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S20 Central and East European regions on the common path - 20 years of integration with European Union

Inner peripheries in Poland -why cohesion policy does not always work

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Abstract

Poland's inner periphery, despite the significant intervention of the European Union's cohesion policy, constantly struggles with socio-economic disparities, which constitutes a challenge that, to a large extent, cannot be alleviated even in the presence of cohesion policies. These regions, characterized by structural economic problems, geographical disadvantages, demographic changes, inadequate local governance, limited private sector involvement and deep-seated cultural and social problems, show why a one-size-fits-all approach to development is insufficient.

The importance of a place-based policy, which considers the unique characteristics and local spatial connections of each area, is crucial for effective development interventions. The TIPERICO research project (<https://tiperico.web.amu.edu.pl/en/>), conducted within the framework of urban functional areas, has been instrumental in redefining and classifying Poland's inner peripheries. By selecting representative test areas and examining their developmental regularities, the project offers a detailed understanding of the diverse challenges these regions face. This research includes both quantitative analyzes of development trajectories and qualitative insights from residents, entrepreneurs, NGO activists and local authorities. These perspectives shed new light on the multi-faceted conditions and development obstacles occurring in these areas. They allow us to answer why cohesion policy intervention is not always effective in these areas and its effectiveness is limited. The research results lead to the formulation of recommendations tailored to individual needs regarding programming and implementation of development policies in Poland's inner periphery. These recommendations take into account the socio-economic character of regions, their diverse responses to development turmoil and the broader political

context characterized by a tendency to centralize the programming of development interventions. The results underscore the need for a differentiated, region-specific approach to policymaking. They show that to effectively tackle the unique challenges of Poland's inner periphery, development policies must be adaptable, informed by local insights, and responsive to the specific needs of each region.

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