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The sense of territorial identity and intensity of antisocial behaviors in a group of socially maladjusted youth

Abstract: The purpose of the article is to present selected results of research into the feeling of territorial identification in a group of adolescents suffering from maladjustment in the context of their antisocial behavior. In the case of the present research, the feeling of identification is hierarchically related to five circles: residential, regional, national, European and global. The research was conducted using the diagnostic opinion poll method, within the scope of which the survey technique was utilized. In order to construct a picture of defective social functioning, the thesis employs the Social Maladjustment Scale by Lesław Pytka. In total, 481 pupils of youth educational centers were surveyed. Statistical data analysis did not indicate any differences in the feelings of territorial identification related to the intensity level of antisocial behavior in the group of adolescents from youth educational centers.

Key words: Territorial identification, youth, social maladjustment.

Introduction

Finding an answer to the question of identity “who am I?” determines the permanence of the individual and the consistency of their behavior from one situation

to another and the integration of their own *self*. Man, living in a community with which they identify, also creates a sense of their social identity, i.e. the identity of *We*, formed on the basis of perceived and experienced similarities to other people, resulting in a sense of community and sharing of certain meanings with other people, which is expressed in the cognitive links of self with other people and identification with their goals, values and principles of conduct (Jarymowicz, 2000). The social dimension refers to identification, affiliation and membership of a group, which are indicated in the answer to the question: to what extent an individual feels that they belongs to a particular group (Melchior, 2004). The term identity seems to be the main concept with regard to “identification” and can be understood in two ways: identity as *idem*, i.e. what is the same, and identity as *ipse*, i.e. the same. The first approach refers to the number, multiplicity of characters and the duration of a person in time. It corresponds to the aspect of identification, which can be numerous. The *ipse*, on the other hand, is an absolute unity of identity (Kłoskowska, 1992, 1996). Therefore, it can be said that each individual is a member of a number of communities, e.g. a family, nation, task force and many other. Man identifies himself to a varying extent and to a different degree with the specified spaces, from the place of residence, region, country to transnational identity (Nikitorowicz, 1995, 2007, 2009). The distinction made by Z. Rykiel (1999) is useful in discussing territorial consciousness. Synthetically, he describes it as a part of social consciousness, which refers to the sense of identity of one’s own territory and, secondarily, of one’s own socio-territorial group (Rykiel, 1999). It seems, therefore, that the sense of identification with certain territories is line with the concept of territorial consciousness. On the basis of literature analysis, empirical studies most often distinguish five basic areas of the sense of territorial identity: local, regional, country or nationality related, and supranational (European and global) (Nikitorowicz, 2009; Rykiel, 1999). The aim of the presented study was to analyze the relationship between the sense of territorial identity in the group of maladjusted young people in terms of their antisocial behavior. The results of studies of groups of young people lead to a hypothesis that the sense of territorial identity will be related to the behavioral aspect of the functioning of an individual. In the case of conducted studies it was assumed that the sense of identity will depend on the level of antisocial behaviors (Konaszewski, 2016; Żyłkiewicz-Płońska, 2016).

Characteristics of the field of study and its subjects

The study was conducted on socially maladjusted young people, who were sent to youth educational centers all over Poland. The youth educational centers are dedicated for socially maladjusted children and youth, who require special organization of education, working methods, upbringing and re-socialization, in or-

der to eliminate the causes and manifestations of behavioral disorders. A youth educational center is a rehabilitation and isolation institution operating 24 hours a day, from which young people can return home only during holidays. The selection of the examined group was deliberate and random. The criterion for the deliberate selection was the type of institution in which the subjects of the study were placed by a family court. The sample was determined by the character of the population (finite) and its specificity (youth placed by family and juvenile departments of district courts in youth educational centers as a rehabilitation measure). According to information from the Center for Educational Development, there were 5057 charges (3129 boys and 1427 girls without any intellectual disabilities, and 409 boys 92 girls with mild intellectual disabilities) in youth educational centers. Therefore, the required sample size was also established as $n_p = 390$ for the population of charges of youth educational center (only charges without any intellectual disabilities were included in the sample) with a confidence coefficient of 0.90 and a maximum error of 4% (Brzeziński 2004). Taking into account these calculations, a total of 481 charges from twelve randomly selected youth educational centers were examined. Boys accounted for 54% (258 charges) of the respondents, compared to girls (218), who accounted for 46% of the respondents. Five charges did not answer that question. In the analyzed group, the highest number of people were charges of youth educational centers for boys– 43.7% (210 charges), followed by charges of co-education centers 28.7% (138 charges). A slightly smaller group were charges of the youth educational centers for girls – 24.9% (120 charges). In the case of 13 charges, no information was obtained as to the type of center. The data obtained during the study indicate that the age of the respondents was between 14–18 years ($M=16.34$ $SD=0.97$). The largest group of respondents were people aged 16 (36.4%) and 17 (36.0%), followed by people aged 15 (13.3%). The least numerous groups were respondents aged 18 (10.0%) and 14 (4.2%). The locations of the educational centers in which the studies were conducted are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1. List of the surveyed centers and percentage share of charges in particular youth educational centers

Name of the center	Number of questionnaires completed	Share in the sample [%]
Youth Educational Center, Goniądz	49	10.2%
Youth Educational Center, Borowie	16	3.3%
Youth Educational Center, Otwock/Józefów	29	6.0%
Youth Educational Center, Kolonia Ossa	45	9.4%
Youth Educational Center, Kolonia Szczerbacka	64	13.3%
Youth Educational Center, Puławy	46	9.6%
Youth Educational Center, Różanystok	57	11.9%
Youth Educational Center, Rusinów Konecki	34	7.1%
Youth Educational Center, Wola Rowska	27	5.6%

Name of the center	Number of questionnaires completed	Share in the sample [%]
Youth Educational Center, Warsaw, ul. Strażacka	35	7.2%
Youth Educational Center, Warsaw, ul. Dolna	15	3.1%
Youth Educational Center, Warsaw, ul. Patriotów	30	6.2%
No data	34	7.1%
Total	481	100%

Research tools

Sense of territorial identity. Taking into account the work of Z. Rykiel (1999) establishing that an individual identifies with different territories and the work of A. Kłosowska (2012) assuming that an individual is a member of a number of groups and communities, e.g. family, nation, task forces and many other, the respondents were asked to answer the following questions: “To what extent do you feel a citizen of the world?”, “To what extent do you feel a European?”, “To what extent do you feel a Pole?”, “To what extent do you feel a citizen of your region?”, “To what extent do you feel a citizen of your city?”. The diagnosis of the increase in the sense of territorial identity was based on a scale from 1 (“definitely no”) to 5 for (“definitely yes”).

Anti-social behavior. In order to construct a picture of defective social functioning the Social Maladjustment Scale by L. Pytko was used to study young people aged 13–17. The Social Maladjustment Scale consists of six subscales. In the study, a scale was used to measure antisocial behavior (ZA). This subscale consists of 10 categories describing the characteristics of social behavior. To describe the severity of each attribute, a three-point scale (0, 1, 2 points) was used. A 0-point weight is assigned to statements that define normal, socially desirable characteristics. 1- and 2-point weight are assigned to statements indicating respectively a moderate and significant degree of severity of negative behaviors. The basis for determining the type and level of social maladjustment is the sum of points obtained in particular partial scales separately.

To confront the independent variable, which is the level of antisocial behavior intensity with the sense of identification with the educational center environments. On the basis of the sten score scale, three levels of antisocial behavior intensity were distinguished: low, average and high, and three levels of sense of identity: low, medium and strong (the results of the studies obtained in a given area of identification were divided into percentiles, low identification level: below 1.7, strong identification level 3.4 and above, mean identification level between 1.7 and 3.4). In order to verify the relationship between the sense of identification and the level of antisocial behavior intensity, the non-parametric Chi-squared test (χ^2) was used.

Analysis of the study results

The first issue to be examined concerns the relationship between identification with the place of residence and the intensity of antisocial behavior. The results of the studies are presented on the Figure below.

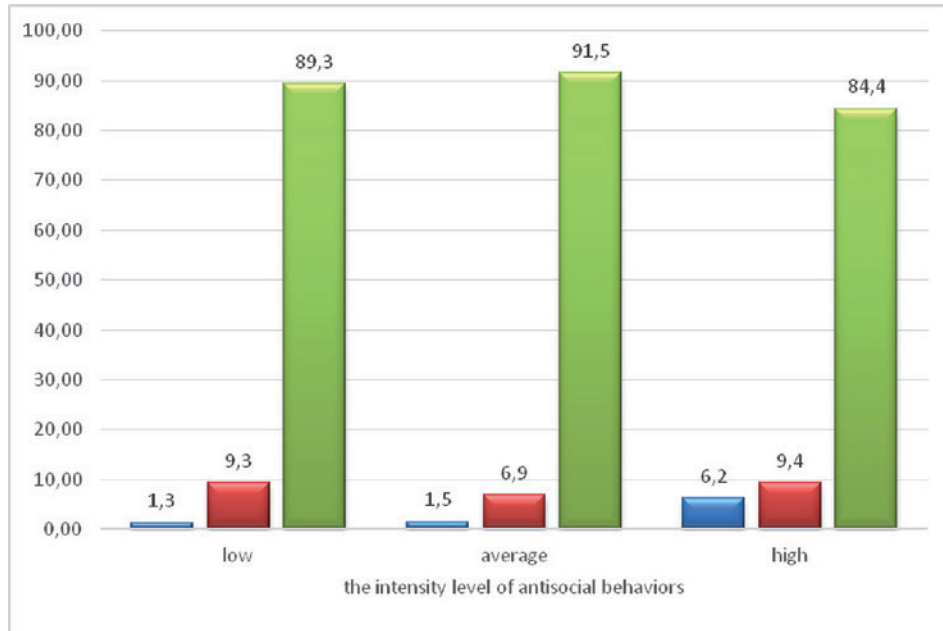


Fig. 1. The sense of identification with the place of residence and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors

Source: own research

Analyzing Fig. 1, it can be seen that the level of antisocial behavior intensity does not differentiate identification with the place of residence. The result proved t to be statistically insignificant $\chi^2(4, N = 481) = 7.476$; $p = 0.113$. Minors falling into a high, average and low level categories clearly identify themselves strongly with their place of origin. The question of why minors identify themselves with their place of residence so much therefore seems justified. To answer this question, reference can be made to studies by C. Shaw and H. McKay. The concept they developed focused on the claim that the existence of crime does not depend on the characteristics of single individuals, but on the socio-cultural characteristics of the areas in which they function. The authors, analyzing the patterns of criminal behavior of young people in the context of their place of residence, developed a concentric model of city zones. They also emphasized that the sources of

crime do not lie in personal factors, origin of a specific ethnic group, as much as they do in the infrastructure typical for the living environment. They proved that deviant and criminal behaviors of youth originate not only from being immoral by nature, but also from the specific structure and culture of the community to which they belong (Błachut, Gaberle, & Krajewski, 2000; Shaw & McKay, 2016; Siemaszko, 1993). This is due to the fact that they usually live in disorganized environments characterized by often contradictory axionormative requirements, in unstable culture, among less wealthy, but not necessarily poverty-stricken people. Only to a certain extent can it be said that the signs of demoralization are territorially limited, that offences are more frequently recorded in the vicinity of the perpetrators' place of residence (Shaw & McKay, 1942, 2016; Siemaszko, 1993). Regardless of the type and strength of arguments, it is fair to say that the place of residence of youth prone to criminal behavior becomes a highly probable area where antisocial behavior, in the broadest sense of the term, may be manifested. On the other hand, however, socially maladjusted young people feel a strong attachment to their city, district or housing estate. Identification with the place of residence satisfies the need for a strong home "base". This place can then be treated as a refuge for social traditions maintained and protected by individuals and as a "haven in an uncertain environment" (Walmsley, Lewis, & Nowosielska, 1997). A. Cohen and W. Miller argued that domestic entanglement, as well as low social competences, the frustration experienced generates additional effects such as violence, addiction and other deviant behavior (Cohen, 1955; Miller, 1958). Furthermore, it can contribute to the deepening of exclusion by adding not only a social dimension, but also an educational, professional and even digital one (Błachut i in., 2000; Ostrowska & Wojcik, 1986; Wojnarska, 2017).

Next step was the analysis of the relationship between the sense of regional identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors. The data are presented in Fig. 2.

As in the case of the place of residence, it is fair to say that the (regardless of antisocial behavior) the minors strongly identify with their region. However, the level of antisocial behavior intensity does not differentiate the sense of regional identity $\chi^2(4, N = 481) = 0.964$; $p = 0.915$, which may indicate that regardless of the intensity of antisocial behavior, the sense of regional identity is comparable. Less than 79% of minors with a low level of antisocial behavior strongly identify themselves with the region, 83.8% with an average level and 81.2% with a high level of identification. At this point it should be noted that criminal behavior in terms of infrastructure is also a side effect of the planned housing policy, which concentrates (resettlement from other districts) on one area of socially excluded families, representatives of the subclass (Hancock, 2001). On the other hand, the place and its surroundings are still key variables in getting to learning the functioning of the group of people in question as well as their environment (Rykiel, 1999; Walmsley i in., 1997). The central point of attachment is one's own home,

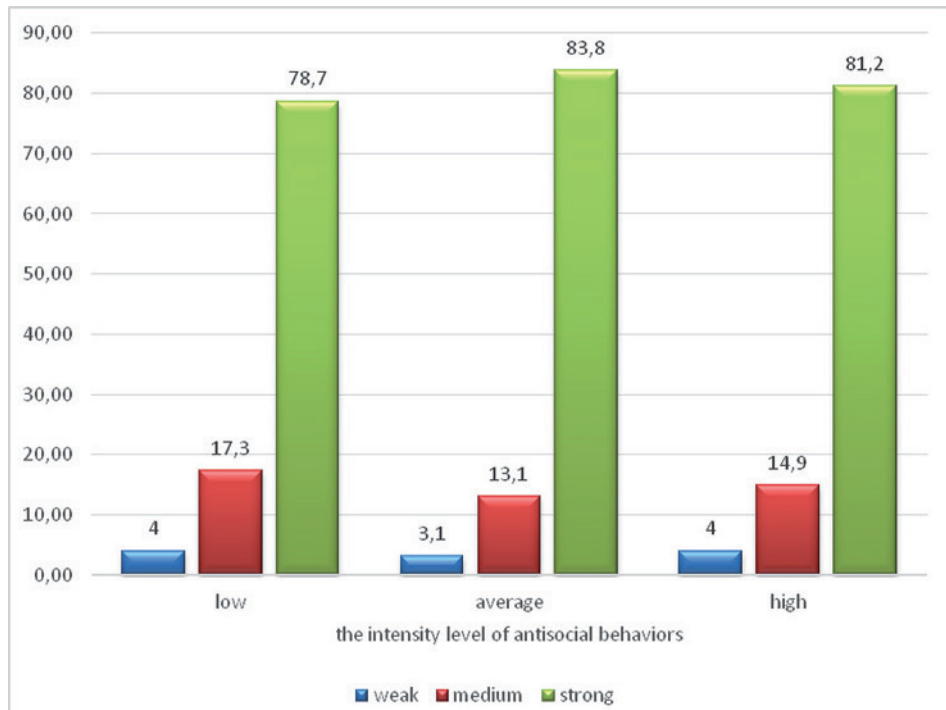


Fig. 2. The sense of regional identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors
Source: own research

but we can speak of attachment on any scale (housing estate, district, city, region). It can therefore be concluded that, despite their diverse life experiences and coming from neighborhoods or homes of dubious reputation, the surveyed minors are strongly linked to their environment of origin, place of residence and region.

Another attempt at confronting variables is an analysis of the relationship between the sense of national identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors. The results are presented in Chart 3.

In the case of the sense of national identity, we deal with the strongest sphere with which minors identify, regardless of the level of anti-social behavior. The sense of national identity oscillates around 90%. Analyzing the chart, it is clear that the level of antisocial behavior intensity does not differentiate national identity $\chi^2(4, N=481)=5.280$; $p=0.260$. This means that regardless of the intensity of antisocial behavior, the sense of national identity in this group of young people is comparable. Moreover, it has been pointed out that national identity is an important element of minors' concept of self, therefore very often superficial knowledge and misunderstanding of the national sphere has severe consequences related to the generation of nationalism and antisocial behaviors. In the context of this group of young people, they express themselves through hooliganism, vandalism, escalation of aggression and violence, formation of xenophobic attitudes and

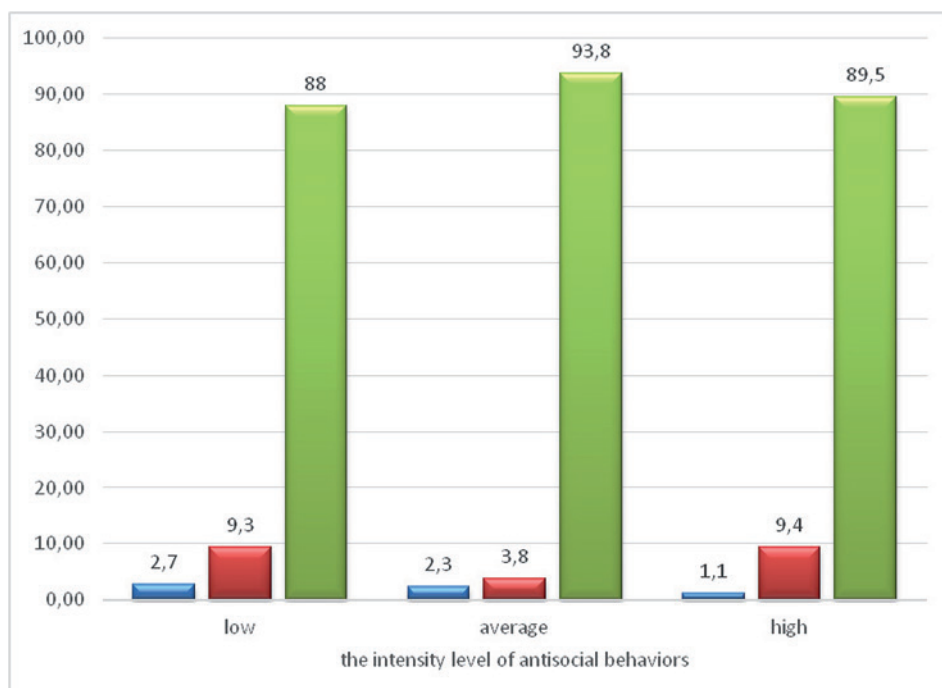


Fig. 3. The sense of national identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors
Source: own research

the increase of hatred towards other people (Fatyga, 1999; Nikitorowicz, 2009, 2014; Ogińska-Bulik, 2007).

The next chart presents an analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable, i.e. the sense of identification as a European, and the independent variable– antisocial behaviors manifested. These results are presented in Chart 4.

The highest percentage of strong European identity (68.5%) was found for the group with an average level of antisocial behavior. However, people with high and low levels of antisocial behavior also identify themselves relatively strongly with Europe. The lowest level of European identity (56%), on the other hand, is evident in young people with a low level of antisocial behavior. The result proved to be statistically insignificant $\chi^2(4, N = 481) = 4.740$; $p = 0.315$. European identity compared to local-regional or national identity is much weaker, which may mean that maladjusted young people are moving away from creating one's own persona in the context of European identity. Our experience of working with minors has shown that young people are now building their identity in the direction of closing themselves to diversity. This identity is exemplified by the attitudes of hatred of those of different nationality or religious beliefs. Therefore, educational and therapeutic programmes should ensure the introduction of new content related to the training of awareness of cultural behavior of maladjusted individuals (Nikitorowicz, 2009, 2014).

Lastly, the relationship between the sense of global identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors was analyzed. Detailed data are presented in Fig. 5.

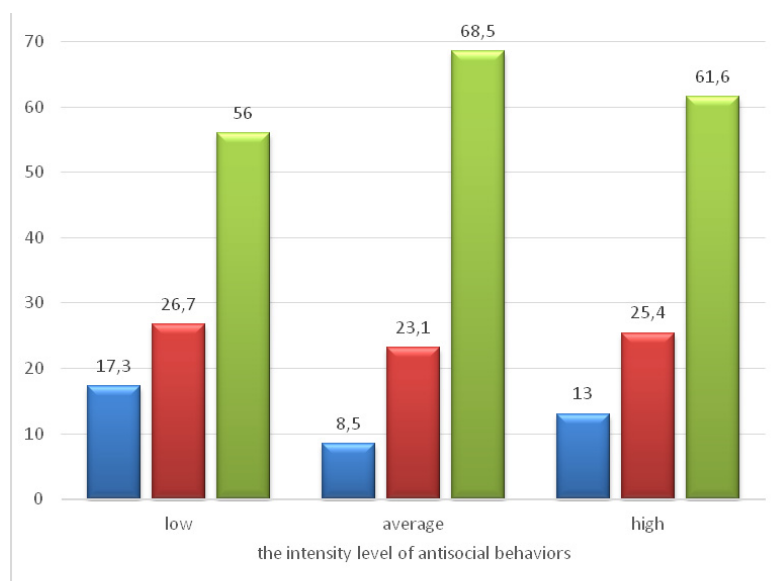


Fig. 4. The sense of identification as a European and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors

Source: own research

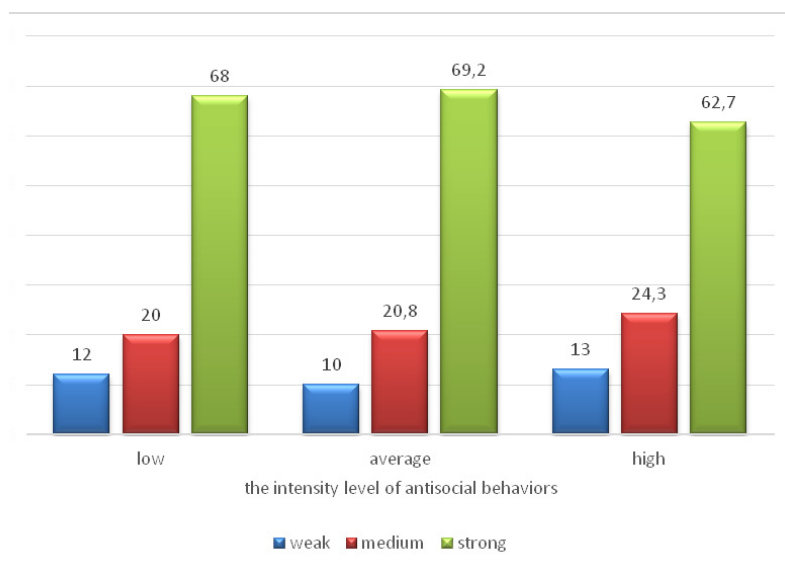


Fig. 5. The sense of global identity and the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors

Source: own research

As in previous cases, the highest percentage of strong global identity (69.2%), was found for the group with an average level of antisocial behavior. Minors characterized by a high and low level of intensity of antisocial behavior also relatively strongly identify themselves as citizens of the world. The result proved to be statistically insignificant $\chi^2(4, N = 481) = 2.118$; $p = 0.714$. A. Giddens (2007) notes the significant impact of globalization processes on the social life of modern people. Globalization does not simply occur “somewhere else”, in another dimension, without any connection with the issues in which the individual is involved. Globalization takes place “here and now” and affects our intimate and personal life in many ways. It penetrates local contexts, reaches homes and communities, be it through impersonal sources such as the media, the Internet or popular culture, or through personal contacts with people from other countries and cultures, globalization trends inevitably transform the life of each individual (Giddens, 2007). This is also reflected in the statements young people made concerning global identity, which is relatively strong in the group of minors (but much weaker than identification with the place of residence, region and nation) regardless of the level of antisocial behavior.

Conclusions and pedagogical guidelines

The analysis of data did not reveal any statistically significant differences in the sense of territorial identity due to the level of intensity of antisocial behaviors in the group of young people from youth educational centers. Therefore, it can be stated that the issues raised are not easily recognizable and are not subject to unambiguous analysis and interpretation. The issue of territorial identity in the context of antisocial behavior of youth is subject to constant development and permanent reevaluation. It is also rarely raised issue in the social sciences. The complex hypothesis related to territorial identity and the intensity of antisocial behavior also pose some difficulties, both from a cognitive and methodological perspective– the lack of research tools to measure territorial identity probably leaves a lot of room for errors and overinterpretations. Nevertheless, the authors see the usefulness of continuing empirical research aimed at a more in-depth analysis of the sense of territorial identity of youth and see the legitimacy of further, in-depth explorations aimed at understanding the relationship between the distinguished identity planes and the behavioral component.

The theoretical analyses presented in this paper, as well as interpretations of research results concerning territorial identity of maladjusted youth in the context of antisocial behaviors and the relationship between these variables, give rise to the conclusion that the sense of identification with the distinguished territories in a sense constitutes an underestimated potential, capable of reducing antisocial behaviors unfavorable from the perspective of functioning of both individual and

group. Diagnosis of the identity formation dangers in the context of territorial identities is important in order to illustrate which territories an individual identifies with. It also allows for modification and design of appropriate preventive and rehabilitation programs, which take into account the identification of young people who are not socially adapted.

The significance of the broadly understood place in the creation of individual identity is emphasized in the concept of J. Nikitorowicz (2009), who writes about the surfaces of individual identity, overlapping layers, remaining in dynamic dependence, such as: family identity, local-parish identity, religious-ethnic identity and national-state identity. In view of the research results obtained, particular attention is paid to the local dimension of the identity of an individual. Characterizing this dimension, the author emphasizes the importance of the first social roles played in a broader context than the family and the social expectations of the group towards the individual. It causes the formation of conformist or nonconformist attitudes, conscious placement of oneself in the reality outside the family, consent to the fulfillment of external expectations or resistance and reluctance towards these expectations (Nikitorowicz, 1995, 2009).

Currently, an important task of social rehabilitation pedagogy is to notice new trends in preventive work and to use them at local, regional and national levels. Moreover, it should be noted that the problem does not consist in the lack of ability to formulate relevant thoughts in social rehabilitation practice, but in the lack of recognition of solutions and projects of activities offered by theoreticians and researchers. Activities describing work in an open or natural environment, minimal police and judicial intervention and creative identity transformations. On the basis of the study results obtained, it can be stated, with a great deal of caution, that a sense of territorial identity plays an important role in the formation of one's identity. Undertaking an attempt to answer which socio-cultural identity of the maladjusted youth should be pursued in educational, preventive and rehabilitation activities, one can indicate the following direction related to the formation of identity constantly discovering oneself and others. It is based on the ability to reflectively go beyond oneself and develop the ability to discover *others*, to look at oneself from the perspective of other people, to notice and understand each other, the ability to dialogue, to have an endless, continuous conversation with oneself and, above all, with other people. Awareness of one's own autonomy (one's own self), and at the same time, a sense of bond with *We*, i.e. the family, local environment, the parish, through national, European, continental and global *Me* and *We* (Nikitorowicz, 2009).

The conclusions drawn from the analysis and interpretation of the data provide a basis for the formulation of practical guidelines for educators in social rehabilitation centers. The presented analyses may constitute a foundation for the construction of theoretical pedagogical foundations for educators, teachers and pedagogues to be used in the development of individual educational programs,

prevention strategies and prevention programs aimed at reducing antisocial behaviors of the young generation. This search is a part of the current of activities that M. Konopczyński (2014, p. 117) defines as creative, of a developmental character, aimed at strengthening the potentials of charges by shaping not only cognitive structures of youth, but also designing methodological influences (Konopczyński, 2014).

The advantages of a multilateral view of the sense of territorial identification are rather undeniable for the social rehabilitation pedagogy. By identifying an individual with a specific territory, spontaneous activity expressed in socially acceptable behaviors can be triggered, which in turn can lead to a sense of community. By stimulating specific identification processes in local, regional and national environments, actions can be taken to shape and integrate the individual with the immediate community. The issue of identification means at the same time the diversity of civic and individual (subjective) aspects (Kłoskowska, 1992, 1996).

Our own research focused on mutual relationships between territorial identity and antisocial behavior. In the context of further studies, it is worthwhile to broaden the scope of the analysis, taking into account, for example, the importance of other types of behavior: for example, broadly understood socially acceptable behavior.

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