

INTRODUCTION

Intensifying economic, social, cultural connections and changes in political relationships between countries significantly influence the directions of transformations and possibilities of development of the world and European space, as well as national, regional and local systems. Thus market relations and the changing political situation require constant monitoring in order to properly stimulate and utilize emerging development opportunities. In this regard, a systematic observation of the process plays a vital role. It enables the effective use of the possibility of activation of potential, in particular of national, regional and local systems. In the changing conditions the role and capacity of local authorities increases. They can, to a certain degree, make use of the situation to create possibilities for business development, attracting foreign capital, and implementing new solutions, resulting from the progress of civilisation. In this context of vital importance are the intellectual resources and the use of human and social capital at the disposal of the local government unit. It should be noted that individual phenomena and their development level in different spatial systems sometimes have different growth possibilities, hence studying them, apart from theoretical and cognitive value, can also have application meaning and serve rational management of regional and local structures.

Works included in the present volume refer to the afore-mentioned topics. They are concerned mainly with the selected issues of shaping of regional and local structures.

In development process of key importance is the quality of human capital which stems from the generational change. This is influenced by modern living conditions which caused the longer life expectancy and changed the co-existence of generations. As a consequence, the labour market observes the existence of two groups – older and younger generation. On this basis, generational differences in work resources and their spatial differentiation regarding regions for the years 2003–2016 have been identified. The authors indicate possibilities of using the synergic effect by creating inter-generational teams in order to eliminate the negative effects of generational diversity (H. Godlewska-Majkowska, J. Lipiec).

Economic activity occurs in changing conditions resulting from the possibility of using rules of intensifying civilisation progress, which also relates to the shaping and managing of small and medium companies. Based on the example of the Greater Poland voivodeship, it was indicated that in this regard, conditions and possibilities of innovative activity, especially during the transition to the fourth industrial revolution, play an important role. Considered the most important factors stimulating innovation activity are as follows: conducting own R&D activity, co-operation with scientific and research institutions and institutions in the business environment (H. Mizgajska, Ł. Wściubiak). In this context, modern business services play a special role as well. They

have a significant impact on the opportunities for the development of innovative business entities in the West Pomerania voivodeship (K. Łobacz, Ł. Klimek, P. Niedzielski). Nowadays, at a basic level, innovation and R&D influence economic development. They affect the growth of the value of industrial production and can eliminate the delays in development of spatial systems (A. Świadek, M. Szajt). Investments create major opportunities for growth and socio-economic changes of local systems. This is indicated by the issue of development of tourist, recreational, sports, health, and housing infrastructure, as well as development of business entities within the urban-rural commune of Uniejów (K. Kulawiak, T. Rachwał, K. Smętkiewicz). An important factor in the economic development of spatial systems is territorial marketing concerning especially the indication of local sites attractive for new investment opportunities (N. Derlukiewicz, A. Mempel-Śnieżyk, T. Pilewicz, M. Zdon-Korzeniowska).

World Economic Centres have the primary influence on the direction and pace of development of economy. This is indicated by the level of resistance of the command and control function in the US cities. The authors indicated that in the majority of American cities, the number of headquarters has dropped, but at the same time their resistance to the crisis increased (P. Raźniak, S. Dorocki, A. Winiarczyk-Raźniak). A similar mechanism of governance and change of the command and control function was discussed in relation to European cities. In Europe, it was noticed that the gravity centre of said function was shifted in the Eastern direction. As a result, the importance of Britain and Germany in this context has decreased (S. Dorocki, P. Raźniak, A. Winiarczyk-Raźniak).

Changing geopolitical situation affects the relationships between global military powers and shaping of a particular defence policy. This issue was discussed based on the example of changes in production structures of the national defence industry, in reference to the United States and Western European countries (D. Klimek). Transport infrastructure plays an important role in European, national and regional development. Of particular importance appears to be railway transport. The authors reached such a conclusion by analysing the development of production and modernisation of railway rolling stock (S. Wojtkiewicz, T. Bocheński).

In the years of economic transformation numerous companies did not have the possibility to adapt to the new conditions of management. This issue was studied based on the example of the decline of "Diora" Factory and changes in the post-industrial area, which was taken over by "Kaufland", the biggest hypermarket in town, as well as developing new service zone (W. Jurkowski). As a result of specific economic policy and technological progress, the function of individual branches of industry in economic development changes. As an example can serve the change of the role of metallurgy in Italian region of Campania (M. Noviello). Of great importance in terms of economic development of a country and regional systems is the possibility of international trade links. The mechanism of this process was illustrated using the example of ties between Turkey and Poland (M.G. Dziwornu, T. Rachwał).

As a result of development, the meaning of services, IT services in particular, increases. In order to rationally manage the activities of a company, access to adequate information is vital. This is also applicable for the analysis of socio-economic development processes in spatial systems. In this context, the issue of integrated gathering and sharing information necessary, among others, for planning the development of enterprises, diagnosis and assessment of directions of development of socio-economic spatial systems (B. Stelmach-Fita, M. Pękalska, P. Bartoszczuk). Development of service

activities refers to the socio-economic potential of cities. This issue was discussed based on the example of cities with sub-regional functions. On the basis of the classification and recognition of common services, the correctness of the hierarchical model of locating services on the sub-regional level was defined (J. Sołtys, S. Dorocki).

Cultural institutions, defined lately as cultural industry, play an important role in the development of urban agglomerations. The issue was presented using the example of Wrocław. During the diagnostic phase of study, it was established that cultural industry includes: publishing, music, film, and television industry, as well as new media, including computer games (B. Namyślak).

In the process of development of local systems, tourism plays a vital role. This is indicated by a review of tourism and recreation publications which appeared in Poland in 2000–2017 and were labour-related (D. Piróg).

We encourage you to research further the issues undertaken in the present volume, in order to more precisely study the properties of processes of socio-economic and cultural changes, as well as to indicate the opportunities of using them in managing business entities and spatial systems of different scale, in particular those of regional and local character.

Zbigniew Ziolo, Tomasz Rachwał