

INTRODUCTION

An important notion in the functioning of market economy is realising and understanding the mechanisms and conditions influencing the development of business entities. Said development is made possible by certain spatial conditions of both regional and local level. It is closely connected with the functions that the business entities serve, as well as with their impact on socio-economic space. Thus, learning of the features and behaviour of spatial systems, in particular local and regional systems, in economic transformations is a crucial topical problem. The already-mentioned systems, depending on their location and functions within the national space, are characterised by significant diversification of both potential and structure. Therefore, it is important to undertake actions aiming at a more and more precise study of those systems and their influence on different business entities in order to rationally manage economic processes. As the importance of local government units in space management increases, so does the responsibility for stimulating their development in order to not only increase their competitiveness, but also to have impact on the level and quality of living of the society. That is why progress in research on the development of local and regional systems in the process of economic transformations appears to be one of key tasks. It is worth mentioning that those transformations were at first strictly connected to the political system changes. Currently, however, they occur mainly due to European and World conditions.

The present volume comprises of articles dealing with various aspects of transformations of local and regional systems occurring under the influence of the functioning of business entities. S. Dorocki and P. Struś point to significant spatial diversity of the dynamics of development of local systems in Lesser Poland Voivodeship. They analyse selected socio-economic factors that illustrate the direction and tendencies of development of the region.

Financial resources play a vital role in the processes of transformations of local and regional systems. Their potential depends, among others, on the capacity of acquiring funds for realising projects. This topic is studied by A. Mrozińska in a paper devoted to the effectiveness of acquiring EU funds for projects realised by cities in the period of 2007–2013. In this context, A. Golejewska emphasises the vital importance of development of innovative potential of a region. The theory is supported by empirical examples of innovative activity of selected entities in the Pomeranian Voivodeship analysed by the author.

The development of economic activity occurs on the basis of microeconomic profits which results in concentrating the activity in the most profitable and thus attractive location. Most often, the main criterion for choosing a location is the degree to which a particular area will raise the economic effectiveness of the activity. This problem is studied by P. Brezdeń and R. Szmytkie as they analyse the processes of concentration

of industry in the suburban areas in the biggest cities of Lower Silesia. They emphasise that currently suburban areas of prominent cities provide the best conditions for economic activity.

An important factor of development of spatial systems is their proximity to significant business entities of international and national character. M. Dyszy provides examples of such a notion in her article devoted to the economic activity development in a rural area located in the vicinity of the Katowice-Pyrzowice airport. The location allows for the growth of business entities that are both directly and indirectly connected with the functioning of the airport, such as transportation and warehousing, as well as other entities contributing to raising the quality of life of local residents.

In increasing the competitiveness of local systems, the development of new technologies for information flows plays a crucial role (G. Chaberek-Karwacka). They are used in logistics processes in the cities and, as they decrease the need for human flow, help solve the problem of congestion.

In times of changes in economy and of social transformations, various functions of already existing local centres change as well. This process witnesses the disappearance of numerous functions, usually connected to manufacturing, that did not handle the competition of market economy. At the same time, commercial and services functions are strengthened as a result of the growth in one-man businesses. This problem is illustrated by A. Brzosko-Sermak, M. Płaziak and P. Trzepacz as they discuss the transformations of commercial and services functions in Nowa Huta (Krakow) in the context of changes in the profile of business entities.

Processes of socio-economic transformations connected to changes in economy occur not only in Poland, but in the majority of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As A. Kuzyshyn and I. Poplavska, emphasise they are happening in Ukraine as well. Changes are most significant and noticeable in terms of social transformations, demographic changes included, as their reaction to economy changes are the most rapid and the strongest.

We realise that research on the development of local and regional systems needs to be further expanded, due to its topicality and the need for effective management of said systems. Further analysis will allow for a more detailed study on the mechanisms of transformation, an evaluation, as well as for setting goals and selecting methods of managing the development process. For we believe that through increasing the effectiveness of management, transformations of spatial systems should positively influence the level and quality of living of the society.

Zbigniew Ziolo, Tomasz Rachwał