Diagnoza współczesnej struktury społeczno-ekonomicznej i klasyfikacja funkcjonalna małych miast w Polsce - w poszukiwaniu rozwiązań modelowych

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(projekt OPUS)

Identification of contemporary socio-economic structure and functional classification of small towns in Poland - in search of model solutions for towns of economic success

The fundamental scientific objective of the project is to identify and evaluate contemporary structure and functional classification of small towns (ST) in Poland (population below 20,000). The research will cover all small towns in Poland. Recognizing these matters shall enable constructing modeled development directions for small centers representing various functional categories.

The scientific objectives are intended to verify the following hypotheses:

1) The functional structure of small towns and the range of their spatial impact depend on the size of the center measured by the number of inhabitants and its geographical location; however, with the increase in the number of inhabitants and distance from regional and sub-regional centers, the number and importance of functions performed by a small town increases and its area of impact expands.

2) Specific functional categories of small towns can be identified, characterized by similarity of key development factors, socio-economic phenomena and development processes regardless of their regional location.

Specific objectives will be assigned to each task resulting from the research plan.

1. Atlas of Small Towns

Objectives: The cognitive objective of the Atlas consists in graphic presentation of a rich collection of statistical indicators encompassing all relevant social, economic and cultural characteristics of ST. These will allow for instantly drawing scientific conclusions or deepening analyzes in the field of detailed research issues. This goal will primarily serve to identify and assess the socio-economic structure of ST to be conducted in subsequent stages of the project.

Methodology: A rich statistical database will be accumulated, which will then be processed into indicators for the purpose of cartographic presentation. The main data source will be statistical material from Central Statistical Office. The data will refer to two categories of units - urban communes and urban areas in urban-rural communes.

2. Social and economic analysis of small towns

Objectives: The cognitive objective will be to identify and evaluate social and economic phenomena and processes that have been taking place in the last three decades in Poland’s ST and to diagnose development status of these centers in 2020. By the means of structured knowledge, it will be possible to identify the differences and similarities in the structure of ST regarding

diverse spatial and temporal approaches.

Methodology: The applicants intend to employ statistical and social methods and thorough analysis of existing materials. Qualitative data is expected to be sourced by conducting individual in-depth interviews with representatives of town administration and local authorities.

3. Functional classification of small towns

Objectives: To develop a method for functional classification of small town, taking into account previously recognized diagnostic features along with identified phenomena and socio-economic processes, followed by recognition of the functional structure of these centers.

Methodology: Developing a method that allows assigning each ST to a specific functional category and its practical application on the group of small urban centers in Poland.

4. Model of a town of economic success

Objectives: To identify and formulate model solutions for the development and management of ST within specific functional categories. An important result of the study will be to recognize towns of economic success, which will act as a practical example in developing model solutions.

Methodology: The result will comprise monographic studies of success in ST. Such case studies will be executed for intentionally selected examples derived from various functional categories of towns.

5. Dissemination of knowledge on the functional structure and development of small towns

Objectives: To provide practical knowledge on contemporary transformation and the state of development in ST, which is to be used by regional and national level institutions formulating development policy.

Methodology: Various forms of dissemination of project results are envisaged - domestic and foreign conferences, Atlas publication, scientific articles on the development of spatial structure of small towns, functional classification and urban-rural relations, both in Polish and English.

Publikacje

Abstrakty, recenzje, notatki

- Bański Jerzy: The role of small towns in rural space - an attempt at functional classification. [w]: 3rd International Conference on Geographical Science for Resilient Communities, Ecosystems and Livelihoods under Global Environmental Change (GORILLA) 4th-6th Dec 2024. Kampala, Uganda: Makerere University, 2024 - s. 139.