

INTRODUCTION

The processes of shaping of spatial structures of industry occur with different intensity. This applies both to particular scales of spatial layout and branches of industry. Changing market, technological and financial conditions have the main influence on these processes. Economic crisis in a significant way disrupts the functioning of spatial-division structures, as it hinders the further development of markets, obtaining of financing sources, and upgrading production technologies. The most important factors in this case are financial liquidity of business, which can stimulate or halt the productive and service activity, as well as financial situation of other units of economy, which can differently influence the market mechanisms. Nowadays, a number of companies and institutions, as well as individual households, possess significant financial resources. Nevertheless, those resources are not used due to the instability of national and world economy in times of political fluctuations.

The presented volume refers to those trends. The topics chosen by the authors concentrate on determining the influence that the economic crisis has on changes in the spatial structure of industry. The problems are analyzed both a theoretical way and as case studies of empirical data, which includes examples of functioning of selected industry branches, selected companies, as well as the workings of said sector in selected regions.

By analyzing the influence of the economic crisis on the spatial structure of industry, the importance and impact of economic rules was determined, alongside with the directions of change within the structures, measuring methods for industrial potential, and the changing role of enterprises in the spatial structure of industry. This became the background for possible activity of companies. A good illustration of how spatial structures of industry are formed in fluctuating economic conditions is the article on the automotive industry in Brazil. The author pays special attention to changes in the dynamics of production, economic potential, the attractiveness of particular regions in terms of providing favorable conditions for development and risk of a downturn. The economic crisis affected individual branches of industry with different intensity. IT corporations remained relatively unharmed, as their revenue and break-up value did not change in a significant way. The same is true for production of busses. In order to increase their competitiveness, a number of companies from particular branches of industry start to form new organizational schemes, which is best illustrated by the emergence of the cluster of furniture producers.

The economic crisis affects also the financial condition of individual companies, which is visible in the analysis of the activity of European corporations. This issue was presented by analyzing the rankings of the biggest European corporations and their influence on the economic potential of European countries. Another approach to said issue is studying the EU corporate governance framework especially in the context of corporate social responsibility.

It was also highlighted that the research and development activity has a profound influence on changes in the spatial structure of businesses, as it facilitates the introduction of new and more competitive products. Even though the economic crisis had a strong influence on some of the branches of industry, on regional level the companies did not observe as drastic changes as on the global level. As a result of the crisis the regional spatial-division structures also undergo some changes, which is particularly visible in the case of the Malopolska region and Irkutsk.

As a result of improving the quality of life, actions are taken in order to improve the state of the natural environment. This provides better conditions of living for the society. Such actions cause the weakening of the activity of branches that have the most negative effect on the environment (mainly energy industry) and enable better interaction between other branches of industry and the natural environment. They are also in line with the current energy policy of the EU, which proposes to replace traditional resources (mainly coal) with renewable sources. In such a case, the issue of revitalization of post-mining grounds which are possible environmental hazards. In order to limit their negative impact, options for their recultivation are discussed (which include making them a tourist attraction). All this is presented in the last article.

Zbigniew Ziolo, Tomasz Rachwał