kp.kalisz.pl/> and on the Facebook social networking site: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064594066412>.

analyzing the typology of library activities conducted in the service of regionalism and their implementation strategies, and presenting practical solutions available to contemporary libraries. Activities undertaken for the region have been organized around four areas: book collections, support for schools, research and publishing activities, and local activation.

This article demonstrates model solutions currently being implemented in libraries for regional education. This serves as a starting point for further consideration, a set of current practices supporting regionalism in the library landscape. It also highlights the potential for using innovative methods. A significant conclusion drawn from these issues is the functioning of libraries as culture-forming institutions – they not only preserve heritage but, above all, actively participate in the processes of its creation and dissemination. Celebrating the region's history, protecting the cultural heritage of "small homelands," providing multifaceted support for the local community, and, finally, influencing social awareness – these are the types of activities that underpin the significant role of libraries in regional education.

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