

Introduction

In the context of increasing globalisation and European integration processes, industrial activities, which demonstrate a gradually growing tendency to concentrate decisions, organisation and production, play an important role. This tendency is realised through a mounting concentration of capital and production activities within expanded transnational industrial corporations which results from the development of own production plants, localisation of new branches, as well as the merger of existing firms into own organisational structures. The essential motivating factor behind this process is the drive of particular corporations to a systematic increase of competitiveness of offered products and expanding into new bigger markets, among others by way of modernising own products and reducing production costs. A new research area for industrial geography is opened, which simultaneously requires a constant development of methodology and improvement of analysis methods of complex processes in order to prepare appropriate research tools to form rational change processes of different industrial structures – beginning with enterprises or local units through regional and country structures to world-wide global arrangement.

The work included in this volume refers to these important and highly contemporary research issues. The papers generally concern the problem of enterprise formation and industrial structures in the process of growing globalisation.

Implementing the model of geographical space, Z. Ziolo (Pedagogical University, Kraków) presents a model of interconnections between an industrial enterprise and its structural elements, enterprise functions in its economic setting and the impact of globalisation processes on the company conduct.

A. Wieluński (Warsaw University) presents the role of modern branches of industry in the contemporary economy putting special emphasis on the development of information and telecommunication technologies and production potential of world companies which represent it.

T. Strykiewicz and J. Wajda (the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) discuss new structures of capital groups and their research problems presenting fundamental notions and the formation process of leading Polish capital groups: KGHM Polska Miedź (Polish Copper) S.A. and OPTIMUS S.A.

Z. Makieła (Pedagogical University, Kraków) deals with the globalisation process in the development of transport network focusing on the evaluation of the diversity within the European transportation system, and the required directions of the restructuring of national transport in that context.

L. Pakuła (Pedagogical University, Kraków) concentrates on the restructuring directions of Upper-Silesia Industrial Region in the globalisation period emphasizing the changes of the fuel-energy and steel-works and metallurgy complex. Similar issues are undertaken by M. Tkocz (University of Silesia, Katowice) who demonstrates attempts at incorporating industry of the Silesia Region in the structures of world economy mainly through direct foreign investments.

Social and economic aspects of Poland's competitiveness in the context of globalisation are discussed by A. Stańczyk (the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), whereas W. Gierańczyk (the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) presents the competitive aspects of Polish industry.

Transnational companies play an important role in globalisation processes, and their problems are dealt with in papers on selected characteristics of the activities of transnational corporations and their influence on Poland (S. Sala, Świetokrzyska Academy, Kielce), formation processes of IBM international corporation (E. Wajda and M. Zorić-Wołek, Pedagogical University, Kraków) and the spatio-organisational structure of the General Motors Corporation (E. Wajda and K. Zalewska, Pedagogical University, Kraków).

Globalisation processes determine the formation of industrial structures in regional dimension, which is documented by T. Rachwał (Pedagogical University, Kraków) using the example of restructuring activities of industrial enterprises in South-Eastern Poland.

As it appears, the presented work develops successfully new and very complex issues in the context of industrial geography, which, on the one hand concerns the impact of globalisation processes on the formation of transnational industrial corporations, and on the other, the conduct of industrial enterprises facing new conditions resulting from the increase of those processes. It should be acknowledged that the analysis of this research area constitutes one of the fundamental objectives of contemporary geography of industry. As Poland is at the verge of entering European structures, familiarity with global processes is indispensable in order to shape regional and local structures in a rational and effective way, as well as in order to conduct activities of a particular company adequately. It is a necessity for effective measures to be taken with respect to increasing their competitive value through building and strengthening economic, social, capital, information and research ties with various market areas.

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