

DETERMINANTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CITIES WITH COUNTY RIGHTS IN POLAND

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify and assess the conditions for socio-economic development in cities with county rights in Poland.

Design/methodology/approach: The article identifies and assesses the determinants of socio-economic development in cities with county rights in Poland. The empirical material of the article concerns all cities with county rights in Poland. The numerical data come from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw. The collected and organised empirical material was developed in descriptive, tabular, and graphical form, using the comparative analysis method. The article also makes a point assessment of the diagnostic features illustrating the determinants of socioeconomic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland, which is a new approach to the research problem.

Findings: The analysis of the collected and processed statistical data confirmed the research hypothesis put forward in the article, which assumes that cities with county rights in Poland are diversified in terms of the conditions of socio-economic development, with the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants having the best situation in this respect.

Originality/value: The originality of the work lies in the approach to the analysis of the undertaken research issues. The article presents a point assessment of the diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. The work is addressed primarily to local government officials responsible for creating conditions, possibilities, and directions of socio-economic development of cities with county rights in Poland.

Keywords: conditions of socio-economic development, cities with county rights, Poland.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Economic growth is the improvement of quantitative relations in the scope of the growth of production and services, consumption, production potential, etc., leading to an increase in their quantity per capita in a given country. The most important elements of economic growth are factors that ensure an increase in the flow of products and services, the sum of products and services per capita, and the rate of economic growth. Economic growth refers only to quantitative changes, assuming that basic macroeconomic values are characterised by a long-term trend. Economic development is a broader term because, in addition to quantitative changes, it also includes qualitative changes. Economic development means changes in the structure of the productive potential of the economy, the structure of production and consumption, socio-economic relations, and the system of functioning of the economy. It covers the entire sphere of human economic activities, both production activity and the division of produced goods, not only through quantitative growth, but above all through structural and qualitative changes in the broadly understood management process. Development is a category that is inextricably linked to change and time. Without changes, we cannot talk about development. In the most general terms, development is defined as an ongoing process of changes in which successive changes occur in an orderly manner and are maintained relatively permanently. This process consists of: progress, regression, and stagnation. Progress means changes assessed positively, regression negatively, while stagnation is a development phase characterised by a lack of changes. The broadest concept is socio-economic development, which, in addition to growth and development, also includes social and institutional changes. Economic growth means changes that are reflected by the relationships between numbers, and economic development adds qualitative changes to this. These concepts, often used interchangeably in practice, differ significantly from each other. The long-term issue that should be analysed is economic development and the factors that determine it that influence the growth of the international competitiveness of a given country. Achieving economic growth is one of basic goals of the economic policy pursued by the governments of most countries. Economic development is something natural today, inscribed in the economic order of each country. Therefore, socio-economic development can be defined as a process of desired changes, both quantitative and qualitative, not only in the economic sphere, but also in the social, cultural, political, institutional, systemic, etc. (Marciniak, 1997; Szałańska, 2000; Budnikowski, 2001; Miszczuk, Żuk, 2007; Kupiec, 2008; Jańczuk, 2013).

Each city is concentrated in a certain territory with its own separate administrative and political organisation. In connection with this, it can be treated as a specific organisation and a system of interconnected goals, structures, people, and procedures that can be distinguished from the environment. The size of the city, as well as the correlated offer of multidirectional possibilities and activities, and the diversity and complexity of the social, cultural and

organisational structure are the cumulative product of evolution in the process of historical development. However, the evolution of each urban centre is directly related in terms of feedback to the functioning and hierarchical changes of the entire system of cities at the regional, national, and international level. Only very few urban centres enter the path of transformations that lead to the formation of a metropolis during their development. Most urban centres, despite the structural and spatial changes that occur in them at different rates and scopes, remain in the initial phase of development. A metropolitan area is usually considered to be an urban centre with the surrounding zone of influence and connections that, through the multifunctional and specialised nature of space in terms of production and services, meets its own needs and those of the broadly understood region and attracts external activities. Urban centres, and in particular large urban agglomerations, often called metropolises, are a fundamental element of functioning regional structures. In this sense, the links between the socio-economic and political-cultural impact of urban centres and the functioning of regional systems are extremely strong. Therefore, cities are local government units with an exceptional influence on supralocal, and even regional, national and international development, because it is in them that the potentials, activities and entities deciding on its course are concentrated. The measure of a city's strength is primarily its ability to shape socio-economic development, including generating new solutions and new processes characterised by innovation and creativity (Wrana, 2013; Heffner, 2023).

The concept of a large city (metropolis) as an economic region was formulated using the theory of the economic base of the city. It is based on the assumption that all employment in a city can be divided into two sectors, i.e., primary and secondary. The first sector includes all types of activities that mainly meet external and export needs, and their location is the result of the impact of factors of national or international importance. On the other hand, the second sector includes those activities that are locally orientated, and their function is to meet the needs of the entire urban population and their immediate surroundings. They play a fundamental role in shaping the conditions of functioning of the urban structure and the level and quality of life of the residents, and are also an important element in attracting city-forming factors and influencing the image of the urban centre and its attractiveness. It should be added that the size of a city measured by the number of residents is usually a derivative of the sum of employment in both of the above sectors (Matwiejczyk, Glińska, Barkun, 2020; Heffner, 2023).

Larger urban centres, both in international, national, and regional systems, create hierarchical relations that depend on the scope and degree of development of the so-called central functions. They are considered typical urban functions and, in the classical sense, include the production of goods and the provision of services with varying degrees of specialisation. Urban centres with more central functions are located at higher levels of the hierarchy of the settlement system. The greater their concentration in the city, the greater its influence range. Central centres are also characterised by a larger population, which translates into offering a wider range of goods, services, and activities compared to cities from lower

levels of the settlement system hierarchy (Heffner, 1992; 2023; Duranton, Puga, 2014; Khiali-Miab, van Strien, Axhausen, Grêt-Regamey, 2019).

The effective implementation of urban policies is based on the role that individual cities due to their position in the hierarchical network of cities. In particular, it is about indicating which of them performs or is predisposed to perform the function of growth centres. In connection with this, the identification of the nodalness of cities takes place, i.e. their absolute importance in the urban network and centrality, i.e. the accumulation of functions that the city performs for its hinterland. Determining the centrality of cities in turn makes it possible to indicate the position of individual urban centres, as well as the nodal function they perform in the urban network, which is an important condition necessary to determine their potential as growth centers. It should be added that the following attributes are a manifestation of the fact that cities are becoming real centres of socio-economic growth and development:

- high attractiveness for entities seeking conditions for the implementation of unconventional, innovative projects,
- significant share in the city's economic structure of companies creating local and supra-local cooperation networks around themselves, including with the participation of entities transferring intellectual values to the economy,
- the presence of numerous potential partner entities in the city that enable enterprises to outsource functions and, as a consequence, specialise their own activities and constantly strengthen leading strategic competences,
- extensive relations connecting economic entities with scientific, research and development and educational institutions as well as with local government institutions. (Wrana, 2013; Heffner, 2023; Sobala-Gwosdz, 2023).

The socio-economic development of a territorial unit depends on the conditions in which it takes place and on the factors used or exploited. It can proceed in different ways according to different development models or scenarios, and it also brings different effects. Although a distinction is made in the literature between conditions and factors of development, conditions and factors are considered more often together or interchangeably under the name of factors. These conditions and factors are classified according to various criteria of a natural, spatial, economic, social, cultural, historical, or political nature. Another commonly used division is the division into internal and external factors or material and non-material factors. The factors of city development are understood as its resources and characteristic features that determine its growth. The scope of impact of the factors of urban development is strongly dependent on the specificity of their location in local, regional, national, and international systems. The factors indicated in the literature include, first of all:

- demographic situation, including the number of inhabitants,
- quality of human and social capital,
- culture,

- the economic and financial situation of the city as a local government unit,
- local economy, its structure and production capabilities,
- heritage,
- housing,
- the level of development of technical infrastructure,
- the ability to generate knowledge and improve technology related to the location of research institutes and universities,
- the presence of a creative class,
- post-industrial zones with strong potential and importance for the regional and local environment,
- urban transport infrastructure projects,
- strong urban regime,
- and marketing activities and eco-innovation strategies.

It should be added that each city develops using different potentials, and usually it is an original, own combination of the indicated factors, and the possibilities of their use also differ in terms of its different parts (e.g., districts). In turn, as research shows, the main factors of great importance for regional development are the size of the city expressed in terms of population, economic potential and employment structure (Jasnosz, 2008; Jadach-Sepiolo, 2016; Krzysztofik, 2016; Adamowicz, 2020; Heffner, 2023).

Studies on the direction of changes in the level of development of Polish regions indicate that regional differences in Poland have been growing for a long time. The reasons for the persistence or even growth of differences in the level of socio-economic development of regions and their urban centres are diverse and often very complex. However, they lie primarily in:

- weakening demographic potential (outflow of population, deterioration of demographic indicators),
- shortage of very well-educated cities with metropolitan functions,
- weaker urbanisation (densifying and deconcentrating central parts of cities, numerous so-called "downtown voids"),
- poorer communication and transport accessibility,
- relatively low human and social capital,
- weak innovation trends,
- low level of entrepreneurship,
- technological maladjustment and backwardness (Heffner, 2010; 2023; Majorek, 2019; Korenik, 2020).

Moreover, an important cause of the growth of regional differences is the policy pursued in economic, socio-political, and cohesion practice that strengthens polarisation. In terms of the so-called polarisation-diffusion model, the polarisation component is implemented, i.e. the strengthening and development of the largest regional centres, while the process of

diffusion of development is much weaker both towards weaker regions and intra-regional systems, especially those with peripheral characteristics. The benefits resulting from this are revealed primarily in the low level of unemployment, high entrepreneurship and innovative activity, good condition of technical and transport infrastructure, and consequently also in much better accessibility, concentration of public sector investments, foreign investments and concentration of higher-order services. Therefore, economic and socio-political benefits are usually concentrated in metropolitan-type centres themselves and in relatively narrow zones of their direct impact, not even moving to subregional-type centres, not to mention intra-regional peripheries. Metropolises and some regional centres, focused on increasing their competitiveness at the supraregional, national, and international level, have only a small activating impact on their regional structures, which rather only constitute a base providing them with appropriate resources and means and multiplying their development potential (Dignan, 1995; Churski, 2014; Zarówna, 2014; McCann, Ortega-Argiles, 2015; Heffner, Gibas, 2017; Heffner, 2023).

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 cities with county rights in Poland.

The article puts forward a research hypothesis which assumes that cities with county rights in Poland are diverse in terms of the conditions of socio-economic development, with the best situation in this respect being that of the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants.

The empirical material of the article concerns all cities with county rights in Poland. The numerical data come from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw. The collected and organised empirical material was developed in descriptive, tabular, and graphical form, using the comparative analysis method.

In order to identify and assess the conditions for socio-economic development in cities with county rights in Poland, the following diagnostic features illustrating them in 2023 were analysed: population density (population per 1 km²), percentage of 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, percentage of population using the water supply, sewage, and gas networks, total revenues of municipal budgets per capita (PLN), own revenues of municipal budgets per capita (PLN), share of own revenues in total revenues of municipal budgets (%), total expenditures of municipal budgets per capita (PLN), investment expenditures of municipal budgets per capita (PLN) and share of investment expenditures in total expenditures of municipal budgets (%).

In addition, the article included a point assessment of the analysed diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. Individual diagnostic characteristics were compared with the average for all cities with county rights, which was assumed to be 100 points, and their advantage or disadvantage in all selected groups of cities was assessed accordingly. Then, all points were summed up and the average was calculated (Figures 1-4). It should be emphasised that this is a new approach to the research problem undertaken in this article.

3. Results

As research shows, in national and regional settlement systems, there are most small urban centres and fewer medium-sized towns, while the number of large centres, and especially very large ones, is small (Cardoso, Meijers, 2017). The situation is similar among cities with county rights in Poland, where the largest share belongs to the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants, that is, up to 100,000 (43.9%). This is followed by the group of cities with the number of inhabitants 100-200 thousand (36.4%). On the other hand, the smallest is the group of cities with the highest number of inhabitants, i.e. 200 thousand and more (19.7%) (Table 1).

The data in Table 1 show that cities with county rights in Poland are very clearly differentiated in terms of population density. The group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants has the highest population density, while in the other two separate groups of cities with smaller numbers of inhabitants, it is much lower and close to the average for all cities with county rights in Poland. Additionally, the differentiation of this feature between individual cities is quite large in all of their separate groups, but it is the smallest in the group of cities with 100-200 thousand inhabitants.

The data in Table 1 indicate that the cities analysed in Poland are slightly diversified in terms of demographic features such as the percentage of the working-age population and the number of nonworking-age population per 100 people of working age. It should be noted, however, that both of these features are the most favourable in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, while the worst situation in this respect occurs in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. It is also noteworthy that the differentiation of these characteristics between individual cities is almost negligible in all of their separate groups. Therefore, all of them are relatively homogeneous in this respect.

Table 1.

Selected features characterising demographic conditions in cities with county rights in Poland in 2023

Specification	Cities with county rights *			
	Total	I	II	III
Number of cities	66	29	24	13
Population density - people per 1 km ²				
Average	1506,3	1350,4	1460,4	1938,5
Variation coefficient V (%)	45,2	48,2	36,9	43,0
Percentage of working-age population				
Average	57,2	56,6	57,2	58,5
Variation coefficient V (%)	2,6	2,2	2,1	2,9
Non-working age population per 100 working age persons				
Average	74,9	76,8	74,8	70,9
Variation coefficient V (%)	6,0	4,9	4,8	7,2
Natural increase per 1000 population				
Average	-5,0	-5,0	-5,5	-3,8
Variation coefficient V (%)	51,6	51,7	43,4	68,3
Net migration for permanent residence per 1000 population				
Average	-2,7	-3,7	-2,5	-0,7
Variation coefficient V (%)	93,3	60,9	81,6	381,9

Table explanations: * I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

Based on the data in Table 1, it should be stated that cities with county rights in Poland are clearly differentiated in terms of demographic features such as natural increase per 1000 inhabitants and net migration for permanent residence per 1000 inhabitants. In the case of both of these features, the best situation occurs in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, and in the case of the second feature, i.e. net migration for permanent residence per 1000 inhabitants, it is the worst in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. In turn, the differentiation of these features between individual cities is large and very large in all their distinguished groups, and this is especially true for the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants.

In cities with county rights in Poland, the best developed component of technical infrastructure is the water supply network, and the least developed is the gas network, and this applies to all of their separate groups, depending on the number of residents (Table 2).

Furthermore, there are no major differences between the separate groups of cities with county rights in Poland in terms of the access of their residents to the water supply, sewage and gas networks (Table 2).

It should also be noted that the differentiation of these characteristics between individual cities is small in all their separate groups, while it is greater in the case of a characteristic such as access to the gas network, and this applies especially to the group of cities with the smallest number of residents (Table 2).

Table 2.

Selected features characterising infrastructure conditions in cities with district rights in Poland in 2023

Specification	Cities with county rights *			
	Total	I	II	III
Percentage of the population using the water supply network				
Average	97,6	97,0	98,3	97,3
Variation coefficient V (%)	2,6	3,4	1,7	1,6
Percentage of the population using the sewage system				
Average	92,5	92,7	92,0	93,0
Variation coefficient V (%)	4,7	4,3	5,7	3,6
Percentage of the population using the gas network				
Average	76,6	73,9	80,4	75,3
Variation coefficient V (%)	19,5	27,7	9,9	9,5

Table explanations: * I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

The data in Table 3 show that cities with county rights in Poland are slightly differentiated in terms of the value of total revenues of city budgets per capita in PLN. The highest value of this revenue is noted in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants and the lowest in the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand. Additionally, the differentiation of this feature between individual cities is small in all of their distinguished groups, and there are no major differences in this respect between them.

The data in Table 3 indicate that the cities analysed in Poland are clearly differentiated in terms of such economic and financial features as: the value of city budgets' own revenues per capita in PLN and the share of own revenues in the total revenues of city budgets. In the case of both of these features, the best situation occurs in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, then the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand, and the worst is in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. It should be added that the differentiation of these features between individual cities is small in all of their distinguished groups, and it is smaller in the case of the second feature, i.e. the share of own revenues in the total revenues of city budgets.

Based on the data in Table 3, it should be stated that cities with county rights in Poland are differentiated in terms of the value of total expenditure of city budgets per capita in PLN. The highest value of these expenditures is characteristic of the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, whereas in the other two separated groups of cities this value is lower and similar. The differentiation of this feature between individual cities is, in turn, small in all their separated groups, and there are no major differences in this respect between them.

Table 3.

Selected features characterising the economic and financial Total revenues of city budgets per capita in PLN financial conditions in cities with district rights in Poland in 2023

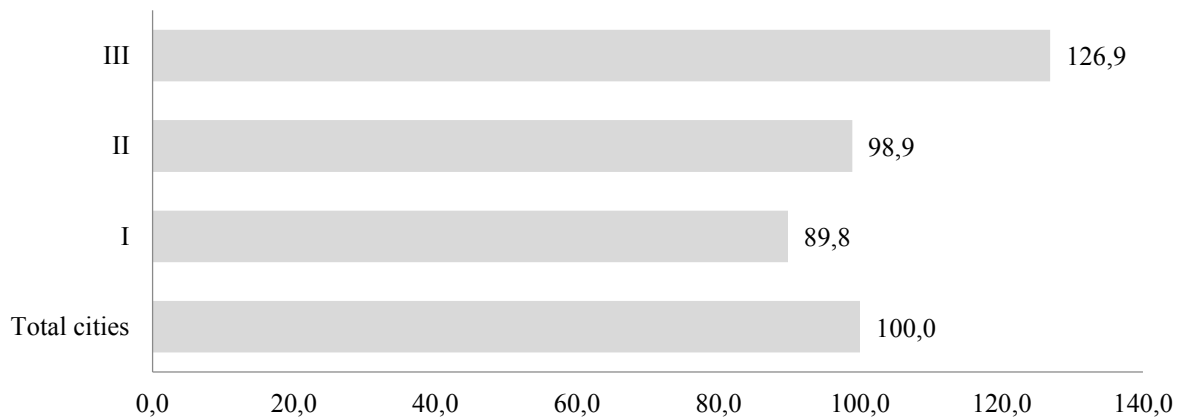
Specification	Cities with county rights *			
	Total	I	II	III
Total revenues of city budgets per capita in PLN				
Average	8940,8	9122,0	8675,3	9026,9
Variation coefficient V (%)	17,7	21,7	14,4	12,3
Own revenues of city budgets per capita in PLN				
Average	4610,4	4229,3	4562,9	5548,4
Variation coefficient V (%)	27,8	32,4	20,2	22,5
Share of own revenues in total revenues of city budgets in %				
Average	51,3	46,1	52,4	60,9
Variation coefficient V (%)	16,4	15,7	9,3	11,2
Total expenditure of city budgets per capita in PLN				
Average	9518,6	9453,2	9310,7	10048,5
Variation coefficient V (%)	16,6	19,8	13,6	13,9
Investment expenditure of city budgets per capita in PLN				
Average	1514,7	1429,0	1530,3	1677,0
Variation coefficient V (%)	51,4	59,9	51,2	35,6
Share of investment expenditure in total expenditure of city budgets in %				
Average	15,4	14,5	15,9	16,6
Variation coefficient V (%)	38,2	41,4	39,3	29,8

Table explanations: * I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Source: Central Statistical Office in Warsaw.

The data in Table 3 show that the cities analysed in Poland are diversified in terms of such economic and financial characteristics as the value of investment expenditures of city budgets per capita in PLN and the share of investment expenditures in total expenditures of city budgets. In the case of both of these features, the best situation occurs in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, followed by the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand, while the worst situation occurs in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. Moreover, it should be noted that the differentiation of these features between individual cities is large in all of their distinguished groups, while it is smaller in the case of the second feature, i.e., the share of investment expenditures in total expenditures of city budgets, and this is especially true for the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants.

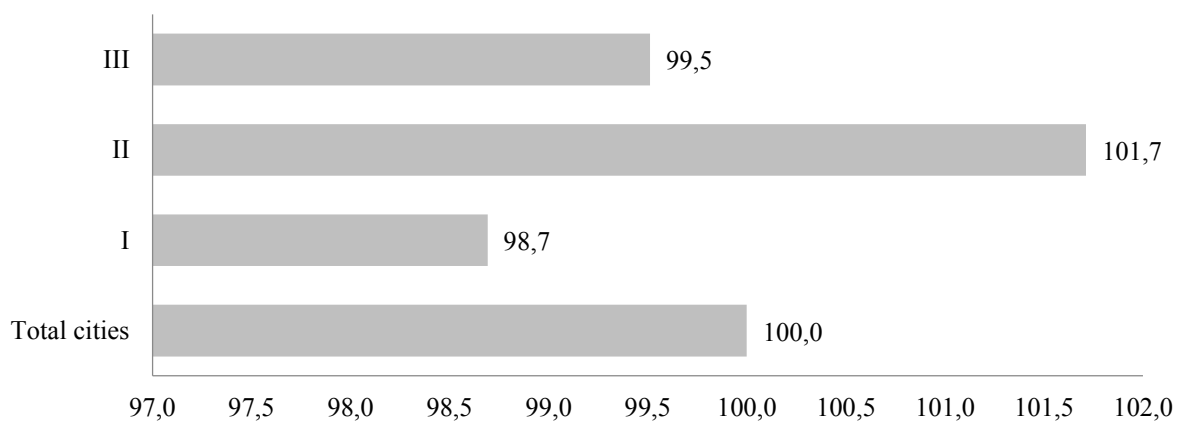
Figure 1 presents the results of the point assessment of the diagnostic features illustrating the demographic conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities, depending on the number of their inhabitants, against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. It should be noted that these conditions are clearly differentiated between the selected groups of cities. The best demographic conditions of development are characterised by the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, while they are the worst in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. In turn, in the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand, they are the closest to the average for all cities with county rights in Poland. This therefore partially confirms the research hypothesis put forward in the work.



Explanations: I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Figure 1. Point evaluation of diagnostic features illustrating demographic conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland (total cities = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

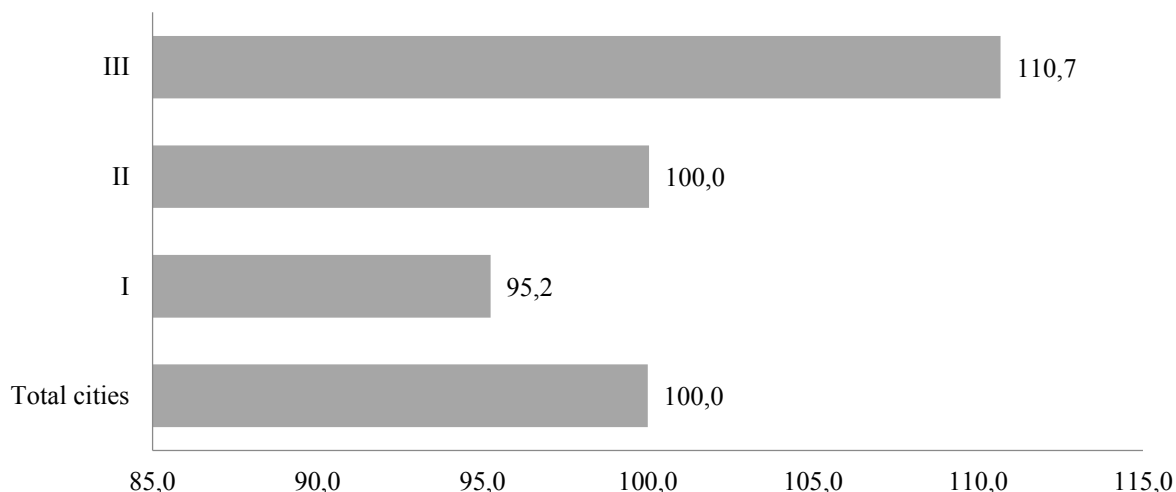


Explanations: I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Figure 2. Point evaluation of diagnostic features illustrating the infrastructure conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland (total cities = 100.0 points)

Source: Own study.

Figure 2 presents the results of the point assessment concerning the diagnostic features illustrating the infrastructure conditions of socio-economic development in the selected groups of cities, depending on the number of their inhabitants, against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. In view of this, it should be stated that in all the selected groups of cities, the analysed development conditions are very similar and close to the average for all cities with county rights in Poland.



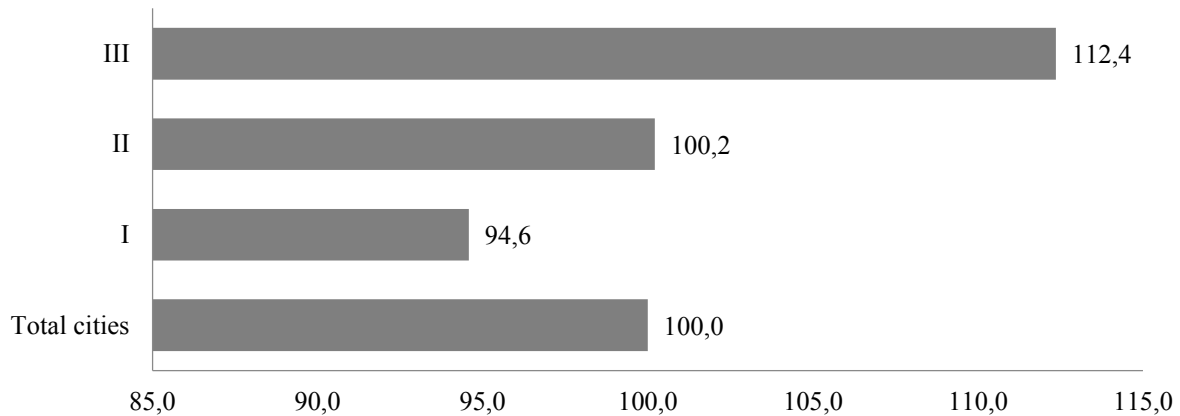
Explanations: I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Figure 3. Point evaluation of diagnostic features illustrating the economic and financial conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland (total cities = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

Figure 3 presents the results of the point assessment of the diagnostic features illustrating the economic and financial conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities, depending on the number of their inhabitants, against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. It follows from this that the selected groups of cities are diverse in terms of the analysed development conditions. The best economic and financial conditions occur in the group of cities with the highest number of inhabitants. In the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand, they are identical as in the case of all cities with county rights in Poland. On the other hand, the worst situation in this respect is characterised by the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. Therefore, this partially confirms the research hypothesis formulated in the work.

Figure 4 presents the results of the point assessment concerning all diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in the selected groups of cities, depending on the number of their inhabitants, against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland. On this basis, it should be stated that the selected groups of cities are diverse in terms of the development conditions. The best conditions of socio-economic development are distinguished by the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, while the worst are in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants. On the other hand, in the group of cities with a population of 100-200 thousand, these conditions are the closest to the average for all cities with county rights in Poland. This therefore confirms the research hypothesis put forward in the work.



Explanations: I – cities with up to 100,000 inhabitants; II – cities with 100-200,000 inhabitants; III – cities with 200,000 inhabitants and more.

Figure 4. Point evaluation of all diagnostic features illustrating the conditions of socio-economic development in selected groups of cities against the background of all cities with county rights in Poland (total cities = 100.0 points).

Source: Own study.

4. Summary and conclusions

The analysis of the collected statistical data conducted in the article allows the following conclusions to be drawn:

- ✓ cities with county rights in Poland are clearly differentiated in terms of such features as population density, natural increase, migration balance, value of city budgets' own revenues per capita, and share of own revenues in total city budget revenues,
- ✓ separate groups of cities with county rights in Poland are clearly differentiated in terms of demographic conditions for socio-economic development, with the best occurring in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, and the worst in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants,
- ✓ in cities with county rights in Poland, the best developed component of technical infrastructure is the water supply network, and the worst is the gas network, and this applies to all their separate groups, depending on the number of inhabitants,
- ✓ in all separate groups of cities, the infrastructural conditions for socio-economic development are very similar and close to the average for all cities with county rights in Poland,
- ✓ cities with county rights in Poland are diversified in terms of the economic and financial conditions for socio-economic development, with the best ones being in the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants, while the worst are in the group of cities with the smallest number of inhabitants.

In addition, the analysis of statistical data allows for the confirmation of the research hypothesis, which assumes that cities with county rights in Poland are diverse in terms of the conditions of socio-economic development, with the best situation in this respect being the group of cities with the largest number of inhabitants. In view of the above, it should be stated that the number of inhabitants is an important factor that positively affects the conditions and possibilities of socio-economic development in cities with county rights in Poland.

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