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Tytuł:

Suburbanizacja miast wojewódzkich w Polsce a przemiany społeczno-gospodarcze ich obszarów funkcjonalnych

This dissertation focuses on the functional expansion of voivodeship cities beyond their administrative borders, the creation of functional areas, and the mutual relations between municipalities within them. The aim was to analyze and evaluate changes in functional areas of voivodeship cities in the context of suburbanization processes. Indicators of development in three spheres – economy, space, and society – are used for delimitation of functional areas and identifying the most important processes occurring there. On this basis, functional areas were divided according to their economic, spatial and social potential. Then, cities representing each of the four groups were selected for more detailed analysis.

The idea behind the indicators was to make it easy to replicate them and thus to enable future analyses and comparisons of changes in functional areas of all voivodship cities. Therefore, data from the Central Statistical Office, offering comparability between all Polish municipalities, were used in the analyses.

In the analyses, differences between the functional areas became visible, which cannot always be explained only by the core city's population or the current economic profile. Many factors influence the current shape and extent of functional areas, including historical ones. The urban fabric is very durable, and decisions made during the industrial revolution or in the early 20th century can still influence the development of a city in the 21st century.

The results suggest that the negative consequences of suburbanization form a set of dysfunctional economic, spatial and social phenomena that reinforce each other. There is no specific cause of urban sprawl, nor is there a recipe for controlling this process. Cities are not spreading only because of the insufficient housing market. Also of great importance are trends moving people towards living “closer to nature”, even if it is harming the natural environment. The economic aspect is also not without significance.

Functional areas seem to be incompatible with the existing division into communes and counties. The applied solutions, such as Integrated Territorial Investments, are ad hoc and targeted, trying to mitigate the effects without addressing the cause of the existing problems. Empowering functional areas and providing them with real management tools, e.g., refining existing solutions concerning metropolitan unions, seems to be the most effective solution for improving the functioning of functional areas and reconciling the conflicting interests of local governments at the municipal level.