

COMPARISON OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS IN MUNICIPAL AND LAND COUNTIES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN REGIONS OF POLAND

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify and assess the conditions of socio-economic development in municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland.

Design/methodology/approach: The article identifies and assesses the conditions of socio-economic development in municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland. The empirical material of the article applies to all municipal and land counties in the country, as well as to all municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland. The numerical data come from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw and concern 2022. The collected and organised empirical material was developed in descriptive, tabular, and graphic form, using the method of comparative analysis. Furthermore, the article provides a point assessment of the diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in the municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022.

Findings: The analysis of statistical data carried out in the article confirmed the research hypothesis, assuming that the conditions of socio-economic development are differentiated between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, with better conditions in municipal counties, especially in the western regions, and the worst in land counties of the eastern regions.

Originality/value: The originality of the work lies in the approach to the analysis of the research issues undertaken. For the purposes of the research, the article included a point assessment of the analyzed diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in the municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country. The work is addressed primarily to local government officials responsible for the conditions, opportunities, and directions of local socio-economic development of counties local government units in Poland, as well as to all other decision-makers involved in the implementation of local development policy.

Keywords: socio-economic development, development conditions, municipal and land counties in Poland.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

The issue of socio-economic development on a regional and local scale arouses wide interest among economists. The main reasons for this are, above all, the danger of disappearing the specific features of the regions, their cultural identity and historical heritage, as well as the growing threats to the values of the natural environment. In turn, from an economic point of view, the key issue is the optimization of the use of human capital and natural resources in the management process. Another significant problem is the growing interregional and intraregional disproportions in the level of development and quality of life of residents, which generally leads to migration of people from less developed regions and, consequently, weakens their development opportunities (Green-Leigh, Blakely, 2016; Błachut, Cierpiał-Wolan, Czudec, Kata, 2018; Grzebyk, Miś, Stec, Zając, 2019).

Socio-economic development is a process encompassing all beneficial changes of a quantitative and qualitative nature, the attribute of which is durability and impact on the level and quality of life of the population. It should be considered in the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects, and its indispensable components are the natural environment and spatial order. Socio-economic development is a complex, multi-threaded process that varies in time and space. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about a universal set of its factors, but they are generally divided into two groups, i.e., endogenous and exogenous (Szlachta, 1996; Sekuła, 2001; Korenik, 2003; Łabędzki, 2008; Józefowicz, Smolińska, 2019).

Socio-economic development, understood as the scale, pace, and direction of changes in regional and local communities leading to better conditions and quality of life, as well as the resulting spatial structure and forms of space development, are spatially diverse and are the result of many conditions. They can be divided into the following groups regarding conditions: historical, related to the location in geographical space and economic structures, the natural environment and the quality of the human environment, the level of infrastructure development (social, technical, economic, institutional), the activity and effectiveness of local government activities, and also the entrepreneurship and innovation of residents. From a different perspective, we can also mention site conditions, environmental conditions, conditions resulting from space development, and conditions related to the quality of the regional or local community. The literature on the subject emphasises the key importance of sustainable development of local government units (including counties and communes), because it leads directly to improvement of the functioning of the economy and society, as well as the condition and quality of the natural environment (Heffner, 2007; 2011a; 2011b; Akgün, Baycan, Nijkamp, 2015; Holden, Linnerud, Banister, 2017; Dziekański, 2018; Miłek, 2018; Józefowicz, Smolińska, 2019; Utzig, Raczkowska, Mięka, 2023).

A very important factor determining socio-economic development is the improvement of the quality of human and social capital, and therefore also intellectual capital. Factors accelerating development may also include special values of the natural environment, convenient location along communication routes, or cultural heritage (Kłodziński, 2001; Nerdrum, Erikson, 2001; Bontis, 2004; Spsychalski, 2005; Kamińska, 2011; Wosiek, 2012; Sikorska, 2013).

In the process of socio-economic development, a special role is played by institutions at various levels, including local government (regional and local), which create and implement development policy. It should be emphasised that lasting cooperation of institutions responsible for the directions and dynamics of changes in the region, county, or commune is necessary. Moreover, due to the uneven distribution of resources or different development paths of regions in the past, the activities of regional and local level institutions require support from the state. The problem of economically weaker regions does not concern only their inhabitants and, like positive changes, have a supra-regional dimension and serve the general society (greater dynamics of development of the entire economy, improvement of the condition of the natural environment, limiting the negative effects of excessive migration, etc.). One of the important instruments to support socio-economic development are investments by local government units (regional and local) that improve technical and social infrastructure. Taking over the costs of investment and maintenance of road, water and sewage infrastructure, or waste disposal infrastructure by the local government increases the attractiveness of the region or local environment (county, commune) and thus promotes their development. In turn, a well-developed social infrastructure improves the quality of life of residents and motivates them to stay in their current place of residence, which is particularly important in the case of young and well-educated people. The dynamics of the socio-economic development of the region or the local environment (county, commune) largely depends on the number and economic strength of economic entities. Therefore, among the instruments of regional and local development policy, activities that support the development of entrepreneurship should have an important place. In this way, not only does the market offer of goods and services addressed to a wide range of consumers expand, but new jobs are also created. This, in turn, is an important factor in increasing the level and quality of life of residents and reducing migration pressure (Paul, 2014; Błachut, Cierpień-Wolan, Czudec, Kata, 2018).

A particularly important task of local government is to initiate, organise, coordinate and support activities for the socio-economic development of a given territorial unit (county, commune) and to meet the collective needs of the community, as well as dealing with public matters of local importance (improving the quality of life and the level of service for residents, improving the conditions for running a business, improving the quality of the natural environment, spatial order, securing the effective use of local development factors, improving competitiveness, etc.). In turn, creating a socio-economic development policy should be based on well-thought-out, calculated and consciously selected instruments, tailored to the conditions

and needs as well as the economic situation of a given territorial unit (county, commune). These instruments are grouped into several categories, i.e. income and expenditure, financial and non-financial, influencing economic entities and their environment, as well as obligatory and optional (Paul, 2014; Skica, Bem, 2014; Parysek, 2015; Kogut-Jaworska, 2017).

Effective implementation of local socio-economic development policy depends on many factors, including primarily: understanding the essence and meaning of local development, willingness to act in this area, knowledge and ingenuity of the entities of this policy and the local economy, resources enabling development, unmet social needs that stimulate and direct this development, as well as on collecting appropriate financial resources, gathering people around the idea of local development and creating an appropriate social climate, as well as on the effectiveness of the existing organisational structures of this development. However, the basic structure initiating and organising the process of socio-economic development will always be the local government, in relation to which the following conditions for the effectiveness of development policy are distinguished: pro-development activity, entrepreneurship, openness to innovation and cooperation, inducing the process of collective learning, readiness to build partnerships and create social capital (Paul, 2014; Guzal-Dec, 2015; Parysek, 2015; Zwolińska-Ligaj, 2019).

The originality of the article lies in the approach to the analysis of the research issues undertaken. For the purposes of the research, it included a point assessment of all the diagnostic characteristics analysed diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in municipal and rural poviats of the eastern and western regions of Poland against the background of such poviats in the country.

The article poses a research question that attempts to answer it. What is interesting is what the conditions of socio-economic development in urban and rural districts in the eastern and western regions of Poland and are they different?

This is the reason for creating the article, its structure and the method of processing the research results.

2. Research aim, empirical material, and research methods

The aim of the article is to identify and assess the conditions of socio-economic development in municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland.

The article puts forward a research hypothesis assuming that the conditions of socio-economic development vary between municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland, with better conditions in municipal counties, especially in the western regions, and the worst in land counties of the eastern regions.

The empirical material of the article concerns all municipal and land counties in the country, as well as all municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, i.e., in six provinces, i.e. Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, and Podlaskie, as well as Dolnośląskie, Lubuskie and Zachodniopomorskie¹. The numerical data come from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw and concern 2022. The collected and organised empirical material was developed in descriptive, tabular, and graphic form, using the method of comparative analysis.

To identify and assess the conditions of socio-economic development in municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland, the following diagnostic features illustrating them in 2022 were analysed: population density (population per 1 km²), percentage of the working-age population, nonworking-age population per 100 people of working age, natural increase per 1000 population, net migration for permanent residence per 1000 population, working people per 1000 population of working age, registered unemployment rate (%), percentage of population using the water supply, sewage and gas networks, total income county budgets per capita (PLN), own income of county budgets per capita (PLN), share of own income in total income of county budgets (%), total expenditure of county budgets per capita (PLN), investment expenditure of county budgets per capita (PLN) and share of investment expenditure in total expenditure of county budgets (%).

Additionally, the article provides a point assessment of the analyzed diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in the municipal and land counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022. Individual diagnostic characteristics were compared with the average of counties in the country, which was taken as 100 points, and their advantage or underweight was assessed accordingly in all counties covered by the study. Then, all points were summarised and the average was calculated (Figures 1-4). It should be emphasised that this is a new approach to the research problem discussed in the article.

3. Results

Each local government unit has its own specificity, which is determined primarily by such features as: spatial location and accessibility, population and demographic situation (number and structure of population, quality of human and social capital, socio-cultural features, changes in the number of inhabitants, i.e. growth, stagnation, decline), level of development and structure of the economy, labour market and unemployment, material and intangible resources, infrastructure (social, technical, institutional), natural environment (quality, values), local

¹ One of the administrative borders of these provinces is the state border.

initiatives (establishing and developing cooperation, entrepreneurship, innovation, openness to new solutions). In turn, the conditions in which the local government operates, i.e., the features of a given local environment (county, commune), largely determine its financial situation (level and structure of income and budget expenditure, debt) and determines the possibilities and directions of its activities in the field of further socio-economic development. Particularly important conditions for the development and functioning of local government lie in the endogenous (often specific and unique) features of the local environment (county, commune). These features have a significant impact on the scale, directions and dynamics of socio-economic development, and also constitute the primary (somewhat natural) conditions in which the local government operates and conducts its own development policy (Grzebyk, Sołtysiak, Stec, Zając, 2020; Sołtysiak, Zając, 2023).

Table 1.

Selected characteristics characterising demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market in municipal and land counties covered by the research in 2022

Specification	Counties		
	total	municipal	land
Poland			
Number of counties	380,0	66,0	314,0
Population density - population per 1 km ²	355,4	1572,0	99,7
Percentage of the population of working age	58,5	57,6	58,7
Population of non-working age per 100 people of working age	70,9	73,7	70,4
Natural increase per 1000 population	-4,5	-5,1	-4,4
Balance of migration for permanent residence per 1,000 population	-0,9	-3,0	-0,4
Working persons per 1,000 working-age population	361,7	568,2	318,3
Registered unemployment rate	7,3	4,5	7,9
Eastern regions of Poland			
Number of counties	66	11	55
Population density - population per 1 km ²	318,5	1541,7	73,8
Percentage of the population of working age	58,8	57,7	59,0
Population of non-working age per 100 people of working age	70,2	73,3	69,6
Natural increase per 1000 population	-4,4	-4,6	-3,3
Balance of migration for permanent residence per 1,000 population	-2,5	-3,4	-2,3
Working persons per 1,000 working-age population	318,2	543,0	273,2
Registered unemployment rate	9,4	6,6	10,0
Western regions of Poland			
Number of counties	65	9	56
Population density - population per 1 km ²	224,6	1140,8	77,3
Percentage of the population of working age	58,4	57,4	58,6
Population of non-working age per 100 people of working age	71,2	74,4	70,7
Natural increase per 1000 population	-5,5	-5,9	-5,5
Balance of migration for permanent residence per 1,000 population	-0,3	-1,9	-0,1
Working persons per 1,000 working-age population	364,0	546,9	334,6
Registered unemployment rate	7,3	3,5	7,9

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

According to the territorial division of the country, there are 380 local government units in Poland, including 66 municipal counties and 314 land counties. It should be added that in the eastern and western regions of Poland, both the number of counties and the percentage of municipal and land counties are similar. In the eastern regions, the percentage of municipal

counties is 16.7% and land counties 83.3%, while in the western regions it is 13.8% and 86.2%, respectively (Table 1).

Demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market are an important factor determining the possibilities and needs of socio-economic development in a given area (Grzebyk, Miś, Stec, Zająć, 2019; Grzebyk, Sołtysiak, Stec, Zająć, 2020).

The data in Table 1 shows that among the analysed features illustrating the demographic conditions and the situation on the labor market in county local government units in Poland, the following are more favourable for counties in the eastern regions: population density, percentage of the working-age population, number of the working-age population, unproductive people per 100 people of working age and natural increase per 1000 population. However, in the case of other characteristics, i.e. the net migration for permanent residence per 1000 population, the number of employed persons per 1000 working-age population and the registered unemployment rate, the situation is better in the counties of the western regions of Poland.

Moreover, there are differences in this respect between municipal and land counties, both throughout Poland and in its eastern and western regions. In the case of features illustrating demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market, such as population density, the number of employees per 1000 working-age population and the registered unemployment rate, the situation is better in municipal counties. However, other features, such as the percentage of the working-age population, the number of the non-working-age population per 100 working-age people, the natural increase per 1000 population and the net migration for permanent residence per 1000 population, are more favorable in land counties (Table 1).

Infrastructure constitutes the backbone of the economy and the basis of all economic activity, determining its scope, structure, and spatial distribution. The level of its development largely determines the investment and economic attractiveness of a given area and determines its development possibilities. Among the elements of infrastructure that play an important role in the economic activation of a given area, as well as in shaping the conditions and quality of life of its inhabitants, the following include: roads, communications, energy and gas networks, water supply, and sewage systems, which has been confirmed in many studies and analyses. It should be added that infrastructure in Poland is still relatively underdeveloped, and there are very large regional and local differences in this respect (Pięćek, 1999; Czudec, 2003; Kołodziejczyk, 2009, 2013; Jarosiński, 2011; Grzebyk, Miś, Stec, Zająć, 2019).

In county local government units in Poland, the best developed element of infrastructure is the water supply network, followed by the sewage network, and the least developed is the gas network. However, counties in the western regions of Poland have better access to these infrastructure elements compared to counties in the eastern regions. Additionally, it should be noted that there are differences in this respect between municipal and land counties, both throughout Poland and in its eastern and western regions. Because in the case of municipal counties, the access of their inhabitants to the elements of the analysed infrastructure elements is better compared to land counties (Table 2).

Table 2.

Selected characteristics characterising infrastructure conditions in municipal and land counties covered by the research in 2022

Specification	Counties		
	total	municipal	land
Poland			
Percentage of the population using the water supply network	91,7	97,5	90,5
Percentage of the population using the sewage network	65,9	92,4	60,4
Percentage of the population using the gas network	46,3	76,5	40,0
Eastern regions of Poland			
Percentage of the population using the water supply network	85,1	95,8	82,9
Percentage of the population using the sewage network	59,2	92,6	52,5
Percentage of the population using the gas network	45,3	70,3	40,2
Western regions of Poland			
Percentage of the population using the water supply network	94,9	97,9	94,4
Percentage of the population using the sewage network	74,3	91,1	71,6
Percentage of the population using the gas network	54,6	83,0	50,0

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

The basic condition for the effective and efficient implementation of tasks by local government units is to provide them with stable budget revenues, which not only allow them to finance current expenses, but also enable them to undertake investments that support further socio-economic development (Dziekański, 2018; Czudec, 2021).

The average value of total income and the own income of the county budgets per capita, as well as the share of the own income in the total income of the county budgets, are lower in counties of the eastern regions of Poland, compared to the average for counties throughout the country. However, in counties in the western regions of Poland they are similar to the average for counties throughout the country. It should be added that there is a clear difference in this respect between municipal and land counties, and this applies both to the entire country and its eastern and western regions. The average value of the total income and the own income of the county budgets per capita, as well as the share of the own income in the total income of the county budgets, is much higher in municipal counties compared to land counties, and this applies especially to the western regions of Poland (Table 3).

The average value of total expenditure of county budgets per capita in counties of eastern regions of Poland is similar to the average for all counties in the country, while it is lower in counties of western regions. In turn, the average value of investment expenditure of county budgets per capita, as well as the share of investment expenditure in the total expenditure of county budgets, is similar in counties of the western regions of Poland to the average for all counties in the country, and it is higher in counties of eastern regions. Moreover, there is a clear difference in this respect between municipal and land counties, both throughout the country and in its eastern and western regions. The average value of the total expenditure and investment expenditure of county budgets per capita is much higher in municipal counties compared to land counties, and this applies especially to the western regions of Poland. However, in the case of a feature as the share of investment expenditure in the total expenditure of county budgets,

it should be noted that it is the highest in land counties from the eastern regions of Poland and in municipal counties from the western regions (Table 3).

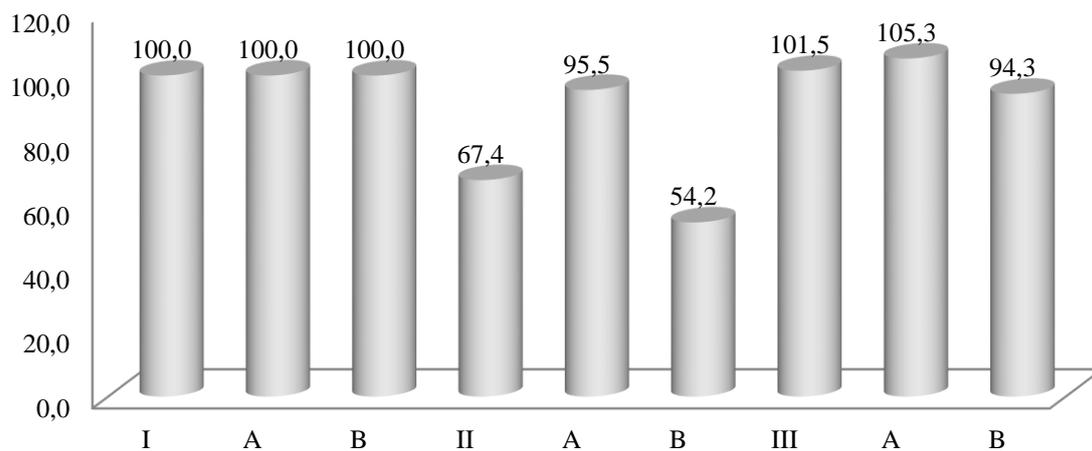
Table 3.

Selected characteristics characterising the economic and financial conditions in municipal and land counties covered by the research in 2022

Specification	Counties		
	total	municipal	land
Poland			
Total income county budgets per capita in PLN	2.809,9	8.380,6	1.639,0
Own income of county budgets per capita in PLN	1.287,1	4.443,8	623,6
Share of own income in total income of county budgets in %	45,8	53,0	38,0
Total expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	2.909,3	8.836,8	1.663,4
Investment expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	506,7	1.404,6	317,9
Share of investment expenditure in total expenditure of county budgets in %	17,4	15,9	19,1
Eastern regions of Poland			
Total income county budgets per capita in PLN	2.663,2	8.363,4	1.684,8
Own income of county budgets per capita in PLN	1.101,5	3.664,8	588,9
Share of own income in total income of county budgets in %	39,4	43,8	35,0
Total expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	2.910,7	8.840,1	1.724,8
Investment expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	601,4	1.341,4	453,4
Share of investment expenditure in total expenditure of county budgets in %	20,7	15,2	26,3
Western regions of Poland			
Total income county budgets per capita in PLN	2.797,9	8.622,9	1.705,4
Own income of county budgets per capita in PLN	1.216,6	4.598,1	673,2
Share of own income in total income of county budgets in %	45,7	53,3	39,5
Total expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	2.754,0	9.257,1	1.708,8
Investment expenditure of county budgets per capita in PLN	499,6	1.951,9	266,2
Share of investment expenditure in total expenditure of county budgets in %	18,1	21,1	15,6

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

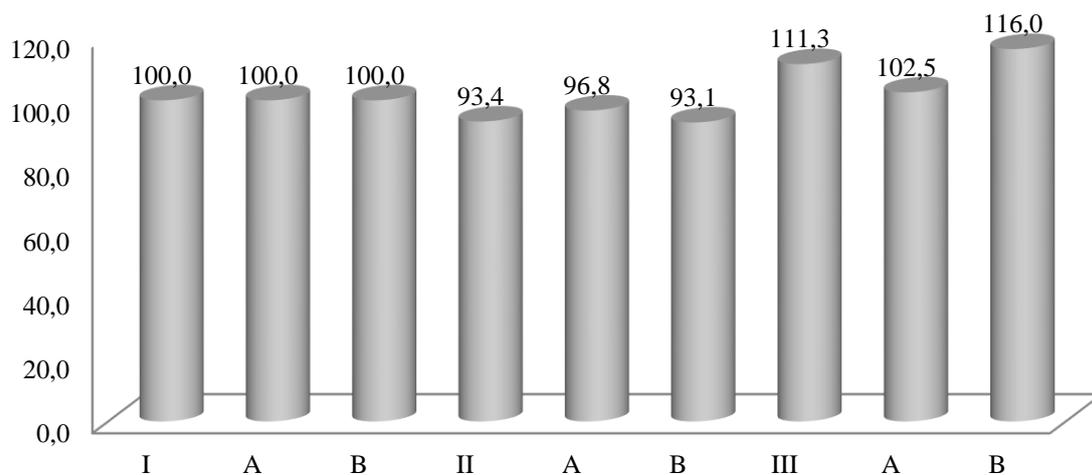
Figure 1 presents the results of the point assessment on demographic conditions and the situation on the labor market in the municipal and land counties covered by the research against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022. It should be noted that counties in the western regions of Poland are characterised, on average, similar demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market to the average for counties throughout the country. However, in the counties of the eastern regions of Poland they are clearly worse. In addition, there are also differences in this respect between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, and this applies especially to the eastern regions. In the case of counties in the eastern regions of Poland, land counties are clearly characterised by the worst demographic conditions and the situation on the labor market, and in municipal counties they are slightly worse than the average for city counties throughout the country. In turn, in the case of counties in the western regions, the best demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market are found in municipal counties, and in land counties they are slightly worse than the average for land counties throughout the country.



Explanations: I – total counties in Poland; II – total counties in the eastern regions of Poland; III – total counties in the western regions of Poland; A – municipal counties; B – land counties.

Figure 1. Score assessment of demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market in the municipal and land counties covered by the research against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022 (counties in Poland = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.



Explanations: I – total counties in Poland; II – total counties in the eastern regions of Poland; III – total counties in the western regions of Poland; A – municipal counties; B – land counties.

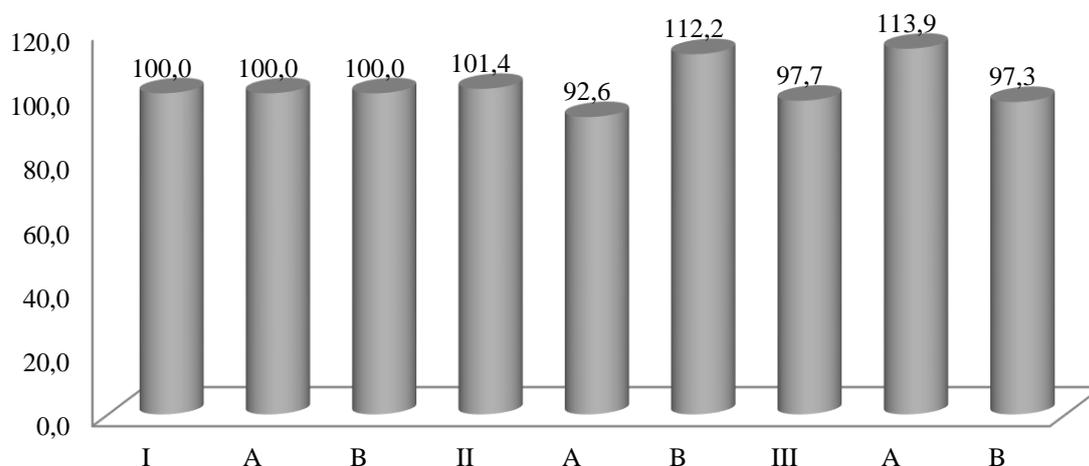
Figure 2. Point evaluation of infrastructure conditions in municipal and land counties covered by the research compared to all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022 (counties in Poland = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

Figure 2 presents the results of the point assessment of infrastructure conditions in the municipal and land counties covered by the research compared to all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022. On the basis of this, it should be noted that the counties in the western regions of Poland are characterised by, on average, better infrastructural conditions, compared to the average for counties across the country. In the counties of the eastern regions of Poland, the analysed conditions are slightly worse. Additionally, there are differences in this

respect between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland. In the case of counties in the western regions, the best infrastructure conditions are found in land counties, while this group of counties in the eastern regions is characterized by the poorest infrastructural conditions. However, in the case of municipal counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, infrastructural conditions are similar to the average for municipal counties throughout the country, although they are slightly better in the western regions.

Figure 3 presents the results of the point assessment of the economic and financial conditions in the municipal and land counties covered by the research compared to all the municipal and land counties in the country for 2022. It should be noted that counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland are characterised by, on average, similar economic and financial conditions, compared to the average for counties throughout the country, with slightly better conditions in the counties of the eastern regions. However, there are differences in this respect between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland. In the case of counties in the eastern regions, the best economic and financial conditions are found in land counties, and in the case of counties in the western regions, this applies to municipal counties. In turn, the worst economic and financial conditions occur in municipal counties in the eastern regions of Poland.



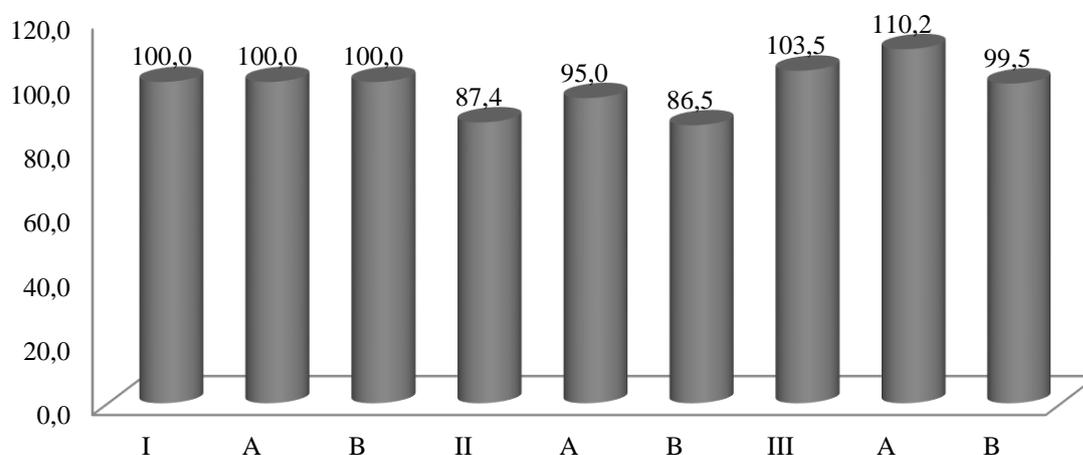
Explanations: I – total counties in Poland; II – total counties in the eastern regions of Poland; III – total counties in the western regions of Poland; A – municipal counties; B – land counties.

Figure 3. Point evaluation of economic and financial conditions in municipal and land counties covered by the investigation compared to all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022 (counties in Poland = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

Figure 4 shows the results of the point assessment regarding the conditions of socio-economic development (i.e. demographic conditions and the situation on the labor market, as well as infrastructural and economic-financial conditions together) in the municipal and land counties covered by the research against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022. On its basis, it should be concluded that counties in the western regions

of Poland are, on average, characterised by slightly better conditions of socio-economic development compared to the average for counties throughout the country. However, in the counties of eastern Poland, these conditions are clearly worse. Moreover, there is also variation in this respect between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, and this applies especially to the eastern regions. Because in the case of counties in the eastern regions of Poland, land counties are clearly characterised by the worst conditions of socio-economic development, and in municipal counties they are slightly worse than the average for municipal counties throughout the country. In turn, in the case of counties in the western regions, better conditions for socio-economic development are found in municipal counties, while in land counties these conditions are similar to the average for land counties throughout the country.



Explanations: I – total counties in Poland; II – total counties in the eastern regions of Poland; III – total counties in the western regions of Poland; A – municipal counties; B – land counties.

Figure 4. Point evaluation of socio-economic development conditions (that is, demographic conditions and the situation on the labor market, as well as infrastructural and economic-financial conditions together) in the municipal and land counties covered by the research against the background of all municipal and land counties in the country for 2022 (counties in Poland = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

This confirms the research hypothesis put forward in the article, which assumes that the conditions of socio-economic development are differentiated between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, with better conditions in municipal counties, especially in the western regions, and the worst in land counties of the eastern regions.

4. Summary and conclusions

The local socio-economic development of county local government units in Poland and its conditions are very important theoretical and practical issues, especially in the context of the functioning of the economy and society and improving the quality of life.

The analysis of the collected statistical data carried out in the article shows that:

- ✓ the conditions of socio-economic development of county local government units in Poland vary between the counties of its eastern and western regions, as well as between municipal and land counties in the studied regions;
- ✓ demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market are clearly better in the counties of the western regions of Poland, and this especially applies to municipal counties. However, counties in the eastern regions of Poland are characterised by much worse demographic conditions and the situation on the labour market, and this applies especially to land counties;
- ✓ infrastructure conditions are better in counties of the western regions of Poland, and this especially applies to land counties. In turn, the counties in the eastern regions of the country are characterised by worse infrastructural conditions, and this applies especially to land counties;
- ✓ economic and financial conditions are similar in counties of the eastern and western regions of Poland and close to the average for counties from throughout the country. Additionally, the best economic and financial conditions in eastern regions are found in land counties and in western regions in municipal counties, while the worst are in municipal counties of eastern regions of Poland.

Furthermore, statistical data confirmed the research hypothesis, assuming that the conditions of socio-economic development are differentiated between municipal and land counties in the eastern and western regions of Poland, with better conditions in municipal counties, especially in the western regions, and the worst in land counties of the eastern regions.

It should be added that the results and conclusions from the analysis of the collected statistical data presented in the article have important practical implications. They provide important and up-to-date knowledge that may be useful primarily for local government officials responsible for the conditions, opportunities and directions of local socio-economic development of powiat local government units in Poland, as well as for all other decision-makers involved in the implementation of local development policy. This justifies the need to continue similar research and analyses.

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