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DETERMINANTS OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ŻÓRAWINA COMMUNE. SELECTED ASPECTS

UWARUNKOWANIA ROZWOJU SPOŁECZNO-GOSPODARCZEGO GMINY ŻÓRAWINA. WYBRANE ASPEKTY

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Summary: In today's global economy, the local level is an important recipient of the effects of the processes and changes taking place. The goal of the article is to define the basic determinants of the social and economic development of Żórawina commune located in the region of Wrocław. In the first part of the article, the author points to the numerous different approaches to defining social and economic development; they also focus on the understanding of development at local level and determine the conditions constituting the basis for development. Then the general characteristics of the analysed commune are presented. The authors focused their considerations on selected conditions of the social and economic development of the studied area in order to create a detailed analysis of this space in the indicated scope. In the study, research conducted on the basis of literature and documents as well as simple statistical and descriptive methods were used.

Keywords: commune, development factors, local development.

Streszczenie: We współczesnej gospodarce światowej istotnym odbiorcą efektów zachodzących procesów i zmian jest poziom lokalny. Celem artykułu jest określenie podstawowych determinant rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego gminy Żórawina zlokalizowanej w powiecie wrocławskim. W tekście wskazano na zróżnicowane podejście do definiowania rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego, skupiono się również na rozumieniu rozwoju w przestrzeni poziomu lokalnego oraz określono uwarunkowania determinujące podstawy rozwoju. Następnie przedstawiono ogólną charakterystykę analizowanej gminy. Autor skupił się na wybranych uwarunkowaniach rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego badanego obszaru, aby przeprowadzić pogłębioną analizę tej przestrzeni we wskazanym zakresie. W opracowaniu wykorzystano studia literatury i dokumentów, proste metody statystyczne i metody opisowe.

Słowa kluczowe: gmina, czynniki rozwoju, rozwój lokalny.

1. Introduction

A commune is a self-government community of the inhabitants, who constitute the population occupying a separate administrative territory. According to the hierarchical typology (tripartition) in the administrative dimension, a commune is the lowest unit of local government level. It is an independent legal entity, independent from other institutions, performing various state functions in order to satisfy the needs of the inhabitants. The priority objective of local government in Poland is to ensure the highest possible standard of living for its residents. This process involves the provision of goods and services, taking into account the correlation between respect for the local cultural and natural environment. There is also no doubt that the quality of life of the inhabitants is determined by the public services provided by the commune. Nevertheless, independent factors are also of great importance, among which one can name the availability of natural resources, leisure infrastructure, including the advantages of the natural landscape, as well as transport accessibility and relations with a large centre (town/city) which has an impact on this area.

In the subject literature it is relatively difficult to find a comprehensive definition of the term *quality of life*. This is primarily due to the fact that the quality of life is an interdisciplinary issue, and thus determined by a multitude of factors and determinants. It should not be forgotten that subjective factors also play an important role in the assessment of the quality of life, which in this context may include an individual's state of health or level of satisfaction with the income obtained [Borys, Rogala 2008].

The intensification of the changes related to the social and economic development of local government units in Poland is the subject of interdisciplinary research. They take on a general or detailed dimension. The aim of this article is to indicate the importance of selected factors of the social and economic development of Żórawina commune. The reason for analysing the subject is the intensified process of local development of the commune, caused mainly by the proximity of Wrocław. The study should be considered to be of a theoretical character. Considerations of the analysis include the period from 2012 to 2018. The research was conducted on the basis of literature and documents, also using simple statistical and descriptive methods. In the evaluation of the potential of Żórawina commune the point bonitation method was employed.

2. Differentiation of approach to the theory of local development

Development is the process of positive quantitative and qualitative changes occurring in a small area, taking into account the preferences, hierarchy of values, and needs specific to a given area [Borys, Rogala 2008]. According to another definition,

development is the process of structural changes characteristic for a certain society, which is based on economic growth.

In practice, the concept of development is most often identified with desirable, measurable changes, which take place in terms of quality (progress) and quantity (growth). Development is considered through the prism of the accumulation of innovation, knowledge and technical progress. The consequence of such trends in the strategic dimension is, first of all, the improvement of effectiveness, efficiency and enabling the satisfaction of human needs [Olszewski 2000].

The term ‘development’ can be considered in three aspects:

- improvement in the efficiency of the production system,
- ability to use local resources,
- meeting human needs [Haffer, Kraszewski 2004].

According to the definition in the Polish Language Dictionary, a region is an area with a specific landscape, economic or ethnographic features [*The Polish Language Dictionary*]. Taking into account the issues raised in this article, a region will be understood in the category of the largest administrative division unit in Poland, i.e. as a voivodeship.

Regional policy is understood as the intentional and conscious activity of public authorities, which in consequence aims at the intensification of regional development. In practice, regional policy can be implemented in two approaches:

- interregional, i.e. actions taken by central authorities in relation to subordinate regions;
- intra-regional, i.e. activities carried out by bodies of the public authority, in particular regions (lack of centralisation in tasks’ performance).

In the literature on the subject, in order to avoid identifying regional policy and state policy in relation to regions (e.g. local government units), the term “regional development policy” is used. The specificity of this concept is connected with a greater emphasis on intra-regional policy, without omitting the manifestations of inter-regional policy.

Regional development should be treated as an interdisciplinary process leading to the systematic improvement in the standard of living of the inhabitants, the competitiveness of economic entities and the increase in the economic potential of the regions. Regardless of the actions taken, regional development in a broader perspective contributes to the economic and social development of the whole country. The subject literature distinguishes between regional development and land-use policy; the latter is a spatial dimension of economic and social policy. In the field of regional development policy, concentration includes regional economies, which is synonymous with geographical space not being treated as a physical whole.

All regional development policy measures focus on the actions of public authorities aimed at guiding and stimulating development in the regions. Certain deviations may, however, be indicated in this respect, resulting from procedures related to the financing of development.

Regional policy has been facilitated by local and regional authorities, whose specific nature and purpose is the determinant of regional policy. The shaping of regional policy entities is also a systemic problem, which is of key importance for the functioning of the state, and not only for regional development policy.

According to R. Brol, local development is “a harmonised, systematic action of local communities, local authorities and other entities existing in a given commune, which aims at creating new ones, improving the existing attractiveness and utility values of the commune through, among others, creating pro-developmental conditions of the local economy or ensuring economic and spatial order” [Brol 1998]. According to the definition byof J. Parysek, development is “a development process in the social and economic dimension, subject to modification by self-government authorities in order to pursue a range of interests and maximise local development factors” [Parysek 2001]. A. Sztando states that “local development should be treated as an interdisciplinary process of change involving various elements that create the economy, society and the environment. Rational connections and relations between these elements are very important” [Sztando 2013].

The definition of local development in practice is analysed in relation to two aspects:

- the narrow one, which should be understood as a positive, desirable qualitative, quantitative and structural transformation, in which society defines its needs, a hierarchy of values;
- the wide one, where local development is considered as a complementary idea of building a modern society model and new pro-development concepts in the economic and social dimension, to which society is to strive [Borys, Rogala 2008].

In practical terms, the term local development is identified with the processes taking place in the strategic dimension, which include conscious and purposeful actions aimed at improving the quality of life of local communities, e.g. in communes, and cities [Parysek 2001].

The most popular typology of determinants influencing local development include [Jakubowska]:

- external factors, which are relations between the closer and further surroundings of the commune;
- internal factors that occur on the territory of the commune and include, among others, activities undertaken by the local authority, accumulated resources or skills;
- spatial factors, which mainly concern the geographical location, territory;
- economic factors, which are considered in the macroeconomic context – they are not dependent on the local authority of the commune, because the process of their shaping takes place at national and international level (communes have an impact only on microeconomic factors, e.g. determining the rate of local taxes);
- hard factors, which are expressed with the use of indicators or values, e.g. accessibility, number of users, coverage of the sewage system;

- soft factors, i.e. factors whose measurement is difficult or impossible, e.g. competence, creativity, effectiveness.

Moreover, in the literature on the subject the determinants of local development are divided into external and internal ones. Internal conditions include local resources, first of all human potential, their needs, availability of raw materials or assets. In the case of external factors, however, the analysis is mainly focused on the policy of the state, with particular emphasis on the quality of life of the inhabitants and other social issues.

Local activities for the benefit of social and economic development should, as a consequence, aim at [Jabłońska 2008]:

- supporting various development initiatives aimed at improving the current quality of life of the local community,
- promoting initiatives,
- supporting development on the local labour market,
- improvement of the natural environment,
- sustainable consumption of resources existing in the commune.

According to A. Jabłońska, local development issues are primarily the responsibility of local authorities and various types of entities operating within local communities, e.g. associations. Undoubtedly, the actions undertaken by them determine whether a given self-government unit will develop or stagnate. Certainly the more developed the commune is, the more it is attractive to entrepreneurs, local communities and tourists. It is noted that a greater intensification of social and economic development is observed in more developed regions [Jabłońska 2008]. Such a tendency increases the spread of the development rate within other areas, deepening the marginalization of problematic areas. Local government units, which are characterised by human resources willing to implement changes and intensify development, are characterised by the following factors [Karwińska 2006]:

- attractive geographical location,
- a high degree of computerisation,
- developed communication infrastructure,
- management efficiency,
- favourable conditions for creating and accumulating innovations, advantages of the cultural and natural environment.

Thus, local development is a whole range of changes that occur in the socio-economic sphere of the territory concerned. Changes in this respect are irreversible and durable, they take a specific direction and are subject to different regulations. The qualitative context relating to social development includes above all the directions of changes in the intellectual and philosophical approach of the local community. The effectiveness of these impacts should be considered mainly in the context of the effectiveness of investments in human capital [*National Report on Social...* 2012]. As a consequence, they have an impact on the dimension and the intensification of the processes related to local development.

An important aspect of the local development of a commune is the skillful utilization of the synergy effect of exogenous and endogenous factors and the conscious creation of activities which are conducive to these phenomena. Against this background, there is also the phenomenon called urban resilience – this is the buoyancy of urban milieu where, in economic terms, it can be equated with the city's ability to solve socio-economic problems in a way that enables its long-term success [Drobniak 2015]. Speed of information flow, growing awareness of local society and active human resources mean that that social participation is of great value in local development. Participation in decision-making should lead to an increase in the social acceptability of the effects of these decisions. This is the basic advantage of this approach. The condition is the adequate representativeness of society by its participants [Rynio, Zakrzewska-Półtorak 2018].

3. Żórawina commune – location, general characteristics

Żórawina Commune as a unit of the Wrocław Metropolitan Area

The Wrocław Metropolitan Area comprises in its area about 40% of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia. As an urban and spatial unit it is formed by six counties ('powiats'): oławski, oleśnicki, trzebnicki, średzki, wrocławski, wołowski, and the city of Wrocław [*Disparities in the Development...*].

The Żórawina Commune is one of nine local government units included in the Wrocław 'powiat'. Moreover, it is one of 169 communes in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. The area of the commune is 120 km² and covers 10.7% of the total area of Wrocław County and 0.6% of the area of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. This commune borders Wrocław to the north. The degree of urbanisation of the border zone is so significant that it is difficult to decide whether it is an urban area or a part of the commune in question [*The Żórawina Commune...*]. In the Żórawina commune there are 32 suburban areas, made up of 26 villages: Bratowice-Zagródki, Bogunów, Jaksonów, Galowice, Jarosławice, Karwiany-Komorowice, Mędłów, Krajków, Milejowice, Nowojowice, Mnichowice, Nowy Śleszów, Okrzeszyce-Rynakowice, Przeclawice, Polakowice, Raclawice Małe, Stary Śleszów, Rzeplin-Szukalice, Suchy Dwór, Turów, Wilkowice, Wilczków, Brzeście, Węgry, Wojkowice, Marcinkowice, and Żerniki Wielkie. Undoubtedly, the centre of the commune is Żórawina. The distance between the commune and Wrocław is only 15.4 km [*The Żórawina Commune...*].

An important feature of the Żórawina commune, as well as of other communes included in the Wrocław Metropolitan Area, is its high demographic potential. Moreover, economic activity of the region is concentrated in the area of these communes: as much as 45% of the GDP of the whole Lower Silesia is produced in the Wrocław Metropolitan Area, including one-third in Wrocław. The geographical space of the commune attracts investments in hi-tech with high added value [*The*

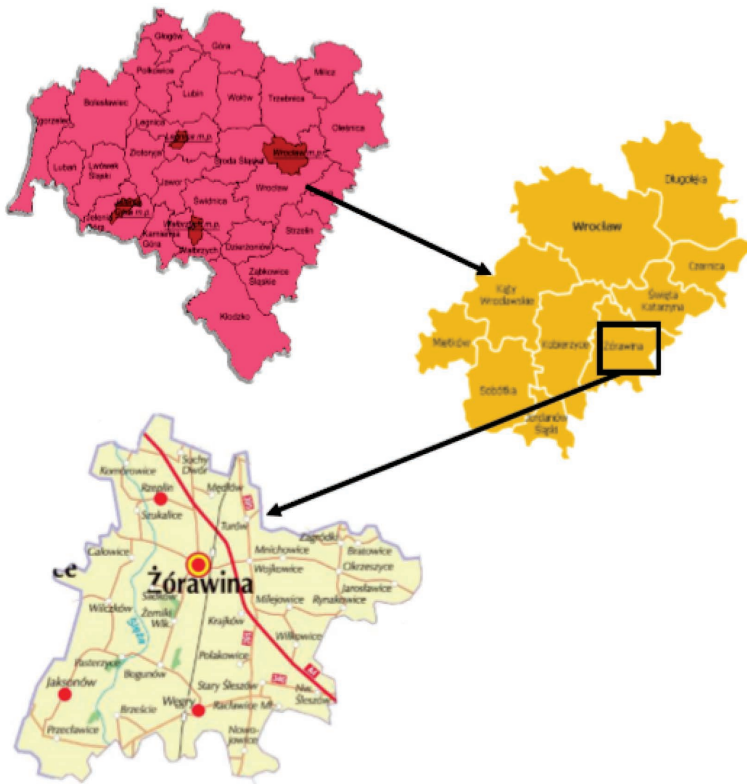


Figure 1. Location of the Żórawina commune

Source: [The Żórawina Commune...].

Żórawina Commune...]. Technological and infrastructural facilities, new housing offers as well as cultural and entertainment facilities are developing intensively [The Żórawina Commune...]. All of the above-mentioned factors are a magnet for investors as well as highly-qualified employees. This trend is reflected in statistical data: practically half of all the economic entities in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship are registered in the metropolitan area. The area of their concentration is the city of Wrocław. Moreover, the area in question is characterised by a favourable sectoral structure.

Services also dominate locally, including trade, professional, technical and construction businesses [The Żórawina Commune...]. The following industries are also developing: food, metal, machinery and electronics [Korenik (ed.) 2009]. The Wrocław Metropolitan Area (including the Żórawina commune) is characterised by an attractive geographical location and good transport accessibility. Undoubtedly, these are important factors that determine its choice by investors and future residents [Korenik (ed.) 2009].

As a consequence, the Wrocław Metropolitan Area is highly attractive in the interdisciplinary dimension; similarly good investment conditions and attractiveness in this respect are presented by Żórawina commune.

Transport accessibility of Żórawina commune

The Wrocław Metropolitan Area (including Żórawina) is characterised by its attractive geographical location and good transport accessibility. The commune is located in the immediate vicinity of the A4 motorway connecting Germany with Ukraine (west-east). The completed Wrocław motorway bypass, city centre bypass as well as the planned and ongoing routes are of great importance for the improvement of the commune's transport accessibility:

- reconstruction and extension of the S8 road from Wrocław to the Czech Republic (border crossing Kudowa-Słone);
- reconstruction and extension of the S5 road from Wrocław towards Poznań.

Moreover, 15 county roads and commune roads run through the area of Żórawina commune. Their density is sufficient, while the condition is average [*The Żórawina Commune...*].

A shortcoming of the commune is its insufficient transport accessibility with the use of public transport. Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Komunikacyjne (MPK) in Wrocław serves single towns in the immediate vicinity of the city's administrative borders. An appropriate solution would be the development of its own public transport system in the commune in question – which proved to be a good solution in the case of the Poznań agglomeration, for example. Transport services are provided only by a private, local carrier on the Wrocław–Żórawina–Przeclawice route.

The electrified railway line no. 276 in the direction of Strzelin and the regional railway junction in Kamieniec Żąbkowski runs through the territory of Żórawina commune from Wrocław. Despite the fact that the number of railway connections is sufficient, railway stops are located only in Żórawin and Węgry. Express trains stop only in Żórawina. It seems appropriate to consider the construction of new railway stops in the commune in question, which will significantly improve the transport accessibility of Wrocław from the perspective of other towns in the commune of Żórawina. A good solution to improve transport accessibility would be the reactivation of the railway line running through Kobierzyce (to serve the inhabitants of towns in the western part of the commune) [Korenik (ed.) 2009].

Transport accessibility should be considered to be one of the key determinants of the social and economic development of Żórawina commune.

Development potential of Żórawina commune – selected aspects

According to the Development Strategy for Żórawina commune for the period 2015-2020, one of the foundations of social and economic development is tourism, including:

- improvement of the tourist attractiveness of the commune,

- improvement of cultural and entertainment on offer,
- improvement of the existing offer of leisure time activities,
- improvement of tourism management.

According to B. Włodarczyk, the tourism space “is the part of the geographical space in which the phenomenon of tourist traffic occurs” [Włodarczyk 2009]. The main condition for classifying a part of the geographical space as a tourism space is tourist traffic, and an additional condition is the occurrence of tourism’s development. According to the conclusion of E. Mazur: “Tourism space is a part of geographical and socio-economic space in which tourist activities take place [Mazur 2003].

Table 1. Characteristics of the tourism space within Żórawina commune

Type of space	Characteristic features of the tourism space of Żórawina commune			
	Tourist traffic intensity	Tourism development	Main tourist function	Impact of tourism activities on the environment
Penetration space	Moderate	None	Exploration Sightseeing	Harmless

Source: own study based on the [*The Żórawina Commune...*].

The planned strategic and operational plans for increasing the attractiveness of the Żórawina commune concern the adopted development directions in strategic documents, not only in relation to Lower Silesian communes, but also on a national scale [Gołembski (ed.) 2002]. Table 1 presents the characteristics of tourism space in the Żórawina commune. According to the adopted typology, the area of Żórawina belongs to the areas of tourism penetration, which means that it is a part of the geographical space visited by tourists primarily for exploratory reasons, in order to enjoy a short holiday [*The Żórawina Commune...*]. The tourism space of the commune is only marginally developed.

Investments are very important from the point of view of the attractiveness of Żórawina commune. This consists not only in the achievements to date in terms of attracting capital, but also of a number of factors influencing the increase in the attractiveness of investing in its area, e.g. improvement of transport accessibility and tax exemptions. Moreover, the attractiveness of the commune is influenced by other types of determinants improving the quality of life of its inhabitants, e.g. air purity, and the public transport network. The level of development of selected determinants constituting the development potential of the commune is presented in Table 2.

The attractiveness index of Żórawina is high, totalling 0.68. The low value of the absolute value index is dictated by the commune’s lowland terrain formation.

The tourist potential of Żórawina commune in the context of social and economic development should be considered significant, however, it will not be of primary importance. The importance of individual components of tourist attractiveness

Table 2. Development potential of Żórawina commune – the point bonitation method

Feature	5 points to be scored
Absolute height below 500 m a.s.l.	1
Relative height between 300 and 500 m	1
Attractiveness of the geographical location	3
Forest cover index ca. 50% of the voivodeship's area	1
Attractiveness of the transport location	-----
Air transport	2
Rail transport	5
Road transport	5
Żórawina commune as an attractive place to live in the Wrocław Metropolitan Area	5
Tourist attractiveness	2
Investment attractiveness	-----
Implementation of the investment policy	3
Motivation to invest	4
Evaluation of pro-investment activities to date	5
Communication accessibility and investment	5
Reliefs, tax exemptions	4
Spatial infrastructure, determinants improving the quality of life of inhabitants	-----
Public transport network	2
Leisure time opportunities	3
Air purity	2
Improving esthetics of the geographical area of the commune	4
Scope of public services in the commune	4
Media supply	5
Level of safety	4

Source: own elaboration based on the point bonitation method, which allows for a subjective evaluation of a given phenomenon according to the adopted scale on the basis of the actual state of affairs.

requires separate and more in-depth analyses of a strategic type in order to optimise the appropriate directions of development of the tourist function.

Its attractiveness the commune is owe to its good transport accessibility, which stimulates local development. Undoubtedly the factor of its development is the fact that the commune in question belongs to the Wrocław Metropolitan Area, which affects it in an interdisciplinary dimension. A high evaluation also regards the

development of spatial infrastructure and determinants improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the commune. Żórawina Commune is treated as an attractive place to live (development of the housing function).

Empirical and practical findings prove that the strong points are endogenous factors associated with its geographical location, communication and location values as a place for the development of single-family housing being the background for the city of Wrocław. The current strategy of Żórawina is focused on touristic attractiveness as an asset and advantage, which is not compatible with the real resources and values of the natural environment. The internal factor of location, placement and environmental values should be redefined as an asset, and an attractive place to live and stay for residents of the city of Wrocław seeking peace and quiet, while being close and connected with the metropolis.

4. Conclusion

The commune of Żórawina should be classified as one of the areas favouring social and economic development. Its unquestionable advantage is its proximity to Wrocław and, consequently, being part of the Wrocław Metropolitan Area. There is good transport accessibility in its area. Both factors induce the further development of entrepreneurial initiatives and activities in the field of single-family housing development, which influences the change in the character of the commune and the limitation of agricultural activity of its inhabitants. Significant potential is also created by the tourist attractiveness of the commune, however this is perceived more in terms of short “city excursions” or cycling trips for the inhabitants of Wrocław rather than spending a few days’ holiday there.

In conclusion, the social and economic transformations taking place in the area of the commune have favourable pro-developmental foundations. There is no doubt that the local community of the commune primarily influences social and economic changes. The task of the commune’s local government is also to integrate the community of the existing inhabitants, who live mainly from farming, and the new inflow population, appearing in parallel with new housing investments. The development of the commune’s identity should be shaped around specific values and internal factors distinguishing the commune from other towns and villages in the county of Wrocław. An important aspect of local government activities is the skillful use of the potential of the local community expecting the development of the commune of Żórawina.

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