

Churski, P. ed.: The social and economic growth vs. the emergence of economic growth and stagnation areas. Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznań, 2014, 197 p.

It hardly needs proof that the social and economic growth has been characterized by polarization. This phenomenon results in an emergence of the economic growth and stagnation areas all over East Central Europe. The distribution of these areas and its variability are affected by diverse growth factors which lead to convergence or divergence of the growth rate. This book containing nine chapters attempts to identify and interpret the different consequences of increasing growth diversity on the basis of international research project carried out between 2011 and 2014 in Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia.

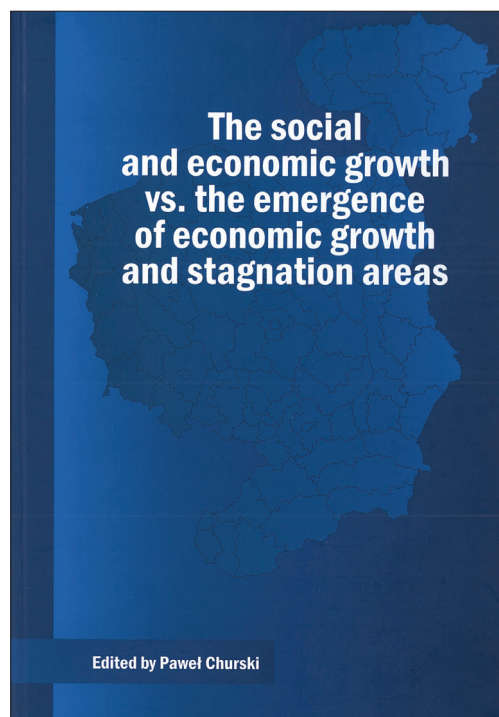
The first chapter by Paweł CHURSKI ('The polarization-diffusion model in changes to cohesion policy – consequences for the direction of growth policy') is of introductory and theoretical nature. Its goal is to establish the role of the polarization-diffusion model in the changes to the European Union's cohesion policy. At a time of frequently indicated lack of effectiveness of the compensation model, the polarization-diffusion model is viewed as the basis for the new paradigm in

the member states' regional policies conditioning the changed direction of the growth policy intervention. The presented facts and trends as well as a discussion conducted by the author provide an important basis for conclusion drawn with respect to the results presented in the remaining chapters of this volume.

The main goal of the chapter developed by Anna BOROWCZAK and Michał DOLATA ('Distribution of the economic growth and stagnation areas in Poland in 2000–2010') was an analysis of the distribution of the economic growth and stagnation areas and its variability in time, carried out with respect to research into the extent and dynamics of social and economic growth in a total system approach. This distribution was identified for 379 Polish counties with respect to the timeframe of 2000–2010 where the synthetic indicator and data clustering were employed. The adopted spatial arrangements makes it possible to view the polarization processes in the context of the distribution of areas with diverse conditioning of the developmental processes which stem from the contemporary globalization processes as well as the remaining relic divisions of Poland's economic space. The conclusions drawn in this article have been used in the subsequent two chapters to form a content-related entirety.

The article by Robert PERDAŁ and Jan HAUKE ('Areas of the economic growth and stagnation in Poland – growth factors') focuses on the issue of identifying and analysing important factors determining the distribution and development of economic growth and stagnation areas in a total system and partial approach with respect to the selected aspects of the process. The procedure of identifying growth factors was based on a canonical correlation analysis and regressive modelling. The research procedure was conducted for all the counties as well as their specific sub-systems. This allows to identify the regularities related to the approach of the territorially-oriented growth policy.

The goal of the chapter prepared by Joanna DOMINIĄK and Barbara KONECKA-SZYDŁOWSKA ('The effect of the crisis on the socio-economic situation of households based on the example of Wielkopolska') is an attempt at identifying the impact of the crisis on the social and economic condition of households. The research was illustrated with the example of Wielkopolska province broken down to the social and economic growth and stagnation areas identified in this region at NUTS 4, on the basis of an analysis of



Poland's total developmental variations. 1,988 representative households were surveyed with respect to changes to different factors (e.g. the unemployment rate among the household members, the income size and structure, running expenses borne by the households, household depths, the ways of spending free time etc.) in the time of crisis. Again, attention was attracted to the regularities resulting from the specificity of the endogenous resources and exogenous conditioning in the economic growth and stagnation areas in a search for the related commonalities and differences.

The series of chapters referring to Poland was closed a paper written by Joanna DOMINIĄK ('The impact of the economic crisis on the business environment service market, based on the example of Wielkopolska'). It includes an analysis of the operations of the business environment service market in Wielkopolska province in the conditions of economic downturn in Poland after 2008. The research was based on the field work in the province and was concerned on 32 business environment institutions. 220 companies rendering commercial business services and 737 entrepreneurs. Due to the fact that they are located mainly in large cities in the course of analysis of the social and economic growth, they were included into the growth areas. The questionnaire survey was carried out in the formerly identified growth areas (Poznań, Konin, Kalisz, Leszno and Poznań county). An analysis of the demand part of the business environment takes into consideration the identified stagnation areas also (Ślupca, Kalisz and Pleszew counties). On the one hand the research was aimed at analysing the changes to the range of impact of the business environment institutions and the changes to the scope of services rendered by them and their financial condition in the time of crisis. On the other hand the author identifies the changes to the intensity and scope of relations between companies and business environment institutions during the economic crisis.

The second part of the book starts with the article of Pavol KOREC ('Lagging regions of Slovakia in the context of their competitiveness'). Its goal is to provoke a discussion on selected issues of the theory and methodology and regional research into competitiveness and the empirical results of the analysis of the competitiveness of Slovak regions with special emphasis placed on the country's less developed regions.

The next chapter written by Gintarė POCIŪTĖ focuses on one of Poland's neighbouring countries ('Trends

of imbalances of demographic and socio-economic development in the post-reform period in Lithuania'). The goal of this article was to identify the most significant trends in the irregular social and economic growth in Lithuania in the past two decades. To this end the author analysed the developmental deviation from the average for selected demographic and socio-economic variables. She also identifies lagging regions which are peripheral ones at all.

A long-titled chapter authored by Paweł CHURSKI, Donatas BURNEIKA and Pavol KOREC ('Areas of economic growth and areas of stagnation as objects of special intervention under regional policies of the European Union member states: An international comparison') was an attempt for a comparison research for Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia. The goal of this analysis was to identify the developmental differences in the economic growth and stagnation areas and the direction of the regional policy intervention in these regions in these three new EU member states. The research results offer a considerable cognitive benefit resulting from the standardised systematization of the surveyed issues for these countries, overcoming some of the objective limitations related to non-existent comparable data on the subject.

The last chapter of the book called 'Research methodology of spatial variability of socio-economic development at the sub-regional level' developed by four authors, Dovilė KRUPICKAITĖ, Jan HAUKE, Barbara KONECKA-SZYDŁOWSKA and Robert PERDÅL combines two aspects of research. The first one is an analysis of the diversity of social and economic growth in the population and settlement aspect in a supra-national dimension. The other aspect consisted in testing three different methods of identifying the growth and stagnation areas which leads to interesting cognitive conclusions of methodological nature.

A great number of carefully edited coloured and black-and-white maps make more chapters very attractive while demonstrate the distribution of both the growth areas and areas of economic stagnation on NUTS4 level between 2000 and 2010 in Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania.

This comprehensive book is highly recommended for geographers, economist, sociologists and politicians as well as wider audience interested in the problems of regional and economic inequalities of nowadays' East Central Europe.

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