

LARGE ENTERPRISES AS A FACTOR TRIGGERING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN AREAS

Magdalena Dej

M.Sc., Researcher

Jagiellonian University

Institute of Geography and Spatial Management

Department of Regional Development

Gronostajowa Street 7, 30-387 Cracow, Poland

e-mail: magdalena.dej@uj.edu.pl

UDK: 711.3(438):330.526.33

COBISS: 1.02 – Review article

Abstract

Large Enterprises as a Factor Triggering Social and Economic Changes in the Polish Countryside outside Metropolitan Areas

This article focuses on the analysis of the distribution, characteristics and effects of large businesses in Poland located in rural areas outside the reach of the largest urban centres. The first part of this paper presents the distribution and characteristics of companies in which the level of employment reaches a minimum of 200 people located in non-metropolitan rural areas in Poland. The second part contains an analysis of the level of socio-economic development of rural communes¹, in which enterprises included in the study are located, against the background of all non-metropolitan communes. The last part presents selected aspects of the impact of large economic operators on the local environment using the example of a company with its headquarters in a rural, agricultural area.

Key words

non-metropolitan rural areas, large enterprises, Poland

The editor received the article on 19.2.2010.

¹ Commune means the smallest municipal unit in Poland

1. Introduction

Today's reflections on the activation of rural areas focus mainly on issues of multifunctional development. In this development, the fundamental role is given to 'small' enterprises (Rosner 2002, Halamska 2002, Długokęcka 2002, Kłodziński 2006). Developing the sector of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises is seen as an effective way of improving the situation of rural areas and their populations, mainly by increasing household incomes or with the elimination of redundant labour force from the agricultural sector. At the same time, very little attention is paid to large businesses located in rural areas, whose importance for their functioning is often fundamental, especially in areas of pure agricultural character.

The following research objectives were chosen prior to this study:

- Determination of the disposition and characteristics of large enterprises located in Polish rural areas that are beyond the reach of most metropolitan areas,
- the presentation of socio-economic characteristics of rural communes, in which enterprises included in the study are located, against the background of all non-metropolitan rural communes in Poland,
- presentation of several aspects of the impact of large enterprises on the local environment using the example of an operator located in a rural agricultural area.

1.1 Methodological and terminological remarks:

This study analyzes non-metropolitan rural areas. The term 'non-metropolitan rural area' describes rural communes, except those established in cities, situated outside the reach of a metropolis (including the delimitation of metropolitan areas by Smętkowski, Jałowiecki, Gorzelak 2008). In the remainder of this study, non-metropolitan rural areas will be referred to as: NMRA.

For the purpose of this study, the large enterprise is an economic entity in which level of employment reaches a minimum of 200 people. A lower limit of employment (compared to 250 people, as is used in Polish statistics) was motivated by the fact that companies employing from 200 to 249 people are often represented in the analyzed area presented later in the article.

For the implementation of the first objective, which is disposition and characteristics of the large enterprises, the largest commercial database containing information on companies and enterprises operating on Polish territory has been reviewed². The second objective - analysis of communes with large enterprises against the background of other NMRAs was achieved using data for 1995, 2005 and 2007³. The third objective was realized as a result of field research conducted on the selected enterprise. Data was provided courtesy of Human Resources management (employee information) and the Technical Department (information on cooperating companies). Supplemental to these sources of information (particularly in relation to the third) were the surveys conducted in spring 2009 among all company employees. 113 of the surveys have been sent and 34 were returned (30%). The obtained sample of employees in terms of age and gender is very close to the actual structure of the average, but differs in terms of level of education (people with basic vocational education were underrepresented - only 30%, while their share of the entire company is nearly 60%).

² Database HBI Poland 2007

³ Data from the Central Polish Regional Statistical Office Data Bank

2. Disposition and characteristics of large enterprises in non-metropolitan rural areas in Poland

2.1 Disposition of enterprises

In rural areas of Poland in 2007, there were 177 enterprises located in 142 rural communes (which weren't located in cities) outside metropolitan areas. There are several distinguished features that characterize disposition of enterprises. Apart from mining plants, whose locations are closely connected to the occurrence of raw materials, the most important feature for enterprises is their proximity to the important urban centres (Bański 2006), and not without significance is the level of socio-economic development of regions and their Entrepreneurship traditions (Kosiedowski 1984). Thus, we can speak of three kinds of investment attractiveness of rural areas: resources, localization (associated with the proximity of large cities or major transportation routes) and the benefits of a high level of endogenous development (Domanski, Gwosdz, Sobala-Gwosdz 2009).

An interesting category includes companies whose location on the peripheral areas is primarily dictated by the desire to reduce production costs through cheap labour. Besides the fact that they employ local workers, the enterprises have weak association with the community of their location, which makes them prone to relocation. It is believed that in the longer term, the impact on the local environment may be less positive than for other motives of business location.

Nationally, most enterprises are located in the vicinity of high rank municipal areas; particularly strong concentration is visible in the Śląskie Province, in a belt between the Śląskie and Łódzkie Provinces with high levels of industrialisation resulting from mineral resources. A relatively low number of enterprises is recorded in Northeastern Poland (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province, Świętokrzyskie Province, Lubuskie and Opolskie Province) (Fig. 1).

Interesting conclusions provide comparison of the functional structure of all rural communes in NMRAs with communes where large enterprises are located. This comparison is possible using functional classification of rural areas (Bański, Stola 2002).

In all communes in NMRAs, the most common are those in which farming has a dominant role (first of all, non-commercial, but also intensive and commercial); the share of other functional types is smaller. In the group of communes with enterprises in non-metropolitan rural areas, the greatest participation has communes with mixed functions or non-agricultural functions. This means that large enterprises in analyzed areas are more often located in non-agricultural communes, which are very often observed in the vicinity of cities; however, they also are met in typically agricultural areas, but not as often (Fig. 2).

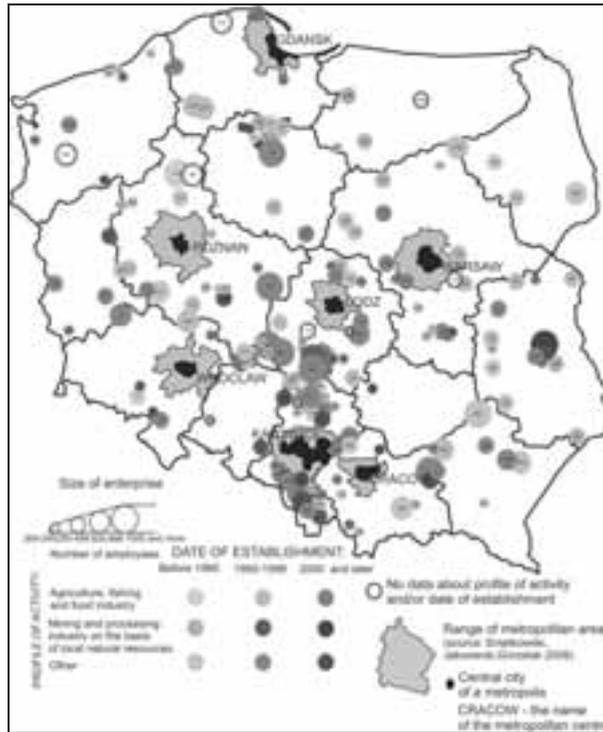


Fig. 1: Distribution of large enterprises in non-metropolitan rural areas in Poland.

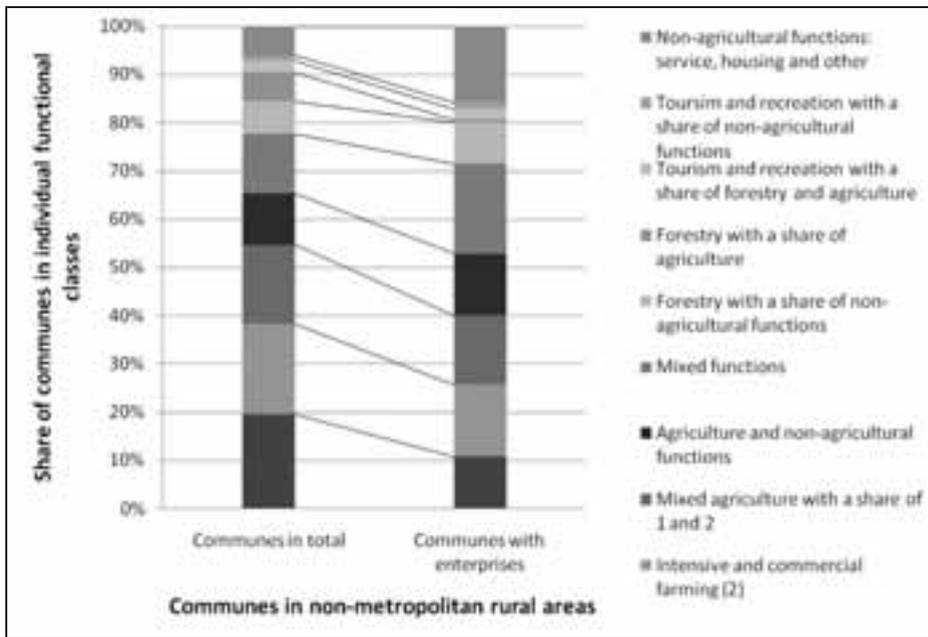


Fig. 2: Functional structure of communes with enterprises with respect to the functional structure of all communes in non-metropolitan rural areas.

2.1 Characteristics of enterprises

Enterprises located in NMRA constitute a heterogeneous group. These differences are indicated in the level of employment, period of realization, business profile, origin of capital, etc. In terms of employment, the largest group includes companies whose number of employees in 2007 was 250 to 499 people (79 enterprises), and the second largest group were smaller companies with 200-249 people (over 60 companies). Such high abundance in this category was the reason for its above-mentioned extension. Larger companies were represented less often (21 companies with 500-999 employees and only 10 with the level of employment over of 1000 people).

The majority of existing companies (34.9% of the total) were founded before 1990 – before the period of systemic transformations in Poland. At the same time, the period from 1990-1995 is considered the most dynamic and was the time of the biggest changes and rapid development of the free economy market. The second part of the 90s was less dynamic; 23.5% of all analyzed enterprises were established. There has been a clear slowdown from the year 2000 on, when only 7.8% of NMRA enterprises began.

The profile of operators is very important in terms of characteristics of its connections with the local area. There are three categories to which chosen enterprises were assigned:

- companies operating on the basis of local agricultural products, engaged in agro-food processing,
- companies based on local natural raw materials, both mineral (mineral, mineral water) and other (wood),
- companies with profiles not related to local resources from the area in which they operate.

One of the most common motives for enterprise location from the last mentioned categories was desire to reduce production costs through the use of local cheap labour.

In NMRA in 2007 (the analyzed year), the most numerous enterprises were operators in the agro-food processing sector, who, to a large extent, based their activities on local agricultural products (meat and dairy), as well as enterprises engaged in the manufacture of furniture and wood products. The existence of companies with business profiles associated with processing in the agro-food industry can be evaluated positively, since they do not distort the existing functions of agricultural areas in which they operate. What is more, these companies strengthen those functions and often help to increase the intensity of agricultural use of land, thereby positively affecting their performance. In turn, the least positive assessment should be given to operators who are located in areas with good natural agricultural conditions, do not take advantage of its value, and only take advantage of cheap labour.

Existence of an enterprise not connected with agricultural potential and traditions of the area distracts people from working on their farms, results in the appearance of binary professions and brings negative consequences for the agricultural use of land.

The share of companies with foreign capital in the whole analyzed group of companies is less than 20% (34 firms), while their distribution is fairly uniform on Polish territory. Only the Northeastern part of the rural marks their absence (Podlaskie and Warmi sko-Mazurskie Province), which is caused by very low levels of communication with other parts of the rural. It affects the lack of investors' interest, for whom location and accessibility are one of the most important factors.

Effects of large enterprises on the local environment can be considered both on the scale of the whole rural as well as by particular commune/place of their location. At the national level, this impact can be determined using statistical analysis of the level of socio-economic development with enterprises in NMRAs against other communes in the same area. When conducting statistical analysis, it is important to remember that the current level of socio-economic development might be a result of the enterprise's location, but it can also be a pull-factor for investment, therefore constituting one of the location factors.

To determine the exact consequences of this interaction, it is essential to carry out fieldwork in selected businesses and communes representing their local environment.

3. The development level of communes with large enterprises in the background of all communes in non-metropolitan rural areas in Poland

The level of socio-economic development can be performed using selected indicators. In the case of this study, for the purposes of evaluation of potential differences between communes with and without large enterprises, the following characteristics were taken into account: migration tendencies and population structure, education and educational aspirations, local initiative, local labour market, construction and building activity. These areas can be characterized using many indicators (Tab. 1); however, for the purpose of this study, because of the inability to present all values for all mentioned indicators, only the following will be presented:

- internal migration per 1000 inhabitants as the indicator of migration tendencies,
- number of people who benefit from the installation of sewer systems per 1000 inhabitants as the indicator of quality of life,
- number of economic entities per 1000 inhabitants as the indicator of local entrepreneurship.

In the cases of all discussed indicators, the following aspects will be presented: differences between the average value of the indicator in communes in NMRAs and the value in communes with large enterprises. Subsequently, making use of one-factor variance analysis – communes with enterprises will be compared to those without enterprises in NMRAs with respect to the average values of the analyzed indicator. Finally, identical comparison will be made, with a division into mono-functional agricultural communes and multi-functional ones.

Tab. 1: Chosen aspects of the impact and indicators that characterize the level of socio-economic development of communes.

Sample aspects of the impact	Selected indices
Migration tendencies and population structures	Internal migration per 1,000 inhabitants
	External migration per 1,000 inhabitants
	Index of feminization
	Demographic dependency rate
Education and educational aspirations	Percentage of people with higher education among inhabitants of working and retirement age
Level of life	Number of stores per 1,000 inhabitants
	Percentage of people using installations (water supply, sewage, gas) among total population
Style of life	Readers in public libraries per 1,000 inhabitants
	Percentage of children aged between 3 and 6 attending kindergarten
Social activity	Percentage of members of clubs and artistic groups among population in total
Local entrepreneurship	Economic entities per 1,000 inhabitants
Local labour market	Percentage of working people among population of working age
Construction activity	New apartments commissioned per 1,000 inhabitants

3.1. Internal migration per 1000 inhabitants

In most of the analyzed communes, the level of migration is higher than the average value of this indicator in all communes in NMRAs, so in general, the level of internal migration is higher in communes with large enterprises than in all communes in non-metropolitan rural areas. In communes with large enterprises, the analyzed indicator is higher in the vicinity of big cities, which is connected with the process of suburbanization and not only with the location of large enterprises. It is significant that those differences are observed not only in the division into communes with and without large enterprises, but also in the more detailed division into mono-functional and multi-functional communes (Fig. 3).

In every case, the level of internal migration is higher in communes with enterprises than in communes without enterprises. The influence of the proximity to big cities is not so important, because this dependence is observed in mono-functional agricultural communes as well, which are located far away from urban centres.

3.2 Number of economic entities per 1000 inhabitants

In the case of the analysed indicator, in communes with big enterprises, there is a visible division between eastern and western Poland, which is compatible with the general division between the better-developed western part of Poland and the more backward, poorer eastern part.

There are statistically important differences between communes with and without large enterprises. In the case of communes with large enterprises, the level of the analyzed factor is higher than in communes without enterprises, and this dependence is observed in the division of mono-functional (agricultural) areas and multi-functional ones (Fig. 4).

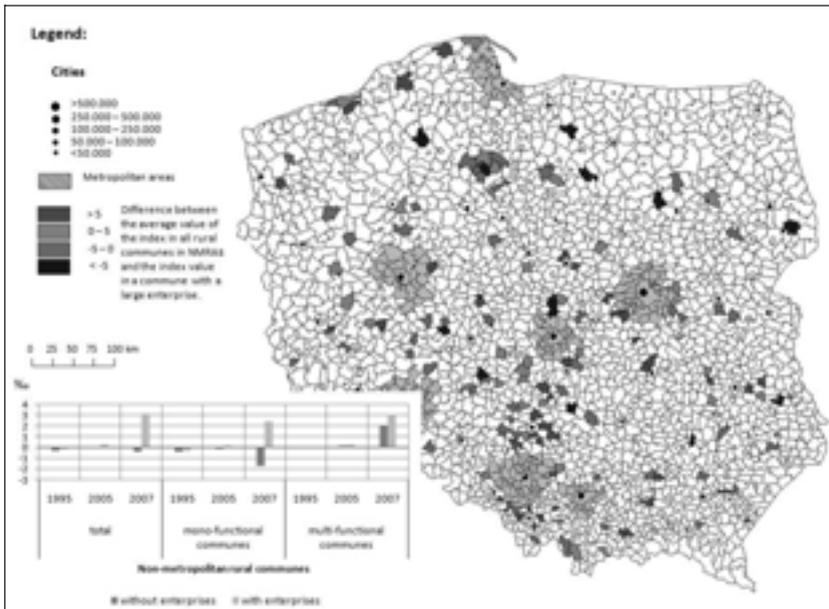


Fig. 3: Internal migration per 1,000 inhabitants in 2007 and its change from 1995-2007 in communes with large enterprises.

Source: Own study.

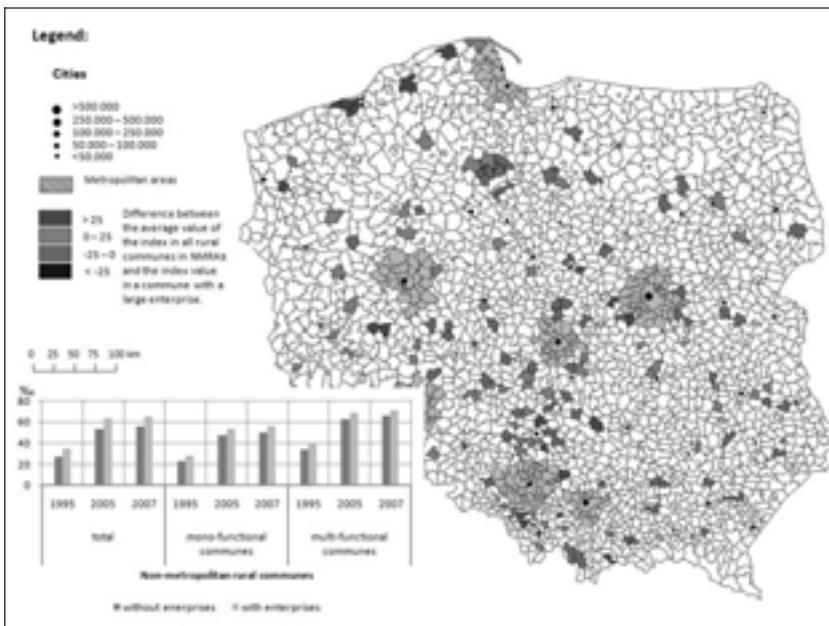


Fig. 4: Number of economic entities per 1,000 inhabitants in 2007 and its change from 1995-2007 in communes with large enterprises.

Source: Own study.

3.3 Number of people who benefit from installation of sewage system per 1000 inhabitants

As in the previous case, in communes with large enterprises, there is a visible division between eastern and western Poland, which is compatible with the general division between the better-developed western part of Poland and the more backward, poorer eastern part. But there are also statistically important differences between communes with and without big enterprises in this case. In communes with large enterprises, the level of the analyzed factor is higher than in communes without enterprises, and this dependence is also observed in the division between mono-functional (agricultural) areas and multi-functional ones (Fig. 5).

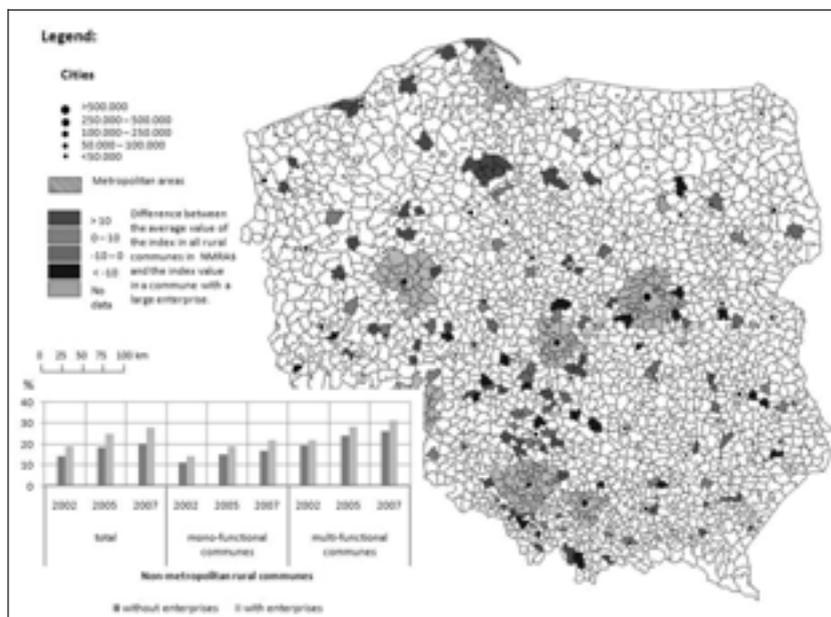


Fig. 5: Number of people who benefit from installation of sewage systems per 1,000 inhabitants in 2007 and its change from 2002-2007 2007 in communes with large enterprises.

Dependencies on better socio-economic situations of communes with large enterprises are confirmed in other analyzed indicators noted above, which will not be presented in detail in this study.

On the basis of the carried-out statistical analysis and the short summary presented here, some general conclusions can be drawn. First of all, communes with large enterprises located in NMRAs differ significantly in positive ways, in terms of socio-economics, from communes without enterprises, but these differences indicate both areas of mono-functional character (agricultural and agro-forestry) as well as those with multi-functional character. It must be admitted that localization of large enterprises in mono-functional areas cannot fully equalize the differences in socio-economic levels in relation to multi-functional areas. For development of communes located in NMRAs, the location close to urban centres of high importance is more significant than the existence of a large enterprise. The existence of enterprises in

communes located in the analyzed area certainly does not eliminate regional differences in the level of the commune's socio-economic development.

4. The impact of a selected large enterprise on its local environment – selected results of fieldwork

For the purpose of this study, the following example has been chosen: a production company (production of metal packaging) with foreign capital, located in a mono-functional rural area, which, until recently, has had 200 employees and has been operating in the analyzed area for 19 years. For this case, the following aspects were analyzed: changes in the structure of land use, the level of relations with local enterprises, types of work commuting, opinions of employees on the motivation to start work, the level of job satisfaction and its significance to the household's income, etc.

The company chosen in order to carry out this research is located in the Southern part of Poland (Małopolskie Province, Proszowicki District, Radziemice commune), about 30 km NE from Krakow. Radziemice commune is one of the smallest communes in Poland (58km²), consisting of 17 villages, inhabited by 3600 persons. Traditionally, a dominant occupation of inhabitants is farm work. Numerous indicators show the importance of farming for the inhabitants of Proszowicki District. The analysis of the share of employed people in the farming industry in relation to the total number of employed in the district shows clearly that the discussed area is dominant in the whole province (74.5%), leaving behind the other farming districts (Miechowski District – 66.8%, Dąbrowski District – 62.4%). This is due to advantageous natural conditions, especially in the soil, as well as the proximity to Krakow – which is a big market for agricultural products.

The structure of land use also reflects the importance of agriculture for the functioning of the district; the share of agricultural area consists of 88%. As far as the intensity of the usage of soil is concerned, in 2005 it was remarkably lower in the Northwest of the district, where the share of plough land was over 80% of the agricultural area. In the remaining four communes, this intensity was much lower, which, to a certain extent, can be connected with the better level of communication with Krakow and, in consequence, more frequent cases of finding employment in the city.

The analyzed company is part of an international capital group; its relations with foreign companies including other companies in the group are strong. On a regional scale, these relations are the strongest with respect to Krakow and the district city, which results from the rank of these centres. Relations with local companies are not too strong, yet they are perceptible; existence of at least several local companies is determined by the provision of services to the large company.

The company takes advantage of the goods and services offered by numerous enterprises located abroad, especially from Germany (22 enterprises), Holland (6 enterprises) and from the United Kingdom and France (5 enterprises each). Those are mainly companies that deliver raw materials for production (steel) or specialized companies cooperating with the Technical Department for maintenance of machines. At the same time, we need to draw our attention to the fact that the importance of the foreign companies is very little in relation to the market share of the Polish companies (altogether 259). The analysis of the distribution of companies connected

with this enterprise, on a domestic basis, shows very strong connection to the economic units of the Małopolskie Province (117 units), followed by the Mazowieckie Province (79 units) and Śląskie (16 units). It seems to be very characteristic that despite the close vicinity to Świętokrzyskie Province, only 3 enterprises from this area that cooperate with the analyzed company are observed. In Małopolskie Province, itself, most of the companies are tied to companies from Krakow (73 enterprises), second according to its importance centre is Proszowice (9 companies), which is a reflection of the rank of those centres. At the same time, in the whole area of Proszowicki District, there are only 13 identified companies that offer services to the analyzed company. The most important local partners of the company are units offering forwarding services as well as connected with warehouse business activities, designing and maintaining electrical installations, delivering fuels and building materials.

In 2007 in the analyzed company, there were 200 employees. During the two years that followed, the number of workers decreased to 113. The range of commuting to work is very typical. All employees come from the Małopolskie Province; most of them (a half) come from the area of one commune – where the enterprise is located. It is possible to notice a visibly lower number of employees from areas that are well-connected with Krakow, on account of its proximity and availability of means of public transport. The employees mainly come from communes located close to the company and not from the communes peripherally neighbouring the region's metropolis.

The employees are usually people characterized by a low level of education (57% with basic vocational education) who, until the moment of commencement of work at the enterprise, were usually only involved in working on their own agricultural farms.

No less than 43% of employees combine working for the enterprise with working at their own farm. However, for almost all the polled people, working for the enterprise was the basic source of revenue in their households. The respondents expressed their satisfaction with earnings, which is not surprising since the average wage in the enterprise is higher than the national average. The analysis of motivation for commencement of work in the company provides interesting conclusions. For 78% of respondents, the vicinity of the place of work was the main motive for commencement of work for the company; for another 17%, selection of the place of work was dictated by lack of possibilities of finding employment in other companies. Employees working for the analyzed company primarily selected it on account of shortage of workplaces at other companies. Furthermore, relatively bad connection with the main city centre and agricultural character of the area are factors that had been determining professional activities of the inhabitants until the appearance of the company; this activity was largely limited to work at the residents' own farms.

The level of satisfaction with work for the company is quite high; the most highly-rated were: work conditions, possibilities of increasing professional qualifications, wages, and possibilities of promotion. On the other hand, the least positive assessment was given to the rapport with colleagues. It is not surprising though, since employees know each other mainly because of being neighbours and not because they work for the same company. Neighbourly relations are transferred to the professional area. This is also evident in the managerial team, which lowers its authority.

5. Recapitulation

Communes where large enterprises are located in NMRA are positively distinguished on the social and economic level, from companies with no enterprises; these differences are visible both in areas with mono-functional character (agricultural or agricultural and forestry), as well as multi-functional areas.

Field research is indispensable in order to evaluate the impact of a company on the local environment. The presented example of such research shows that existence of a large company in a mono-functional rural area undoubtedly has an impact on the local environment, transforming it on both social and economic levels.

In the case of the analyzed company, it is necessary to state that its influence is stronger on the social plane than on the economic one. The lower level of connection with the local enterprises results from – on one hand – the demand for higher-quality goods and service, which are only realized in the urban areas and on the other hand, from the low level of enterprise in the district. Undoubtedly though, the existence of the company stimulates local enterprise, which is proved by some of the economic units located in the neighbourhood close-by, for which business activity is strongly conditioned by the orders placed by the analyzed company.

A much stronger influence of the enterprise was observed on a social level, which is a result of the fact that the great majority of employees of the factory, including office clerks, are recruited from the district inhabitants. It is very distinctive that the range of the influence is greater towards North and East than in the Southwest, which is a consequence of the location of the company in relation to Krakow – the leading job market in the region. The enterprise very positively influences the limited local job market. For many inhabitants of the district, its localization constituted a motivation to start gainful employment, which they would never have had in other circumstances, due to possibilities of gaining profits from farm activities and a very limited number of positions in the areas neighbouring their home place.

Increasing outside-agricultural activity of the inhabitants who previously dealt with working on their own farms, can be connected with the lowering of the intensity of ground exploitation, especially in Radziemice commune, from where more than half of the employees of the enterprise are recruited.

At the same time, this phenomenon should be judged as negative. People starting work in a big company do not resign from running their own farm. The commune workers instead decide to have two professions simultaneously, which influences greater extension of the usage of the soil, which, in this area, is characterized by very high aerosanitary values.

References

- Bański, J. 2006: *Geography of a Polish Village*, Polish Economy Publishing House, Warsaw.
- Bański, J., Stola, W. 2002: *Transformations in the Spatial and Functional Structure of the Rural Areas in Poland*, *Studies of the Rural Area*, 3, PTG-IGiPZ PAN.
- Długokęcka, M. 2002: *Economic Entrepreneurship vs. Multifunctional Development of Rural Areas*, [in:] W. Kamińska (ed.), *Multifunctional Economy in Rural Areas*:

- handouts from the scientific conference devoted to Professor Marian Koziej on his seventieth birthday, Institute of Geography of the świętokrzyska Academy, The Kielce Learned Society, Kielce, p. 101–114.
- Domański, B., Gwosdz, K., Sobala-Gwosdz A. 2009: Foreign Investments in Polish Rural Areas and in Small Towns of Southeast Poland, [in:] Z. Górka, A. Zborowski (ed.), *A Man and Agriculture. To Professor Czesław Guzik on his 70th birthday*, Institute of Geography and Spatial Economy of UJ, Krakow, p. 267–279.
- Halamska, M. 2002: Enterprises, Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship in a French village [in:] M. Kłodziński, B. Fedyszak-Radziejowska (ed.), *Rural Enterprise in Poland and in the Countries of the European Union, The Problems of the Village and Agriculture Development*, the Institute of Development of Village and Agriculture PAN, Warsaw, p. 139–160.
- Kłodziński, M. 2006: Social-Economic Activation of Rural Communes and Small Towns, *The Problems of the Village and Agriculture Development*, the Institute of Development of Village and Agriculture PAN, Warsaw.
- Kosiedowski, W. 1984: Factors and Potential of Location of the Industry in the Region, *Treatises of Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń*.
- Rosner, A. 2002: Entrepreneurship in the Village vs. Local Job Market, [in:] M. Kłodziński, B. Fedyszak-Radziejowska (ed.), *Village Entrepreneurship in Poland and in the countries of the European Union Community, The Problems of the Village and Agriculture Development*, the Institute of Development of Village and Agriculture PAN, Warsaw, p. 56–73.
- Smętkowski, M., Jałowiecki, B., Gorzelak, G. 2008: Diagnosis of Problems of Development of Metropolitan Areas and Recommendation of Delimitation of the Metropolitan Areas in Poland, *The Centre for European Regional and Local Studies. (EUROREG)*, Warsaw University, Warsaw.

LARGE ENTERPRISES AS A FACTOR TRIGGERING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN AREAS

Summary

Rural areas in Poland, in spite of considerable changes that have taken place for the last 20 years, still present lower levels of social and economic development in comparison with urban areas. Therefore, literature widely discusses ways of activating those areas. The most frequently mentioned as the best method of improving the life conditions of the inhabitants of rural areas is multifunctional development of the rural areas, which is mostly related to development of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (Rosner 2002, Halamska 2002, Długokęcka 2002, Kłodziński 2006). At the same time, too little attention is focused on big economic units that appear in the rural areas of Poland and that are crucial for the local surrounding area, especially in the case of a village with mono-functional agricultural character. The analyses carried out, allowed the identification of enterprises where the number of employed amounts to at least 200 people and which are located in rural communes (with the residence office in a village), outside metropolitan areas (in accordance with classification made by Smętkowski, Jałowicki and Gorzelak 2008).

In 2007 in the highlighted area, over 170 above-mentioned companies existed in 142 communes. In spite of the fact that the observed tendency was to be located near city areas and raw materials supplies (in cases of companies whose business activities were based on raw materials), some of them were located in typically agricultural areas. In such areas, two kinds of enterprises were observed to appear. The first kind of enterprise was the food processing company, whose production is based on agricultural products; the second characteristic group included companies whose business activity profile had nothing to do with the natural resources of the area and who only established enterprise in such an area in order to lower expenses.

The analyzed enterprises differ from each other by size, date of establishment, business profile and origin of capital.

The largest group included companies employing between 250-499 people (79 companies), followed, with respect to size, by 200 and 249 employees (over 60 companies). With respect to the date of establishment, most (34.9%) companies were established before 1990, yet the most dynamic period was the first stage of transformation in Poland, between 1990 and 1995, which complied with the general trend of development of entrepreneurship in Poland. As far as the profile of business activity is concerned, the largest group included companies dealing with food production and food processing; however, many companies manufacturing furniture and wooden products also exist.

On the basis of statistical analysis of the communes with the enterprises in NMRA in relation to the all communes in this category of areas, we can conclude that communes where big business units are located differ in a distinctive way from the compared category of communes. Differences were observed among many, including the tendency of migration, level of enterprise or even investments into technical infrastructure. In any case, a more advantageous situation was noticed in communes where such investments had taken place. The above-mentioned situation might be a consequence of the positive influence of enterprises, which stimulate

development of local enterprise, encourage new inhabitants, and influence life conditions. On the other hand, better condition of these communities were noticeable at the moment when the companies were established, which should be perceived as an important localization factor. With no in-depth studies of motives of localization of particular companies, as well as with no field research, there is no possible way to unambiguously settle this issue.

Interesting data is provided by the company mentioned in this study, which is located in a rural area. The analyses of the relation between large companies with local economic units, range of commuting as well as employees' attitudes and opinions concerning job satisfaction at the company, allow us to draw more specific conclusions.

It may be concluded from the research carried out that the company influences local environment in an essential way; moreover, the influence is stronger when it comes to the local job market than to the level of local enterprise. A much stronger impact on the social level results from the fact that most of employees, including managing officers, are recruited from the inhabitants of the nearest areas to the company. For many inhabitants of the district, the location of the company constituted the motivation for deciding to start gainful employment, which, in different circumstances, they never would have started because of the agricultural incomes their farm brought them and the very limited number of vacancies at companies in close proximity to the place of their residence.

The increase in the out-farming professional activity of the inhabitants who dealt with farming until the establishment of the nearby company can be connected with the decrease of land use intensity in the district, especially in the Radziemice commune, from where half of the employees of the company were recruited. The work conditions in the analyzed company, taking into consideration both salary and possibilities of promotion and developing professional skills, are positively assessed by employees. This is reflected by an objective assessment of the salary and real actions taken by the management of the company, while relations among workers are assessed negatively, which results from transferring relations among neighbours to the professional area.

