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Identification and analysis of key factors affecting the economic potential of Lower Silesian counties between 2006-2012

Summary. Differences in the economic situation in Polish regions are widely described in the subject matter literature. The results of empirical research allows to indicate a considerable variation among the poviats in Lower Silesian region. It should be noted that the observed diversity of the economic situation over Lower Silesian poviats during investigated years does not show a downward trend, which should be a starting point for the debate over the particular tools for narrowing the gap between the least and most developed areas.

Key words: economic potential, development disparities, local development

Introduction

One of the features characterising the contemporary conditions of development is the significant disparity of the socio-economic potential of individual regions. Although actions have been taken to strengthen the economic cohesion, an imbalance can still be observed both on the horizontal dimension and within individual local self-government units, being part of the region concerned. Every local territorial system has its specific assets resulting from its natural characteristics as well as its human and capital resources, all of which affect its ability to exercise various leading functions. Naturally, the importance of the resources varies over time, so in order to be able to identify the development opportunities, what one requires is a constant monitoring of the local potential. By conducting

systematic research on this issue it is possible to position a given unit of the local government in relation to other units in the region, this being necessary if actions are to be taken with the objective to eliminate the gaps and barriers between the most and least developed areas.

Thus, the aim of the article is to analyse the disparities in the economic situation within the region, taking into account the disproportions found in the individual counties. On the basis of a theoretical analysis, we will conduct a statistical analysis with the focus on the comparison of the economic situations of the Lower Silesian counties based on the data comprising the years 2006-2012 with the aim to identify the key factors describing the similarities and disparities pertaining to the economic potential. Within the scope of the research, we have used the data from the Regional Data Bank made available by the Central Statistical Office, data from the Regional Chamber of Accounts in Wrocław, the Voivodship Labour Office and the information from our own studies carried out by the Entrepreneurship and Management Research Team at Wrocław School of Banking.

1. Economic potential versus development disparities on the intra-regional scale – theoretical introduction

The social and economic changes that occurred in Poland led to a far-reaching transformation of the situation of the local communities. One of the cornerstones of the political transformation was the move towards replacing the centralised ministerial and sectoral system by a territorial system with the onus for local and regional development being put on the local self-government level[1]. The changes were accompanied by a generally accepted assumption that local tasks should be performed by the relevant local self-governing communities in accordance with the view that they are more capable of identifying and recognizing the nature of local needs. Moreover, the attention was also drawn to the mechanism of social control as being significantly more effective when exercised by the group of citizens directly involved rather than by a centralised decision-making system. Yet, along with the new possibilities of action taking and greater discretionary power came new challenges resulting from the market economic governance based on competiveness and entrepreneurship.

The reactivation of the local self-government, first as a one tier and later as a three-tier government, constituted an important phase of the constitutional changes, further leading to the changes in the structure of local government units and in the way they operate. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of

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[1] L. Patrzałek, *Finanse samorządu terytorialnego*, Wyd. AE we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2004, p. 38.

Poland[2] the aim of the local government is to perform public service tasks not reserved by the Constitution or other statutes to other public authorities. In the light of the present conditions the responsibility for development policy management on the national, regional and local scale is allocated to the particular levels of the country's administrative division. After having implemented a three-tier administrative division, the processes taking place in communes and counties are considered to be a local development, whereas the development occurring on the level of a self-governing voivodship is categorised as a regional development[3]. This fact finds its further confirmation in the adopted legislative solutions. Pursuant to Art. 3 of the Regional Development Act dated August 31, 2006[4], the development policy is managed by:

   1) on the national scale – the Council of Ministers
   2) on the regional scale – voivodship self-government
   3) on the local scale – county and commune self-government.

This separation of responsibilities in terms of the scale on which the development policy is being managed sanctions the natural distribution of tasks performed by the individual entities of the public sector. A particular sphere of competence in matters related to boosting the development in territorial systems is given to the voivodship self-government whose key role is to determine the development strategy for the voivodship and the intraregional policy management. In order to fulfil these responsibilities the voivodship self-government needs to undertake steps towards acquiring and merging public and private funds with the objective in mind of performing public benefit work, maintaining and extending important social and technical infrastructure as well as creating the conditions for economic development, including the creation of the labour market[5].

Discussions on the issue of regional development are widely reflected in the literature on the subject. In their definition of it A. Klasik and F. Kuźnik focus on indicating the key components of the development including economic potential and competitive strength of the region, with their further focus on the standard of living[6]. Following this thought, Z. Przygodzki defines the regional development as a "sustained growth of economic potential of the regions and continuous and systematic improvement of their competitiveness, as well as an enhancement of the standard of living of their inhabitants, thus contributing to the socio-economic

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[2] The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Dz.U. nr 78, poz. 483, art. 163.

[3] *Rozwój lokalny i regionalny: uwarunkowania, finanse, procedury*, eds. B. Filipiak, A. Szewczuk, Wyd. Fundacja na rzecz Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2005, pp. 9-10.

[4] Dz.U. 2006 r., nr 227, poz. 1658, art. 3.

[5] Act on Voivodship Self-Government, Dz.U. 2001 r. nr 142 poz. 1590 z późn. zm., art. 11.

[6] *Zarządzanie strategiczne rozwojem lokalnym i regionalnym*, eds. A. Klasik, F. Kuźnik, Wyd. Uczelniane AE w Poznaniu, Poznań 2001, p. 23.

development of the country"[7]. Analysing the above, one cannot fail but to notice the interdependencies between the regional development and economic potential. As regards the cited definitions, these interdependencies are understood hierarchically i.e. the change of the economic potential is treated as a partial component of the regional development. A natural consequence of such an approach is that some confusion may arise when trying to explain the concept of the economic potential of the region. The relevant literature has rather avoided providing a clear definition , and when conducting research the economic potential is usually interpreted in context through the attempt to determine the combination of a series of variables affecting the opportunities for development of the region concerned. Within the framework of this article a similar approach will be employed.

A separate issue is the fact that despite various ways in which the regional policy has been run it has not been possible in Poland to reduce the development disparities which have divided the country into the western part, commonly referred to as Poland A, with a stronger economic development and the eastern part, referred to as Poland B, characterised by a weaker economic development. However, the process of regional development should not be considered only on the horizontal dimension; it should also be seen against the background of the changes occurring inside the region. Consequently, the regional development also needs to be perceived as a set of changes taking place within the region. These changes are generated by a number of endogenous and exogenous factors, as well as by the targeted actions influencing the desired changes with respect to the operations of the local government units. It is important to realise that the regional development occurs mostly through the development of the local units it consists of. Yet, a system that is highly polarised limits the opportunities for effective operation and sustainable development of the entire region. Striving for a greater economic cohesion is therefore a key issue.

Thus, shaping the conditions for the regional development requires a continuous decision making ensuring an effective and long-term impact on the problems of the local communities. An important role plays here the verification of the tasks that are being performed as to what degree the set objectives have been met. Therefore being capable of constantly monitoring current situation plays an extremely important role, especially in terms of the economic potential assessment concerning individual units of the region. Developing suitable methods and having skills to interpret the data obtained on this basis constitute a starting point for defining opportunities and threats to the development of a given territorial system.

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[7] J. Chądzyński, A. Nowakowska, Z. Przygodzki, *Region i jego rozwój w warunkach globalizacji,* Wyd. CeDeWu, Warszawa 2007, p. 43.

2. Applied research methods

In the light of the theoretical disquisition introduced in the paper, the objective of the research results presented below is to demonstrate the extent of disparities in the economic potential in the Lower Silesian Voivodship, in the county system. The study was conducted based on a few basic assumptions:

– research object – local self-government units of the Lower Silesian Voivodship,

– cross-section of the research – the county's level. The voivodship consists of 26 land counties and three cities with county rights Wrocław, Jelenia Góra and Legnica,

– the time horizon of the research spanned the years 2006-2012,

– while estimating the index values on the county level, not only the financial situation of the county self-government was taken into account, but also the financial parameters of all the self-government units of the communes the county consists of. The reason for that was to measure more reliably the differences between the economic situation of the individual counties.

The starting point for conducting the study is to determine the set of characteristics comprising the most complete and comprehensive description possible of the economic potential level of the individual counties. This issue is often reflected in the literature on the subject as a part of the disquisition on the measure of local development. In this field a number of authors[8] have provided various concepts pertaining to the sets of the characteristics that would make it possible to define the level of development of a given local unit. Referring to the current content of the literature on this issue as well as own work, the authors of this article created a list of characteristics that are fully consistent with the need to examine the economic potential on the level of the county self-government. Within this scope, an additional criterion was taken into account addressing the timeliness, availability and comparability of the data spanning the years 2006-2012. This formed the basis to define the set of the 12 characteristics presented in Table 1.

Within the created set of characteristics, the information was included describing the labour market situation, the level of economic activity of the county, the income of the inhabitants and the financial situation of the local government units, being part of the county concerned. Considering that there are natural differences resulting from the area size and the number of inhabitants in the unit concerned, each characteristic is relative.

For the values of the adopted diagnostic variables the Ward's method was applied, which serves to define the clusters of the counties with similar economic potential. The Ward's method is one of the agglomerative hierarchical methods.

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[8] *Wskaźniki zrównoważonego rozwoju*, ed. T. Borys, Wyd. Ekonomia i Środowisko, Warszawa 2005; T. Famulska, K. Znaniecka, *Finansowe aspekty rozwoju lokalnego*, Wyd. AE w Katowicach, Katowice 2004, p. 10.

Table 1. The set and the nature of the characteristics taken into account when assessing
the economic potential of the county

Enumeration	Variable name	Variable character
X1	Unemployment rate – total	destimulant
X2	The share of people with a long-term unemployment in the number of unemployed people (%)	destimulant
X3	The value of revenues from the income tax share constituting the state budget income expressed per capita (PLN)	stimulant
X4	The number of entities running a business expressed per 1000 inhabitants	stimulant
X5	The share of newly registered business entities in the total number of business entities	stimulant
X6	The share of business entities which ceased their activities in the total number of business entities	stimulant
X7	Gross average monthly income as a percentage to the national average (Poland=100)	stimulant
X8	Annual expenditures of local self-government units per capita	stimulant
X9	Investment expenditure of local self-government units per capita (PLN)	stimulant
X10	Local self-government units' income per capita:	stimulant
X11	The amount of newly provided flats expressed per 1000 inhabitants	stimulant
X12	Debt figure of local self-government units as a percentage to income	destimulant

S o u r c e: own elaboration.

The methods of the hierarchical agglomeration of objects with multiple character-
istics which G.M. Lance and W.T. Williamsa[9] proposed include several variants.
These variants have different ways of determining the distance matrix between
the groups of objects in the multivariate classificatory space. The Ward's method
provides a special case of the general pattern of objects clustering developed by
G.M. Lance and W.T. Williams. The result of the analysis is a dendrogram, which
is a graphic interpretation of the obtained results.

The Ward's method moves towards minimizing the error sum of squares of
any pair of clusters which can be formed at any stage. The Ward's method is con-
sidered very effective aiming at producing small clusters[10].

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[9] G.M. Lance, W.T. Williams, *A General Theory of Classificatory Sorting Strategies I. Hierar-chical System*, "Computer Journal" 1967, No 9.

[10] T. Grabiński, A. Sokołowski, *Z badań nad efektywnością wybranych procedur taksonomicz-nych*, „Zeszyty Naukowe AE w Krakowie" 1984, No. 181, pp. 6-79.

In further stages of the research, in order to compare the economic potential of voivodships, a linear ordering method was used which is the standardised sums method. It finds its application in the analysis of complex phenomena of which the economic potential certainly is and additionally when it is necessary to compare different objects, such as, in this case, voivodships. The methods of linear ordering make it possible to rank the analysed objects from "the best" to "the worst" with the ranking criterion being the extent of the complex phenomenon. The selection of the variables used to describe the complex phenomenon is mostly of rhetorical nature. Furthermore, while producing the synthetic measure which describes the complex phenomenon, the degree of the variables correlation is of no importance[11].

The results of the ranking became the basis for the analysis of the Spearman's rank correlation with the objective to assess the concordance of the results obtained in individual years. In addition to that, comparing the ranking results with the values of the diagnostic characteristics examined in the years 2006-2012 as the correlation coefficients allowed for the identification of the factors whose distribution converges to the highest degree towards the distribution of the counties' economic potential in the Lower Silesian Voivodship .

For the purpose of calculation, Statistica software was used in this paper.

3. The results and conclusions of the conducted research

In accordance with the proposed research steps, the starting point is the presentation of the results obtained from the cluster analysis of the Lower Silesian counties in the years 2006-2012 (Fig.1).

The analysis that was conducted on the counties of Lower Silesia suggests that there are three distinct clusters of the Lower Silesian counties in terms of their economic potential. One of the clusters present in each of the studied years consists of the county of Polkowice and the city of Wrocław (the exception here being 2007, when they were joined by the urban county Jelenia Góra). As far as the remaining clusters are concerned, during the period spanning the years included in the research some slight changes may be noticed; nevertheless, the obtained results allow the conclusion that in the Lower Silesian Voivodship there are groups of counties which in terms of their economic potential are relatively similar to one another. The observation thus made implies a need to consider the source of these

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[11] D. Appenzeller, *Metodologiczne problemy opisu i prognozowania kondycji finansowej*, in: *Prognozowanie w zarządzaniu firmą*, ed. P. Dittmann, J. Szanduła, Indygo Zahir Media, Wrocław 2008, p. 130.
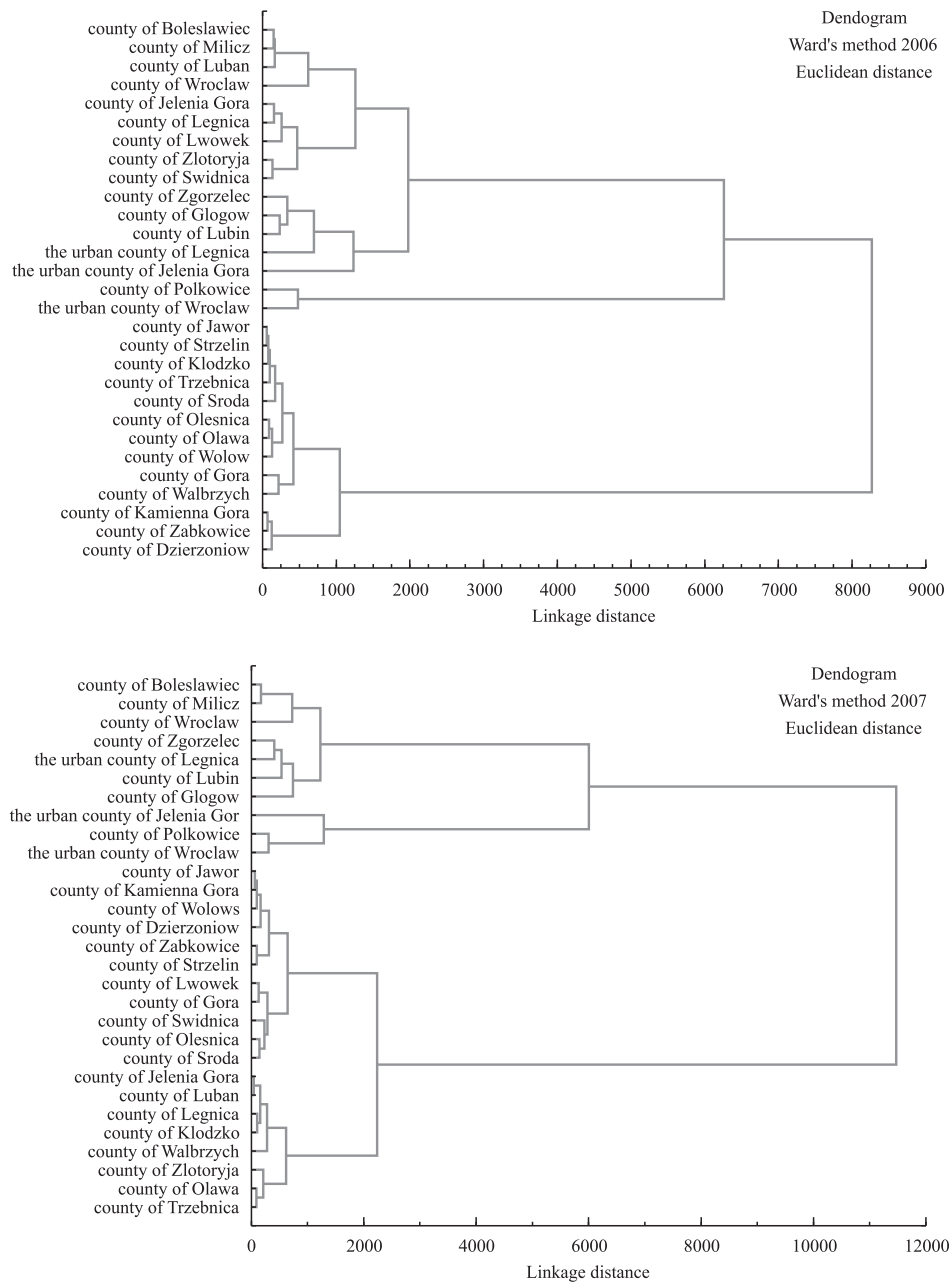
Fig. 1. The application of Ward's method to assess the similarities and disparities in the distribution of economic potential in the Lower Silesian counties between 2006-2012
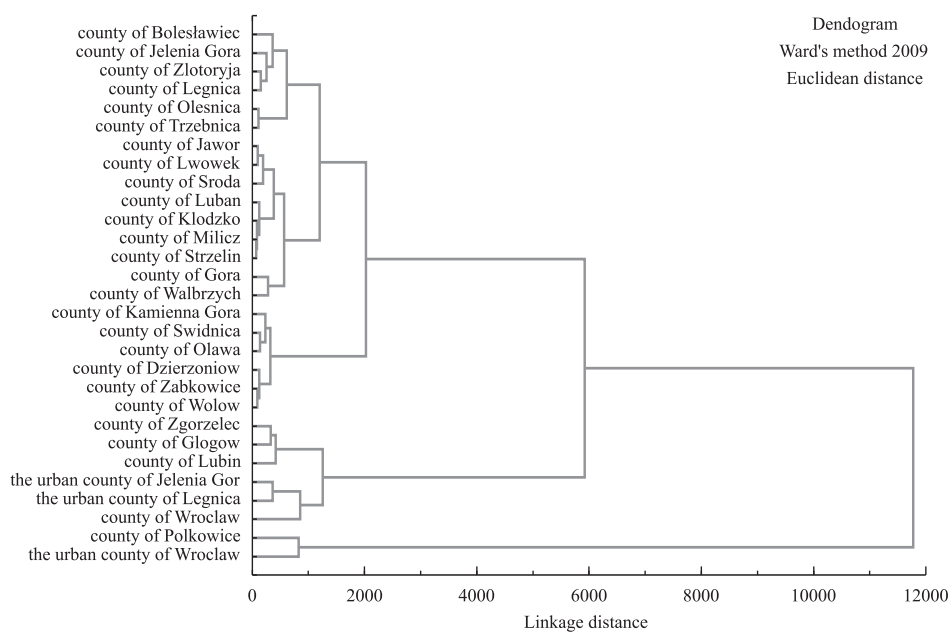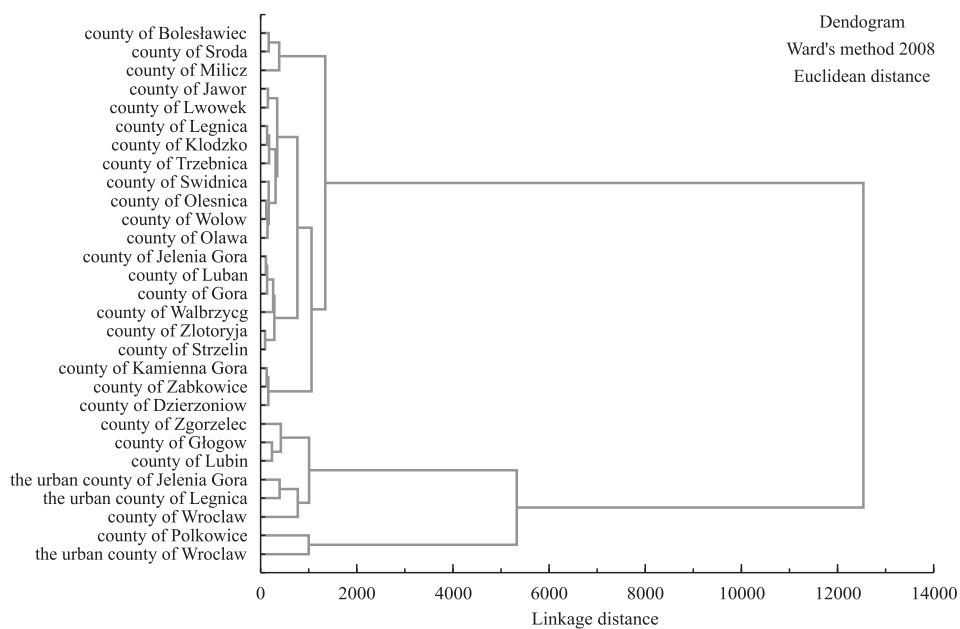
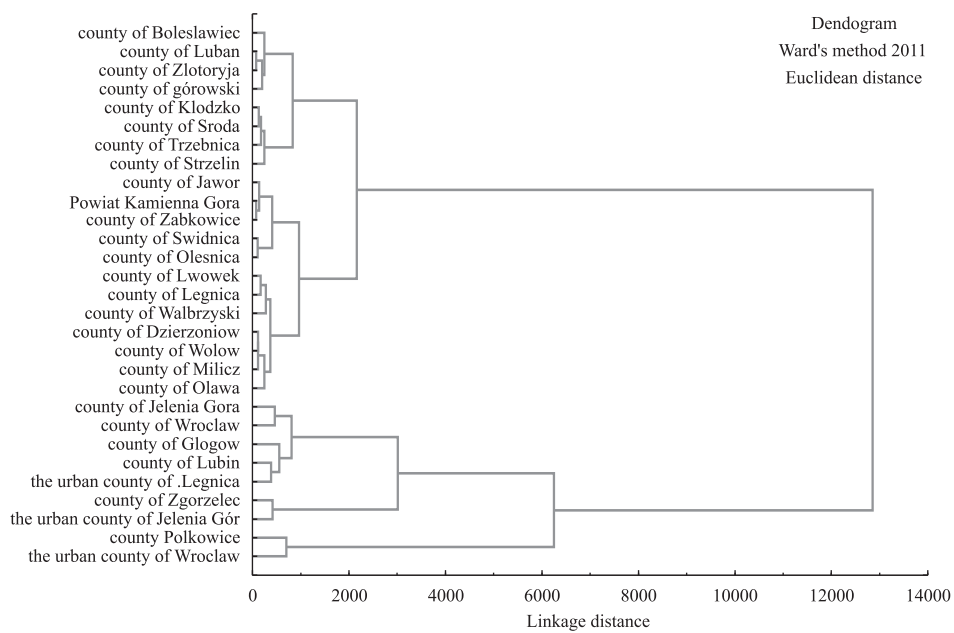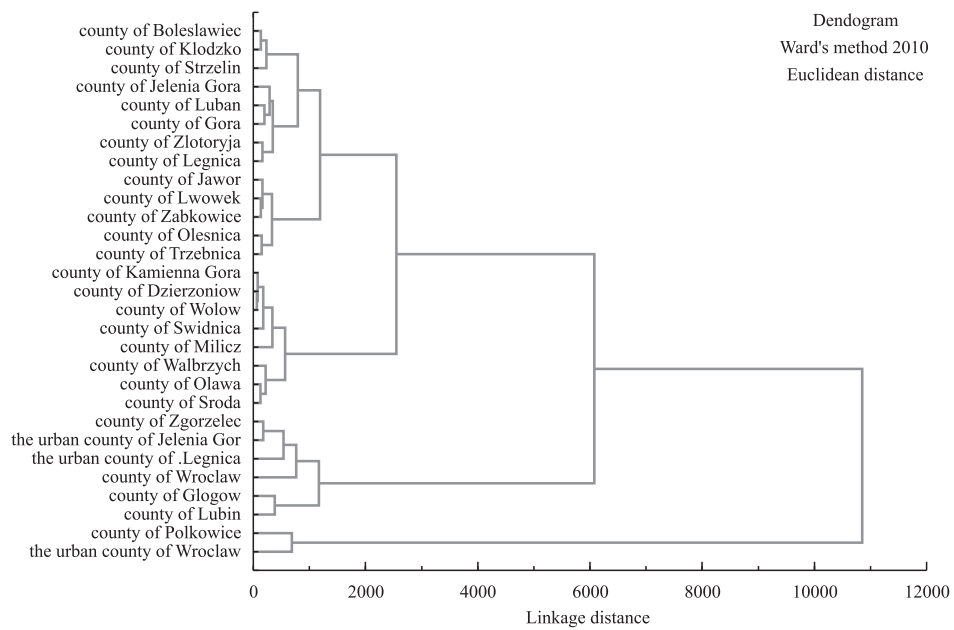S o u r c e: own elaboration with a use of Statistica software.
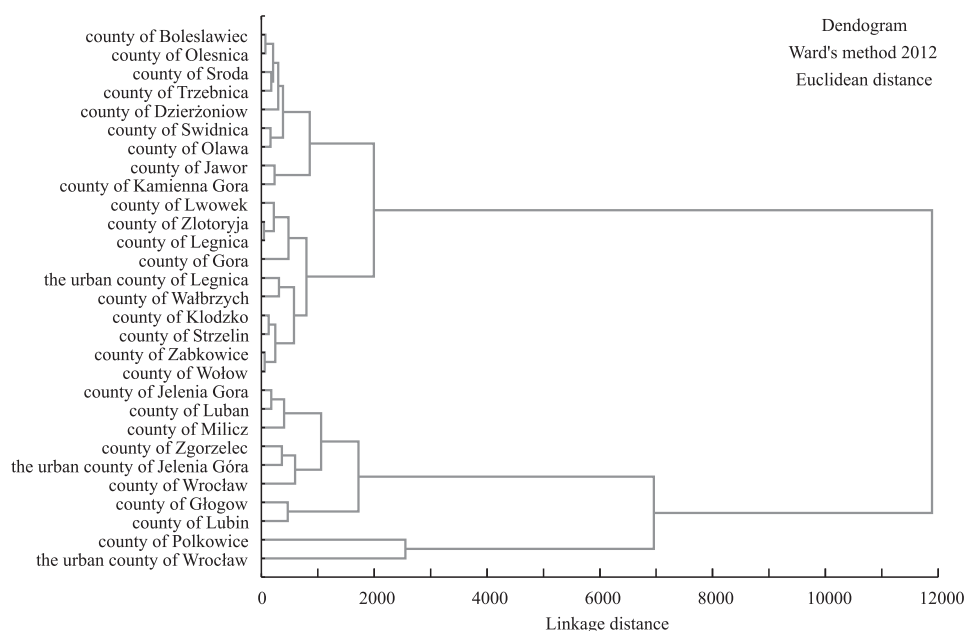
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disparities. The second stage of the research work therefore included the ranking of the counties according to the value of the development measure formulated using the linear ordering methods.

The results demonstrating the situation of the Lower Silesian counties in the economic sphere between 2006-2012 are presented in Table 2 (the information is ordered according to the value of the development measure in 2012).

The research results reveal significant disparities between the urban counties (Wroclaw and Jelenia Góra) along with the industrial counties (Polkowice and Lubin) and the rest of the land counties (a positive exception here is Wrocław county as it benefits from being situated around the capital of the voivodship). The recorded trends relate to the regularities, frequently presented in the relevant literature, concerning the polarisation of the development within the region as a consequence of concentrating the capital in big cities and industrial zones, thus increasing the risk of economic stagnation in the remaining areas. The results of the comparison follow on the conclusion that has been made on the basis of the cluster analysis, where the county of Polkowice and the city of Wrocław also showed the closest similarities in terms of their economic potential.

Table 2. Ranking of the Lower Silesian counties in terms of their economic potential between 2006-2012

Counties	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
County of Jawor	0,23	0,20	0,21	0,29	0,19	0,18	0,15
County of Kłodzko	0,24	0,25	0,21	0,20	0,27	0,24	0,19
County of Góra	0,21	0,25	0,25	0,28	0,13	0,15	0,20
County of Wołów	0,23	0,18	0,21	0,24	0,20	0,20	0,21
County of Złotoryja	0,21	0,24	0,20	0,29	0,27	0,24	0,21
County of Ząbkowice	0,23	0,26	0,28	0,26	0,26	0,25	0,22
County of Lwówek	0,30	0,24	0,25	0,27	0,22	0,25	0,22
County of Kamienna Góra	0,25	0,27	0,30	0,27	0,28	0,28	0,23
County of Legnica	0,29	0,29	0,26	0,32	0,27	0,21	0,23
County of Strzelin	0,26	0,27	0,35	0,31	0,31	0,34	0,23
County of Dzierżoniów	0,20	0,19	0,17	0,18	0,33	0,31	0,24
County of Oleśnica	0,31	0,31	0,28	0,33	0,27	0,32	0,26
County of Milicz	0,31	0,25	0,21	0,23	0,14	0,24	0,26
County of Lubań	0,36	0,26	0,19	0,26	0,21	0,28	0,28
County of Wałbrzych	0,30	0,32	0,27	0,28	0,29	0,27	0,29
County of Świdnica	0,34	0,32	0,30	0,32	0,33	0,36	0,30
The urban county of Legnica	0,46	0,47	0,44	0,46	0,37	0,32	0,30
County of Oława	0,35	0,39	0,32	0,34	0,31	0,33	0,30
County of Środa Śląska	0,31	0,37	0,37	0,34	0,32	0,33	0,31
County of Jelenia Góra	0,35	0,31	0,34	0,37	0,26	0,30	0,32
County of Trzebnica	0,29	0,37	0,36	0,36	0,36	0,39	0,33
County of Zgorzelec	0,36	0,35	0,36	0,37	0,35	0,42	0,34
County of Bolesławiec	0,37	0,37	0,34	0,42	0,38	0,36	0,34
County of Glogow	0,37	0,35	0,32	0,36	0,35	0,32	0,35
The urban county of Jelenia Góra	0,47	0,53	0,50	0,50	0,43	0,57	0,49
County of Lubin	0,56	0,56	0,55	0,53	0,51	0,50	0,49
County of Wroclaw	0,54	0,62	0,57	0,54	0,57	0,60	0,57
The urban county of Wrocław	0,64	0,68	0,64	0,64	0,60	0,65	0,59
County of Polkowice	0,50	0,55	0,45	0,55	0,53	0,48	0,61

S o u r c e: own elaboration.

In order to analyze the causes of the recorded similarities and disparities it is necessary to verify beforehand the concordance of the information resulting from the ranking concerning the economic potential of the Lower Silesian counties in the years 2006-2012 (Table 3).

Table 3. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for the ranking results concerning the economic potential of the Lower Silesian counties during the studied years

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
2006	1						
2007	0,853	1					
2008	0,764	0,913	1				
2009	0,810	0,897	0,907	1			
2010	0,707	0,865	0,817	0,799	1		
2011	0,765	0,873	0,864	0,782	0,916	1	
2012	0,885	0,900	0,824	0,841	0,848	0,885	1

S o u r c e: own elaboration.

The presented findings indicate that there is a very high concordance of rankings, which suggests that there are standing trends in the disparities of the economic potential of the counties of Lower Silesia (each time the correlation coefficients are above 0,7). The results then justify the need for a deeper identification of the analysis as to which diagnostic variables adopted in the study can describe most comprehensively the disparities among the counties the research was conducted on.

The correlation analysis between the ranking results and the values of the diagnostic characteristics studied for the years 2006-2012 reveals that the main factors leading to the economic potential disparity among the Lower Silesian counties are as follows:

– unemployment rate,

– the value of revenues from the income tax share constituting the state budget income expressed per capita (PLN).

For the mentioned characteristics, the correlation coefficients with the results of the collective ranking, with the exception of one year, exceeded 0,7. The analysis of the unemployment rate plays here a particularly significant role since it reflects the intraregional disproportion found in the labour market. While investigating the spatial distribution of the groups of communes separated on the basis of a given characteristic, one can, after all, detect a natural regularity. The cities (Wrocław, Jelenia Góra) and the counties where the Copper Basin is located look most favourable. The dynamic development these areas have been experiencing often conceals the difficult situation of the people inhabiting the remaining parts of the region. The biggest problems related to the unemployment occur invariably in the south-western part of the Lower Silesia Voivodship, comprising the following counties: Wałbrzych, Jawor, Lubań, Lwówek, Złotoryja, reaching as far up as the county of Bolesławiec (where the unemployment rate was systematically above 20% in the studied years).

Table 4. Rank correlation between the results of the Lower Silesian counties' economic ranking
and the applied diagnostic variables between 2006-2012

Variable name	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Unemployment rate – total	0,791	0,859	0,907	0,792	0,827	0,867	0,874
The share of people with a long-term unemployment in the number of unemployed people (%)	0,166	0,235	0,079	0,069	0,297	0,597	0,390
The value of revenues from the income tax share constituting the state budget income expressed per capita (PLN)	0,758	0,821	0,661	0,728	0,842	0,731	0,800
The number of entities running a business expressed per 1000 inhabitants	0,205	0,254	0,032	0,113	0,214	0,197	0,176
The share of newly registered business entities in the total number of business entities	–0,436	–0,410	–0,352	–0,314	–0,613	–0,330	–0,589
The share of business entities which ceased their activities in the total number of business entities	–0,733	–0,143	–0,250	0,430	0,444	0,173	0,416
Gross average monthly income as a percentage to the national average (Poland=100)	0,445	0,567	0,492	0,432	0,625	0,507	0,426
Annual expenditures of local self-government units per capita	0,734	0,615	0,551	0,718	0,451	0,534	0,400
Investment expenditure of local self-government units per capita (PLN)	0,567	0,515	0,546	0,534	0,220	0,546	0,775
Local self-government units' income per capita:	0,853	0,670	0,617	0,667	0,443	0,438	0,320
The amount of newly provided flats expressed per 1000 inhabitants	0,375	0,570	0,678	0,474	0,518	0,214	0,519
Debt figure of local self-government units as a percentage to income	0,035	0,244	0,335	–0,360	–0,241	–0,190	0,230

S o u r c e: own elaboration.

Of significant importance, when trying to explain the factors causing the discrepancy in the economic potential of the Lower Silesian counties, is also the distribution of the value of revenues from the income tax share constituting the state budget income expressed per capita (or PIT and CIT). From the perspective provided by the analysis of the economic situation of the counties this parameter plays a particular role. The reason being the fact that in accordance with the very nature of this source of income the amount of revenues assigned to the budget of a given self-government unit depends on the amount of the income tax paid by the tax payers residing in the area of the unit concerned into the State's budget in each of the successive financial years. As a result the increase of the funds thus collected by the local self-government unit demonstrates the growing economic activity on the local scale, reflecting the improvement in terms of the local companies' financial results as well as of employees' income. For this reason the

persistently high correlation value between this characteristic and the distribution of the ranking results for the counties should be perceived as a disturbing sign in the context of the attempts to reduce the development disparities inside the region. The persistence of this trend demonstrates that there is a process allowing for further consolidation of the uneven distribution of the financial potential of the individual units. It must be noted that the revenues from the state tax share are one of the more significant income sources for the local self-government units, which translates into better opportunities for expanding the investment activities within the framework of future development scenarios.

Summary

The research results that have been collected clearly demonstrate the disparities in the economic situation of the counties located in the Lower Silesian Voivodship, especially as regards the disproportion observed between the cities along with the industrial areas and the rest of the counties. In the light of the conducted analysis a particular role in depicting the current disparities plays the unemployment rate as well as the value of revenues from the state tax share expressed per capita. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that the differences, as shown by the findings, concerning the economic situation of the Lower Silesian counties during the years included in the study show no sign of diminishing. This should provide a starting point for a discussion analysing the possible application of tools that could be conducive to the process of eliminating the disproportion between the most and the least developed areas.

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Identyfikacja i analiza kluczowych czynników kształtujących potencjał gospodarczy dolnośląskich powiatów w latach 2006-2012

Streszczenie. Jedną z cech charakteryzujących współczesne uwarunkowania rozwoju jest wciąż wyraźne zróżnicowanie potencjału społeczno-gospodarczego poszczególnych regionów. Pomimo podejmowanych działań, mających na celu zwiększenie spójności ekonomicznej, w dalszym ciągu obserwowane są dysproporcje zarówno w wymiarze poziomym, jak i w obrębie poszczególnych jednostek samorządowych wchodzących w skład danego regionu. Zgromadzone wyniki badań wskazują na wyraźne zróżnicowanie sytuacji ekonomicznej wśród powiatów w województwie dolnośląskim, co dotyczy w szczególności odnotowanych dysproporcji pomiędzy ośrodkami miejskimi i obszarami przemysłowymi a pozostałymi powiatami. W wyniku przeprowadzonej analizy szczególną rolę w opisywaniu istniejących różnic odgrywa stopa bezrobocia oraz wartość wpływów z udziału w podatkach państwowych w przeliczeniu na 1 mieszkańca. Należy przy tym zaznaczyć, że zaobserwowane zróżnicowanie sytuacji ekonomicznej dolnośląskich powiatów na przestrzeni badanych lat nie wykazuje istotnych zmian, co może stanowić punkt wyjścia do podjęcia dalszych badań nad analizą możliwych do zastosowania narzędzi sprzyjających niwelowaniu dysproporcji pomiędzy obszarami najmniej i najbardziej rozwiniętymi.

Słowa kluczowe: potencjał gospodarczy, zróżnicowanie rozwoju, rozwój lokalny