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PRESENT-DAY ISSUES OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNES BASED ON THE PODLASKIE VOIVODESHIP

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Abstract: Social and economic development is characterised by its spatial diversity. Its conditions on local level usually occur on a larger scale on regional level. Thus, the analysis of development on local level is not only substantively justified but also constitutes an elaboration of particular elements of the regional development. The main goal of this article is to analyse the indicators of local development using the example of the Podlaskie voivodeship considering the division into rural, urban-rural and urban communes. The method consists in a synthetic indicator based on sub-indicators which cover aspects of social and economic development. The main conclusion is that local development will depend less and less on 'hard' infrastructure investment and more and more on qualitative aspects, especially as far as urban-rural communes in Podlaskie are concerned.

Keywords: social development, economic development, Podlaskie voivodeship.

1. Introduction

Development, understood as the permanent improvement of conditions for management and living in a certain area has been the subject of interest of economists both in the local and regional aspects. The processes constituting regional and local development are generally undifferentiated, yet the difference between them is the scale, level of complexity and the size of synergistic effect (Szewczuk, 2011, p. 30).

Conditions and issues of local level development usually exist on a larger scale in the regional perspective. However, the averaged value of the examined feature for the particular region might not fully reflect internal local variations. Thus the analysis of the social-economic processes on local level is not only justified, but also constitutes an elaboration of particular elements of the regional development.

In Poland the unit of municipal government identified with the local aspect is a commune, which since 1990 has been the main municipal authority (Ustawa z dnia 8 marca..., 1990). The main division of communes in Poland is based on rural communes, urban-rural communes and urban communes (some communes perform the tasks of districts, i.e. city with county [‘powiat’] rights). Within this division, one can distinguish the opportunities and threats of local development, but the conditions of the development are often based on different factors within particular groups. Due to the above, the main goal of this paper is the analysis of factors of local development in the social and economic aspect based on the Podlaskie voivodeship. The division into rural communes, urban-rural communes and urban communes is also considered. As a result, it is possible to determine the present-day issues of the social and economic development of the communes.

The author used the method of the construction of a synthetic indicator, allowing to rank the examined units. To formulate the synthetic indicator, selected sub-indicators were used, divided into social and economic sphere. Due to the space limitations of this article, all the processes contributing to the complexity of local development were not possible to discuss, however within those two spheres, a set of factors allowing to analyse static and dynamic development was determined. The years of 2008 and 2018 were considered as the years of intensive development of local government, which resulted from, among others, the availability of EU funds. The Local Data Bank (Central Statistical Office in Poland) was the source of the mentioned data. The literature on local development was discussed in the theoretical section.

2. Local development in theoretical perspective

Local development is a process understood as positive changes, including all the aspects determining business activity and human existence in specified areas. What also should be noted is that development is the result of changes covering both the quantitative increase and qualitative progress in economic, social and environmental systems (Markowski, 2008, p. 13). As a consequence, local development can be defined when quantitative and qualitative changes are visible in particular systems without aggravating the condition of others.

However, the identification of local development is difficult. If one accepts a commune as a unit of local development, it needs to be noted that the commune acts and develops a part of a region. This means that the commune uses goods, external services and funds, and transfers the latter to the external entities (Brol,

1998, pp. 10-11). One might say that identifying local development faces two main problems. Firstly, it is difficult (in most cases) to differentiate between local and regional development. Secondly, local development covers all aspects of existence and human activity; it is a subjective matter to determine its meaning and hierarchy of importance to local development.

The features of local development are complexity and interdisciplinarity, in other words, local development is multifaceted and multi-layered (Sienkiewicz, 2019, p. 31), and it is connected to the differences in various areas of life of local community (economic, social, cultural etc.). What is more, those changes are the result of the influence of particular development factors. The classification of development factors usually entails the division into external and internal, macroeconomic and microeconomic, hard, soft and spatial aspects (Jakubowska, 2013, pp. 177-180), whereas some definitions directly condition local development on endogenous resources (Dawkins, 2003).

It needs to be noted that the conditioning of local development is mainly endogenous, i.e. development occurs in the relations and interactions between different areas of life of a particular community within locally described resources (Korenik, 2013, pp. 31-32). Contemporary endogenous development is defined by the natural environment which not only generates development conditioning but also creates the necessity of the economical and efficient management of natural resources according to the guidelines of sustainable local development (Milán-García, Uribe-Toril, Ruiz-Real, & de Pablo Valenciano, 2019, pp. 1-2).

The indicator, according to its definition, ought to be a controllable element from the point of view of the entities responsible for the organisation of particular activities and life of local residents. As a consequence, the creation and strengthening of local factors of development is the goal and substance of local development policy which may be conducted on different levels. Contrary to the vision of development based on external factors (Capello, 2011, p. 7), the vision of development created for local communities seems to be the most effective. In the contemporary economy, the policy of development on national level is necessary but insufficient because on local level the conducted policy is more effective (Porter, 2000, p. 16) because it takes into account local conditions. What also needs to be underlined is the fact that in the case of individual territorial units, one might distinguish both the different goals defined by the community, and the differentiated set of development factors. As indicated by Brol, the complexity of local development is a consequence of the multiplicity of goals, and the variety of goals and activities (Brol, 1998, pp. 9-10).

To sum up, development is a process of a multifaceted character (economic, social, cultural, environmental etc.). Contrary to the general understanding of the term, the local aspect emphasises the importance of local conditions and factors of an endogenous nature occurring in a given area.

3. Social-economic development of the Podlaskie voivodeship

The Podlaskie voivodship comprises an area of 20 817 km², i.e. 6.5% of the total area of Poland. It is the least populated region in Poland (59 people per square metre). Within this area there are 118 communes, including 13 urban communes (3 cities with county right), 78 rural communes and 27 urban-rural communes (Statystyczne Vademecum Samorządowca, 2019, p. 1). In the analysis below, three cities with county rights were excluded because their development is based on different conditions.

In local terms, the level of development can be evaluated with the use of the appropriate set of indicators, yet this method has two main disadvantages. Firstly, the complexity of the examined subject considerably restricts the full description of the examined process. Secondly, the choice of indicators is subjective and constitutes the result of the author's assumptions, availability of data and subject literature. However, the indicator analysis is used to describe the social and economic processes and has a comparative role, which makes it possible to rank the examined subjects or group them. A similar approach was used in this paper, the choice of indicators concerned mainly those aspects which determined social and economic development with the available data. The explanation of why a given sub-indicator was chosen to construct the synthetic indicator is presented in Table 1 (see Heffner & Gibas, 2013, pp. 225-228).

Table 1. Sub-indicators used to construct the synthetic indicator

Sub-indicator	Explanation
1	2
1. Social area	
1.1. water-pipe system users' participation	The indicator corresponds with living standards; the higher the share of users, the higher the quality of life.
1.2. sewage system users' participation	The indicator refers to technical infrastructure; the higher share of users, the better the infrastructural conditions for development.
1.3. flats per thousand residents	The indicator corresponds with the residential conditions; the higher the level, the better the living conditions.
1.4. medical centres per 10 thousand residents	The indicator represents the quality of the healthcare system; the higher the level, the better the quality of health system services.
1.5. environmental social benefits users' range	The indicator shows the scale of social problems; the higher the level, the bigger the burden on development.
1.6. artistic group members per thousand residents	The indicator testifies to cultural environment; the higher the level, the higher the level of creativeness.
1.7. sports club members per thousand residents	The indicator correspond with the sport activity; the higher the level, the more active and creative the citizens are.

1	2
2. Economic area	
2.1. income of communes and cities with county rights per capita	The indicator corresponds with wealth; the higher the level, the greater the financial resources for development.
2.2. unemployment (the participation in the group of people of working age)	The indicator corresponds with the situation on the labour market; the higher the unemployment rate, the worse the possibility of an individual's development.
2.3. business owners per thousand residents	The indicator presents the level of entrepreneurship; the higher the level, the more entrepreneurial the citizens.
2.4. foundations, associations and organisations per thousand residents	The indicator corresponds with business environment; the higher the level, the more business support institutions there are.

Source: own elaboration based on (Local Data Bank, 2020).

The highlighted sub-indicators were used to develop synthetic indicator for the years 2008 and 2018 within two distinguished spheres (social and economic) and three kinds of communes (urban, urban-rural and rural) separately. The comparison of urban and rural municipalities in one group could be without any interpretative value.

Among the selected diagnostic variables, stimulants and destimulants were highlighted, yet the process of their normalisation (enabling the comparison of particular fragmentary indicators bearing different labels) was conducted based on the following assumptions (Nowak, 1990, p. 89):

1. stimulants:

$$z_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\max \{x_{ij}\}},$$

where: z_{ij} – the value of i -sub-indicator to j -this year, $\max \{x_{ij}\}$ – maximum value of i -sub-indicator to j -this year.

2. destimulants:

$$z_{ij} = \frac{\min \{x_{ij}\}}{x_{ij}},$$

where: x_{ij} – the value of i -sub-indicator to j -this year, $\min \{x_{ij}\}$ – minimum value of i -sub-indicator to j -this year.

In the process of the construction of the synthetic indicator, it was decided that the sub-indicators are equivalent, thus the synthetic indicator was calculated by:

$$z_j = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m z_{ij},$$

where: z_j – the value of i -synthetic indicator to j -this year, m – the number of sub-indicators used in the model.

Furthermore, communes were divided into three classes that determine the level of social-economic development based on the synthetic indicator, i.e. lower level of development $\langle \min; \min+b \rangle$, medium level of development $\langle \min+b; \min+2b \rangle$ and higher level of development $\langle \min+2b; \max \rangle$. The value of b was calculated by:

$$b \cong \frac{R}{k},$$

where: b – class length, R – range (between the minimum and the maximum value of a feature in the set), k – class (where the examined features are grouped).

Taking into account the social aspect for urban communes in 2018, the group with the lowest level of development (five communes – 50%) was the biggest. Three communes were assigned to the higher level, the least numerous was the group of medium level of development (Table 2). In comparison to 2008, the group with a lower level of development was equally numerous, whereas the strength of the group

Table 2. Classes of local development of the Podlaskie voivodeship communes – social area

Communes	Higher level		Medium level		Lower level	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
	Urban communes					
number	2	3	3	2	5	5
name	Wysokie Maz. Sejny	Wysokie Maz. Sejny Brańsk	Zambrów Brańsk Siemiatyce	Zambrów Kolno	Grajewo Kolno Bielsk Podl. Hajnówka Augustów	Grajewo Siemiatyce Augustów Bielsk Podl. Hajnówka
	Urban-rural communes					
number	12	5	11	16	4	6
name	Czarna Biał., Czyżew, ... Ciechanowicz, Suraż	Michałowó, Wasilków, ... Knyszyn, Supraśl	Goniądz, Krynki, ... Nowogród, Tykocin	Czarna Biał. Krynki ... Tykocin, Drohiczyń	Stawiski, Rajgród, Lipsk, Jedwabne	Suchowola, Lipsk, ... Stawiski, Jedwabne
	Rural communes					
number	8	11	46	38	24	29
name	Narewka, Czeremcha, ... Gródek, Sokoły	Narewka, Czeremcha ... Dobrzyniewo Duże, Nowe Piekuty	Dubicze Cerkiew. Szumowo ... Grabowo, Zambrów	Suwałki, Piątница ... Klukowo, Janów	Augustów, Dziadkowice ... Kolno, Sejny	Dziadkowice Bielsk Podl. ... Zawady, Sejny

Source: own elaboration based on (Local Data Bank, 2020).

with a higher level of development was enlarged by one commune at the expense of the medium-level development group. In the group of urban-rural communes in 2018, the most numerous was the group with a medium level of local development (16 out of 27 examined units, i.e. 59%). In 2008 the most numerous was the group with a higher level of development (12 units), where in 2008 only five communes were found. Both in 2018 and 2008 the least numerous groups were those with a lower level of development, which constituted 25% and 5%, respectively. Regarding rural communes, the most numerous was the medium-level group (38 units, i.e. 49%); 11 units (i.e. 14%) belong to the group with a higher level of development, and 29 units (i.e. 37%) to the lower-development one. In comparison to 2008, the distribution of numbers is more diverse – the participation of groups with a higher and lower level has increased.

Considering economic aspect in regard to urban communes, in 2018 the communes with a lower and medium level of development were characterised by the same number, namely 80% of all communes in the Podlaskie voivodeship (Table 3). Only two communes (Wysokie Maz., Brańsk) reached a higher level. In 2008, 60% of communes were at a lower level of development, 30% – at a medium level and only one – at a higher level.

Table 3. Classes of local development of communes in the Podlaskie voivodeship – economic sphere

Communes	Higher level		Medium level		Lower level	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
Urban communes						
number	1	2	3	4	6	4
name	Brańsk	Wysokie Maz. Brańsk	Wysokie Maz. Sejny Siematycze	Siematycze Bielsk Podl. Sejny Augustów	Augustów Bielsk Podl. Hajnówka Kolno Grajewo Zambrów	Hajnówka Kolno Grajewo Zambrów
Urban-rural communes						
number	10	7	9	7	8	13
name	Drohiczyn, Suraż, ... Tykocin, Wasilków	Supraśl, Suraż, ... Tykocin, Wasilków	Nowogród, Jedwabne, ... Lipsk, Rajgród	Zabłudów, Ciechanowiec, ... Rajgród, Czarna Biał.	Wasilków, Michałowó, ... Łapy, Krynki	Szepietowo, Michałowó, ... Krynki, Lipsk
Rural communes						
number	3	7	21	40	54	31
name	Białowieża, Perlejewo, Mielnik	Białowieża, Suwałki ... Turośń Kośc., Dobrzyniewo Duże	Płaska, Brańsk, ... Przytuły, Wizna	Kołaki Kośc., Rutka-Tartak, ... Puńsk, Klukowo	Szumowo, Dziadkowice, ... Kuźnica, Nurzec Stacja	Augustów, Janów, ... Mały Płock, Nurzec Stacja

Source: own elaboration based on (Local Data Bank, 2020).

In the case of urban-rural communes in 2018, the most numerous group was with a lower level of development (13 communes, i.e. 48%). It should be noted that in 2008, 30% of units were assigned to this group. As a result, compared to 2008, one can see a decrease in the number of medium and higher development groups, which in 2018 accounted for 26% of units each. In the case of rural communes, the group with a medium level of development was the most numerous. In 2018, the group with a medium level of development accounted for 51% of the surveyed units, compared to 40% of the group with a lower level of development, and 9% of the group with a higher level of development. It should also be noted that in 2008 the distribution of the number of groups with a higher, medium and lower level of development was less favourable, and amounted to 4%, 27% and 69%, respectively (see Figure 1).

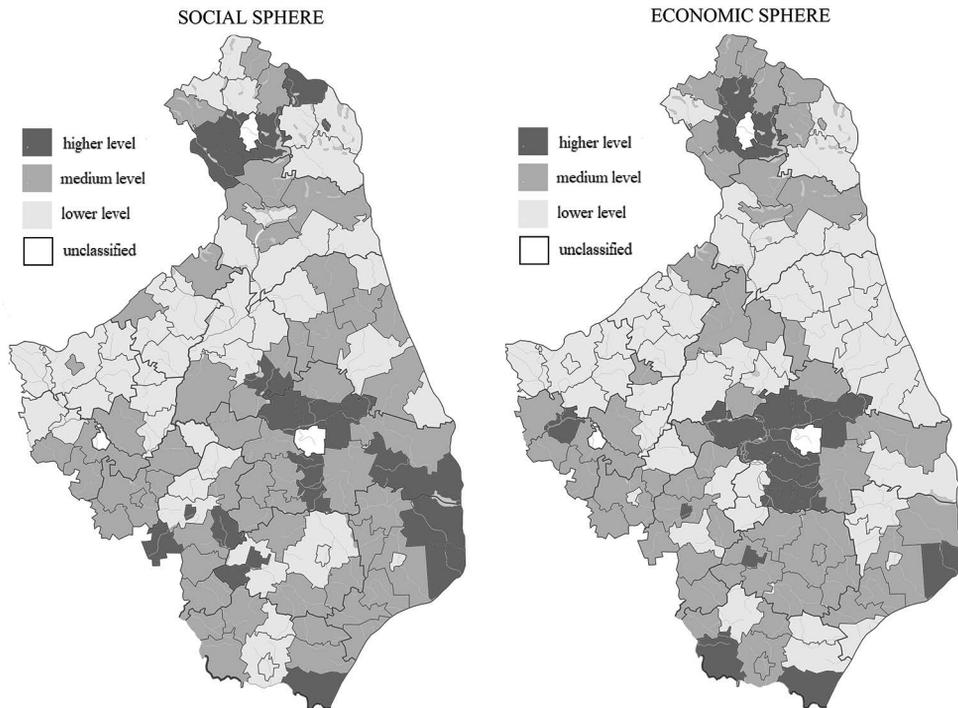


Fig. 1. The level of communes' development in the Podlaskie voivodeship in 2018

Source: own elaboration.

The analysis of spatial differentiation in the level of socio and economic development (Figure 1) allows to conclude that the units with the highest level of the studied process are concentrated mainly around the capital of the region (Białystok), and, to a lesser extent, around other significant urban centres (e. g. Suwałki). Units with the lowest level of development are concentrated in the northern part of the

region (except for the Suwałki region), in the strip from Kolno to Sokółka. It can therefore be assumed that the level of socio-economic development is significantly influenced by the proximity to the capital of the voivodeship, although the spatial range of the impact is limited. In this context, it should be noted that the main urban centres in Poland have narrow, but closely related zones of influence, and the level of development of metropolitan functions in Poland is low, as opposed to the neighbouring European countries (Heffner & Gibas, 2013, p. 235). In general, it can be assumed that in the intra-regional perspective, the distance from the capital is of significant importance for the level of development (Ziemiańczyk, 2010, pp. 37-38) and the level of local development is largely dependent on the processes taking place in the so-called development centres (Chrzanowska & Drejerska, 2016, p. 67). At EU level, the number of macroregions whose core areas developed faster than their hinterland was distinctly higher, the exceptions are some German, Spanish and Austrian regions (Smętkowski, Gorzelak, Kozak, & Olechnicka, 2011, p. 85).

The analysis also shows that in 2018, compared to 2008, in the group of urban communes the average value of the synthetic indicator increased by 5.2% in relation to the social sphere, and 8.5% in relation to the economic aspect (Table 4). For rural communes the increase was more dynamic, i.e. 7.4% in the social sphere and 12.2% in the economic aspect.

Table 4. Synthetic indicators* in 2008 and 2018 in the Podlaskie voivodeship

	Urban communes		Urban-rural communes		Rural communes	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
Social aspect						
average	0.62	0.66	0.50	0.49	0.37	0.40
max	0.77	0.78	0.64	0.72	0.61	0.69
min	0.51	0.57	0.26	0.26	0.19	0.20
range	0.25	0.21	0.38	0.46	0.42	0.48
Economic aspect						
average	0.66	0.72	0.63	0.65	0.38	0.43
max	0.83	0.86	0.75	0.80	0.66	0.65
min	0.59	0.63	0.50	0.53	0.27	0.28
range	0.24	0.23	0.26	0.26	0.38	0.37

* The values of synthetic indicators were calculated separately for urban, urban-rural and rural communes) and are not comparable between the categories.

Source: own elaboration based on (Local Data Bank, 2020).

In the case of urban-rural communes, although an increase (2.7%) was recorded in the economic sphere, with the dynamics much lower than for other groups. In the social aspect, however, the direction of changes was the opposite, i.e. the average

value of the synthetic indicator fell by 1.6%. In 2008 in the Podlaskie voivodeship, 12 communes were assigned to a high level of development, while in 2018 these were only 5 units.

4. Conclusions

The course of the conducted analyses serving to indicate the factors of local development in the social and economic aspect using the example of the Podlaskie voivodeship, taking into account the division into rural, urban and rural-urban communes, allows to formulate the following conclusions:

1. In the case of urban communes, the group with the lowest level of development in the social aspect was the most numerous; the communes with a low and medium level of development in the economic aspect were characterised by the same number.

2. In the case of urban-rural communes, the most numerous was the group with an average level of development in social terms and a lower level of development in economic terms.

3. In the case of rural communes, the most numerous was the group with an average level of development both in social and economic terms.

4. A comparative analysis of data from 2018 and 2008 allows for concluding that the most dynamic increase in the synthetic indicator concerned rural communes; a significant increase, although with a lower dynamics, was recorded for urban communes. On the other hand, for urban-rural communes, the value of the synthetic indicator for the social sphere decreased, while in the case of the economic sphere a slight increase was recorded.

The above conclusions are based on the level of the synthetic indicator. The analysis of subindicators makes it possible to additionally state that while indicators relating to the quality of life determined by infrastructure (sewage system, water supply, housing conditions) have improved in all communes, in the case of many units, indicators such as the availability of artistic groups or sports organisations have deteriorated, and in some units, also the indicators relating to healthcare.

These considerations allow to assume that the biggest development problems among the communes of the Podlaskie voivodeship are present in urban-rural communes. It should be noted here that the group's geographical location is varied, e.g. the Wasilków and Choroszcz communes are part of the Białystok agglomeration, which directly influences their development conditions. In general, on the basis of the synthetic indicator it can be concluded that in the case of the group of urban-rural communes, local development was insignificant, and taking into account the subindicators relating to the social sphere, the situation has deteriorated. The reasons for this require additional studies of a qualitative and qualitative nature, which, given the volume of the article, is not possible. It may be assumed, however, that urban-rural communes encounter barriers to local development specific to their group. The subject literature raises problems in the access and development of

infrastructure, mixing of economic (agricultural, service, etc.) and social functions, and spatial disorder (Siemiński, 2010, pp. 218-219). Perhaps one should ask whether the administrative unit connecting a small town and a rural commune negatively determines local development. In this aspect the 2016 study on hypothetical urban-rural communes established for the purpose of research from small towns and rural communes in the Polish bordering areas is of interest. It states that small towns and rural communes (separately) have improved their developmental position (compared to 2012), while hypothetical urban-rural communes have deteriorated. Therefore, merging a rural commune and a small town into an urban-rural commune does not create added value (Gibas, 2016, p. 310).

Finally, it should be stated that local development will depend less and less on 'hard' infrastructure investment, and more and more on qualitative aspects of life and management in a given commune. This particularly applies to urban-rural communes in the Podlaskie voivodeship, where the risk of 'becoming similar' to a rural commune in terms of qualitative aspects of local development is significant.

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WSPÓŁCZESNE PROBLEMY ROZWOJU SPOŁECZNO-GOSPODARCZEGO GMIN NA PRZYKŁADZIE WOJEWÓDZTWA PODLASKIEGO

Streszczenie: Rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy charakteryzuje się przestrzennym zróżnicowaniem. Uwarunkowania rozwoju występujące na poziomie lokalnym zazwyczaj występują w większej skali w ujęciu regionalnym. Analiza procesów społeczno-gospodarczych na poziomie lokalnym jest więc nie tylko uzasadniona merytorycznie, stanowi także uszczegółowienie elementów rozwoju regionalnego. Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza czynników rozwoju lokalnego na przykładzie województwa podlaskiego z uwzględnieniem podziału na gminy miejskie, miejsko-wiejskie oraz wiejskie. Metoda zakłada wykorzystanie wskaźnika syntetycznego w oparciu o wskaźniki cząstkowe odnoszące się do aspektów rozwoju społecznego i ekonomicznego. Głównym wnioskiem wynikającym z artykułu jest coraz mniejsza zależność rozwoju lokalnego od „twardych” inwestycji infrastrukturalnych, coraz większa zaś od aspektów jakościowych, szczególnie w odniesieniu do gmin miejsko-wiejskich.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój społeczny, rozwój gospodarczy, województwo podlaskie.