

## INTRODUCTION

Social, economic and cultural transformations are to a considerable extent stimulated by the progressing development of productive forces. They are connected with introducing innovative solutions into production processes, modernizing the services, and raising the quality of institution functioning. These processes are observable in the implementation of new production technologies, new forms of work organization, and new forms of management, with attention being paid to their effects on the society. The intensification of these processes is to a large extent affected by the imposed social, economic and cultural policy, which produces particular conditions for the development of basic research in science, research and development tasks, implementation of the results in economic activity and raising the quality of institution functioning. Taking these steps is indispensable for systematic improvement of competitiveness of the offered products and services, and for raising the attractiveness of spatial structures of various scale, in order to generate the internal, and attract the external developmental factors.

In this respect, it is crucial to aim at ever more precise understanding of the mechanisms of innovative processes formation, and to determine their influence on the development of competitive economic entities, efficient institutions, which enable quicker-paced progress in the national, regional, or local economy. Steps taken to this end seem indispensable, as more and more areas of the world pass from industrial and postindustrial economy on to the information stage, in which the economic base is science, and the whole economy relies on knowledge. This, in a considerable degree, leads to the internationalization of production, extension of market areas, and exchange of capital, technologies, and management methods. In turn, this situation significantly contributes to the intensification of globalization processes and the associated processes of European integration.

The growing complexity of these processes is also due to the appearance of new global growth poles, besides the US, Japan, and the EU. They are China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa, which will gradually come to play a more significant role in the political and economic life, and will influence the intensification of competition between the countries, concerning the resources supply and the available markets.

In the light of the presented premises, it must be assumed that it is especially important to aim at a more precise understanding of the formative mechanisms of these complex processes, with a view to creating the grounds for the development of a rational structure of the economic, social and cultural space. This idea became the point of reference for the Authors representing various geographical studies centres, in which these vital research issues are undertaken in the field of industrial geography. In the present volume, the emphasis is put mainly on the analysis of innovativeness development in companies representing different economic branches, and on the investigation of spatial structures, changing under their influence.

The introductory studies, concerning the position that innovativeness occupies in shaping the processes of economic development of spatial structures in the field of geography, provide general background for the specific empirical studies, concerning selected companies (Z. Ziolo, K. Lidin). In these works, attention is paid to the formation of innovative processes, their place in the national economy structure, the role of military factors in motivating the innovative activities of companies, the influence of the social climate on innovativeness development, the expenses allocated to research and development, the position of Poland in the global innovativeness structure, and the proposals of new research-methodological approaches to the problems.

Another set of articles includes works presenting the considerable influence that innovativeness has on the activities of global IT corporations (R. Uliszak, N. Grad, M. Boguś), the biotechnology sector (S. Dorocki, J.P. Jastrzębski, P. Dawidko) and the motor industry (P. Lizak). The influence of innovativeness is also noticeable in the defence industry, which constitutes an important segment in the economic growth (P.L. Wilczyński). In the result of intensified competitiveness processes, also the traditional sectors, like coal mining, adapt to the changing conditions (M. Tkocz, A. Heder). The importance of the market for the development of innovative products, resulting from the preferences of the consumers, is also emphasised (A.I. Szymańska).

Promoting innovative activities requires new organization as regards the development of intellectual capital and financial and legal cooperation, which is illustrated by the emergence of franchise networks (I. Mashkina, K. Lidin, T. Baranov, A. Świętek). As for creating innovativeness, universities are important centres, as they influence the development and implementation of new solutions in the structure of business incubators (M. Godowska).

It is emphasised that – besides production activity and paying attention to economic results – an important issue in the development of global corporations is their social responsibility with respect to the principles of ethics (K. Kowalska).

We do believe that the presented examples of studies offer a deeper insight into important research issues, concerning innovative behaviours of companies, and highlight their importance in the research field of industrial geography. We hope that the research will be continued in other studies, therefore we would like to encourage all researchers to publish their research results in the next volumes of „Prace Komisji Geografii Przemysłu Polskiego Towarzystwa Geograficznego”.

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