

Transport accessibility and international flows as indicators of territorial inequalities

Territorial inequalities are most often defined by indicators characterising administrative units. Classic studies compare GDP, HDI or other measures of quality of life. However, the modern world is organised around a system of linkages and flows. It overlaps with the historically conditioned distribution of socio-economic characteristics. It depends on them and, at the same time, modifies them. The dynamics of global processes resulting in flows (relocation, geopolitical instability, economic inequality, climate change, disrupted supply chains and presently wars in Ukraine and Gaza) are rapidly increasing. To be unconnected is to be left behind (Manyika et al., 2014). Therefore, participation in the space of flows by M. Castells (1998) has become a factor that differentiates individuals and consequently creates inequalities. Flows, however, are conditioned by transport accessibility, which we can consider as a measure of the opportunity for flows to occur and thus for socio-economic development. The construction of some accessibility indicators (potential accessibility) allows the attractiveness of centres (their mass measured most often, but not necessarily, by population) and distance decay to be taken into account (Geurs, van Wee 2004).

The paper will analyse international (European and global) flows of Polish local units (exports, migration, tourism) against their transport accessibility. The impact of flows and accessibility on the level of development will be assessed (cf. Komornicki, Goliszek 2023). The studies discussed here demonstrate that infrastructure development can lead to an increase in relative differences in accessibility as well as in the level of development. It has also been shown that participation in the space of flows differentiates territorial units not only at the regional level, but also at the local level. The differences concern both the volume of flows and their structure, which shows the resilience to external economic shocks (dependence on specific markets). In this context, the degree of territorial polarisation in terms of spatial accessibility and in the level of participation in the space of flows, are indirect measures of globalisation risks. Presented work was supported by the National Science Centre, Poland

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Literature

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