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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COMPETITIVENESS OF SUBREGIONS. THE CASE OF THE WIELKOPOLSKA REGION IN POLAND

# PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚĆ A KONKURENCYJNOŚĆ PODREGIONÓW NA PRZYKŁADZIE WOJEWÓDZTWA WIELKOPOLSKIEGO W POLSCE

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**Summary:** Selected development factors lead to increased competitiveness of countries, regions and smaller administrative units. Management of the processes creating the competitiveness of these units becomes crucial from the point of view of their long-term development The purpose of this article is to capture the relationship between entrepreneurship and competitiveness in subregions using the example of the Wielkopolska region in Poland and to examine the differences in this area between individual subregions.. The research results indicate significant differences in the development of entrepreneurship and competitiveness between the central and peripheral subregions in the Wielkopolska region. They seem to indicate the existence of feedback between ex-post competitiveness and selected entrepreneurship indicators in subregions remote from the regional center of growth and emphasize the importance of SMEs in the economies of these subregions.

**Keywords:** competitiveness of subregions, entrepreneurship, SMEs.

**Streszczenie:** Wybrane czynniki rozwoju prowadzą do wzrostu konkurencyjności krajów, regionów i mniejszych jednostek administracyjnych. Zarządzanie procesami kształtującymi konkurencyjność tych jednostek staje się kluczowe z punktu widzenia ich długoterminowego rozwoju. Cele artykułu to wskazanie związku między przedsiębiorczością a konkurencyjnością w subregionach na przykładzie regionu wielkopolskiego w Polsce oraz zbadanie różnic w tym obszarze między poszczególnymi subregionami. Wyniki badań dowodzą znacznego zróżnicowania w poziomie rozwoju przedsiębiorczości i konkurencyjności między subregionami centralnym i peryferyjnym w województwie wielkopolskim. Wydaje się, że wskazują one na sprzężenie zwrotne między konkurencyjnością *ex post* a wybranymi wskaźnikami przedsiębiorczości w subregionach oddalonych od regionalnego centrum wzrostu i podkreślają znaczenie MSP w gospodarkach tych subregionów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** konkurencyjność subregionów, przedsiębiorczość, MSP.

## 1. Introduction

Economic development within the meaning of the new economy means quantitative and qualitative changes. As Todaro and Smith (2012) note, nowadays the purposes of economic development include availability of goods, an increase in the standard of living and freedom to make economic and social choices. Selected development factors lead to increased competitiveness of states, regions and smaller administrative units. Management of the processes creating competitiveness of these units becomes crucial from the point of view of their sustained and long-term development. Competitiveness in accordance with the Lisbon Strategy is the most important element of regional policy and is often combined with creating the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which is reflected in numerous support programs dedicated to this sector (Gwizdała, 2018). Entrepreneurship and competitiveness are, in turn, considered as co-determinants of sustainable development (Huczek, 2016).

According to the division of territorial units for statistical purposes in the EU, a subregion is a subordinate of a region. A subregion may also mean a functional area understood as an economic region. Functional areas are defined both around metropolitan cities and around smaller urban centers forming subregional growth centers (Olejniczak and Łuczka, 2019).

Competitiveness of a subregion depends on the ability of enterprises located in it to produce goods and services that will succeed on supra-local markets, in particular on international markets. Competitiveness of a subregion is connected with the ability of enterprises to achieve growing income with a simultaneous increase in employment. Due to the special role of SMEs in the economy of any subregion (Ignatiuk, 2011; Olejniczak, 2016; Strużycki, 2004), it seems important to show the significance – for the development and survival of SMEs – of selected subregion competitiveness factors. These factors, and in particular their quantitative and qualitative characteristics, determine the competitive potential of a subregion. On the other hand, the competitive position that is ex-post competitiveness may be expressed by measures such as GDP per capita, labour productivity and the employment rate (Łaźniewska, Chmielewski, and Nowak, 2012).

The purpose of this article is to capture the relationship between entrepreneurship and competitiveness in subregions using the example of the Wielkopolska region in Poland and to examine the differences in this area between individual subregions. It should be noted that a significant limitation of research on the subregional economy comes from a low availability of statistical data and significant delays in the availability of these data at this level of delimitation. Nevertheless, due to the importance of local systems and endogenous factors in contemporary development concepts (Amin, 1999; Romer, 1986; Winkler, 2015), attempting to study and describe the processes and dependences occurring between competitiveness at local level and entrepreneurship seems indispensable from the point of view of the effectiveness of public authorities' policy in this area.

The first part of the article refers to the definition of competitiveness of the subregion and indicates the complexity and multidimensionality of this concept. In the following section, the focus is on the role of SMEs in the subregional economy. The next part presents, based on selected results of empirical research, the most important aspects related to the creation and survival of SMEs. With respect to these considerations, the third part presents the results of our own research on entrepreneurship and competitiveness of the Wielkopolska subregions in a spatial layout in the context of the institutional environment. In the final part, conclusions are formulated regarding the analyzed issues and the directions of further research in this area are indicated.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. The essence of competitiveness of subregions

In the related literature, one can find numerous definitions of competitiveness of a territory (Begg, 1999; Bristow, 2010; Martin, 2003; Storper, 1997), which makes it extremely difficult to develop a consensus on this matter. Competitiveness can be considered at the micro level (competitiveness of enterprises), at the macro level (competitiveness of states) and at intermediate levels such as regions and subregions.

Porter (1990) considers competitiveness first of all in terms of productivity of labour or capital. According to the author, a competitive region is a region in which industry clusters capable of international competition, characterized by high productivity, are located.

Meyer-Stamer (2008) suggested an overall approach to the competitiveness of a territory. According to the author, it means the ability to generate high and rising incomes and improve the living conditions of the inhabitants.

On a local scale, competitiveness refers to the creation of attractive living conditions, strengthening the socio-cultural environment as well as attractive conditions for the development of economic activity. This means actions aimed at supporting local entrepreneurship, territorial marketing, and the development of infrastructure significant from the investors' and residents' point of view. A direct objective is to attract external resources and retain high-quality internal resources (Domański, 2005; Ślusarz and Kadyjewski, 2010).

In the context of considerations regarding the competitiveness of a territory, the concept of resilience of regions becomes important, which, in opposition to traditional models of competitiveness, in particular takes into account the specificity of the local context and the issues of sustainable development. The concept was created as a response to turbulences in the external environment, often associated with globalization processes, in particular in connection with the effects of the financial crisis. It indicates the importance of the potential to adapt to changes taking place in the external environment, the importance of sustainable development, as well as location, diversification and individual development trajectories associated with specific local conditions (Bristow, 2010).

Summing up the considerations, the concept of subregional competitiveness can be described as the ability to attract and retain mobile production factors by creating favourable conditions for a sustainable and simultaneous increase in productivity and employment rate based on locally specific advantages. This definition indicates the need for the proper management of processes creating the competitiveness of the subregion and in particular the need for both the adaptation and acquisition of attractive external resources as well as the use of endogenous (internal) resources to create growing incomes with growing employment based on innovations and highly efficient workplaces including respect for the natural environment. Internal resources include micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, the meaning of which is indicated later in the article.

### 2.2. Importance of small and medium-sized enterprises for the economies of subregions

The role of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the global economy has been widely described in related literature. Their changing condition and entrepreneurial factors along with current trends in this area, as well as public policy leading to entrepreneurship support are the subject of numerous empirical studies both internationally (Cravo and Piza, 2016; European Investment Bank, 2016; Ferreira, Mendes, and Pereira, 2016; OECD, 2017; World Bank Group, 2018; World Bank Ghana Office, 2013; Rateiwa and Azjakpono, 2015) as well as at the level of countries (Anton and Onofrei, 2016; Bank Pekao, 2017).

The growing importance of SMEs in Poland is influenced by many factors, among others (Chaber et al., 2018):

- systematic increase in their number – especially dynamically developing microenterprises; in 2016 the number of this group of enterprises was higher by 21% compared to 2009; a significant increase in the number of jobs – at the end of 2016, 9.7 million people worked in the enterprise sector, which means an increase of 9.76% compared to 2009. The sector of small and medium-sized enterprises was a place of work for nearly 69% of all employees;
- stable growth in the share of SMEs in GDP creation – in 2009-2016, improvement took place in all size groups (micro – from 29.9% to 30.5%, small – from 7.4% to 8.1%, medium-sized – from 9.9% to 11.3%);
- increase in the importance of microenterprises – these entities showed in 2016 the highest profitability in comparison with the entire population of enterprises. The value added generated in the period 2009-2016 by microfirms increased by 32%, and in 2016, as the only group of enterprises, it showed an increase in total YOY investment outlays; higher investment in innovation – this increase mainly concerns medium-sized enterprises;
- greater flexibility compared to large enterprises, which may be their advantage especially in times of economic crisis,
- their development is considered as one of the significant indicators of economic development and dimensions of development processes at the local level (Muller et al., 2017).

Therefore stimulating the development of entrepreneurship and support both in seed processes and in the initial phase of enterprises' activity is one of the most important initiatives supporting the endogenous competitive potential of subregions. The development of entrepreneurship affects its development in a multifaceted way. The most important issues in this respect include: (1) direct impact related to the creation of new jobs, (2) higher revenues to budgets of territorial units due to taxes, (3) technological progress, (4) increased activity and independence of residents, (5) development of civil society, (6) integration and involvement of local resources, (7) inflow of investments, and (8) GDP growth in subregions which ultimately determines the competitive position of the subregion. In the following section, the determinants of creation and survival of SMEs are indicated.

### 2.3. Factors affecting the creation and survival of SMEs

Although the number of small and medium-sized enterprises is systematically growing, one cannot overlook the fact that the smallest entities still have the biggest problems with surviving on the market (Dębicka and Łuczka, 2019). In 2016, over 256 thousand enterprises were established in Poland, while at the end of December 2016 only 179 thousand of them operated on the market. Just over 30% of microenterprises did not survive the first year of operation. The survival rates of small and medium-sized enterprises were higher – 80.5% and 92.4%, respectively (Figure 1). It should also be noted that although the survival rate increases in subsequent years of operation, in the case of enterprises which started operating in 2012, only 28% of them remained active in 2017 (Chaber et al., 2016).

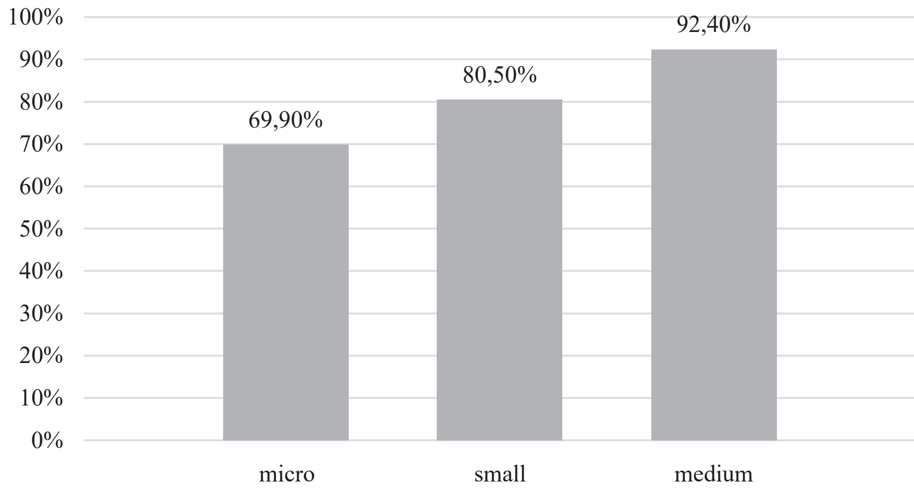


**Figure 1.** Survival for the first year of activity by the size of enterprises – survival rate 2016/2017

Source: prepared on the basis of (Chaber et al., 2016, p. 15).

According to the results of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP, 2010), the most common threats to SME survival include: (1) excessive tax rates, (2) no new customers, (3) unpredictability of the market, (4) unfair and fierce competition, (5) too long payment terms, (6) instability of legal regulations, (7) restricted access to sources of external financing, (8) unclear tender procedures, (9) lack of adequately qualified employees, (10) exchange rate volatility, (11) raw material costs and production costs.

Research results of the European Central Bank (2013) indicate that the most important problems affecting the creation and development of SMEs include: finding customers, access to finance, availability of skilled staff and experienced managers, regulation, competition and costs of production and labour.

In the face of the presented barriers and reasons for SMEs' failure, it is understandable that supporting the development of entrepreneurship and existing micro and medium-sized enterprises is the goal of numerous international institutions, public authorities and the institutional environment (Łuczka and Małecka, 2018). So far, however, not much is known about which of these instruments lead to the best results in this respect and why (Cravo and Piza, 2016).

According to the results of the OECD research, the most important areas of support for SMEs, in particular in the initial phase of activity, are: facilitating access to external sources of financing, support from the institutional environment, improvement of competitiveness and access to information, cooperation networks as well as facilitating access to external markets.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018), in which the conditions for entrepreneurship development in 54 countries were compared, points in particular to such elements as: enterprises' access to financing; government policies – support and relevance; – taxes and bureaucracy; government entrepreneurship programs; entrepreneurship education at the school stage; entrepreneurship education at the post-school stage; R&D transfer; commercial and legal infrastructure; internal market dynamics; internal market burdens and entry regulation; physical infrastructure; cultural and social norms.

The results of Cravo and Piza research in developing countries (2016) indicate in particular such aspects of entrepreneurship support as: matching grants/credits, training and management programs, support of local production systems, innovation policies, supporting access to external markets, and tax simplification.

The presented studies indicate that the fundamental impact on the creation and survival of SMEs should be attributed to the institutional environment, including the closest institutional environment, which is particularly important from the viewpoint of the considerations regarding the management of processes creating the competitiveness of subregions. The next part of the article presents the results of our own research on entrepreneurship indicators for individual subregions of Wielkopolska, which were then combined with quantitative data regarding the institutional environment in subregions. The indicated dependences in this respect were compared with the ex-post competitiveness indicators for subregions.

## 3. Entrepreneurship and competitiveness of the Wielkopolska subregions in the light of own research

### 3.1. Methodology

The following indicators were used to assess the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in subregions of Wielkopolska:

(1) entities entered into the REGON register (Polish National Business Register kept by the President of the Central Statistical Office) per 10,000 population,
(2) natural persons conducting economic activity per 100 persons of working age,
(3) newly registered entities per 10,000 persons of working age.

Additionally, absolute numbers of unregistered and newly registered entities in particular years were taken into account. The investment expenditures and the gross value of fixed assets *per capita* and trends in this respect were taken into account for the assessment of enterprise development. In order to show the trends of individual phenomena, data from the period 2010-2015 were used. The obtained results were presented in comparison with the average for the Wielkopolska region and for Poland.

The applied entrepreneurship and development indicators were compared with the number of business environment institutions in subregions. Finally, the obtained research results were compared with the ex-post competitiveness indicators for individual subregions. In addition, correlations between individual ex-post competitiveness and entrepreneurship indicators were analyzed in all subregions, in the Wielkopolska region and in Poland in 2010-2015.

### 3.2. Research results

As can be seen from Table 1, in the analyzed period in most subregions there was a decrease in the number of newly registered entities, which corresponds to the data for the region and the country. Only in the city of Poznań there was an increase in the analyzed period. The number of natural persons conducting business activity in the analyzed period increased in all subregions. The largest increase was recorded in Poznań (7.4%), and the smallest in the Leszczyński subregion (4.1%). These data correspond with the trends for the entire Wielkopolska region (an increase of 5.3%) and for Poland (an increase of 4.2%). Taking into account the number of entities in the REGON register, an increase in all subregions can also be observed, with the increase being higher than in the case of the previous indicator. In Poznań, an increase of 13.6% was recorded. This result significantly determines the average for the Wielkopolska region (an increase of 8.2%), which is higher than the average for the entire territory of Poland (7.3%).

**Table 1.** Entrepreneurship indicators in subregions, in the Wielkopolska region and in Poland

| Subregion | Entities entered into the REGON register per 10,000 population – trend in 2010-2015 (%) | Natural persons conducting economic activity per 100 persons of working age – trend in 2010-2015 (%) | Newly registered entities per 10,000 persons of working age – trend in 2010-2015 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kaliski | 6.6 | 5.4 | –16.3 |
| Koniński | 6.7 | 5.6 | –10.3 |
| Leszczyński | 5.3 | 4.1 | –8.9 |
| City of Poznań | 13.6 | 7.4 | 18.9 |
| Pilski | 6.1 | 4.9 | –15.3 |
| Poznański | 7.6 | 6.7 | –2.2 |
| | | | |
| Wielkopolska region | 8.2 | 5.3 | –4.1 |
| Poland | 7.3 | 4.2 | –7.4 |

Source: prepared on the basis of the Central Statistical Office data, Local Data Bank.

To sum up, it should be noted that despite the drop in the number of newly registered entities in most subregions, both the number of entities in the REGON register and the number of natural persons conducting business activity increased. This is due to the fact that in almost all subregions, despite the declining trend of newly registered business entities over the years, the number of deregistered entities also decreased, with the number of new ones exceeding the number of deregistered entities within individual subregions. The exception was the city of Poznań in 2015 (6413 new and 6912 deregistered entities).

In order to illustrate the development trends of enterprises in individual subregions of the studied region, investment expenditure and gross value of fixed assets were taken into account (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Development indicators of enterprises in subregions, in the Wielkopolska region and in Poland

| Subregion | Investment expenditures in enterprises with the number of employees above 9, per 1 inhabitant – trend in 2010-2015 (%) | Gross value of fixed assets in enterprises with the number of employees above 9, per 1 inhabitant − trend in 2010-2015 (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Kaliski | 74.8 | 44.7 |
| Koniński | 200.3 | 30.4 |
| Leszczyński | 26.1 | 38.0 |
| City of Poznań | 27.5 | 30.4 |
| Pilski | 58.9 | 45.0 |
| Poznański | 59.9 | 68.1 |
| | | |
| Wielkopolska region | 63.9 | 40.9 |
| Poland | 46.7 | 32.4 |

Source: prepared on the basis of the Central Statistical Office data, Local Data Bank.

In the analyzed period, investment expenditure in the entire Wielkopolska region increased by 63.9%. However, significant differences can be noticed in individual subregions. Taking into account the analyzed ratio, the fastest growing are enterprises in the Koniński subregion (an increase of 200.3%), while enterprises based in the city of Poznań recorded an increase in investment expenditure of only 27.51%. The gross value of fixed assets increased in all the analyzed subregions, although significant differences were also observed for this indicator. The largest increase was recorded in the Poznański subregion (68.1%) and the lowest in the Koniński subregion and in Poznań (30.4%).

The number of business environment institutions broken down into individual types in subregions is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Number and types of business environment institutions in subregions and in the Wielkopolska region

| Subregion | Incubators of entrepre-neurship | Training and consulting centers | Guilds associated in the Wielkopolska Chamber of Crafts in Poznań | Institutions supporting innovation | Non-bank financial institutions | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kaliski | 2 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 15 |
| Koniński | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| Leszczyński | 2 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 18 |
| City of Poznań | 2 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 40 |
| Pilski | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Poznański | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Wielkopolska** | 8 | 25 | 42 | 18 | 18 | 111 |

Source: (Świdurska and Jagodziński, 2015).

By far the most important centre in the Wielkopolska region in terms of supporting entrepreneurship was the city of Poznań, in which 40 out of 111 institutions are located. In addition, the Leszczyński subregion (18 entities) and the Poznań subregion (17 entities) are among the most important subregions in this respect. It should be noted that these data correspond to entrepreneurship indicators, and in particular in the field of newly registered entities. The city of Poznań was one of the subregions in which growth of new enterprises was recorded. In turn, the Leszczyński and Poznański subregions were subregions in which the decrease was the smallest. Taking into account the institutions supporting innovation, the city of Poznań and the Poznański subregion remain the only centres focusing on it.

Table 4 presents the indicators for *ex post* competitiveness for subregions, for the Wielkopolska region and Poland in 2015.

According to the ranking of subregions, taking into account the adopted indicators, by far the most competitive subregions are: (1) the city of Poznań, (2) the Poznański subregion and (3) the Kaliski subregion. These subregions obtained the best results for almost all adopted indicators. The city of Poznań, in terms of GDP *per capita*, exceeded the average for the whole region by 45% and the national average by 49%. The Leszczyński subregion, even though it showed only slightly lower values for GDP *per capita* and the total number of registered unemployed in the working age population than the Kaliski subregion, remained by far the weakest subregion in terms of gross value added. These data correspond to the low increase in the value of fixed assets and investment expenditure in the Leszczyński subregion.

**Table 4.** *Ex post* competitiveness indicators in subregions, in the Wielkopolska region and in Poland

| Subregion | GDP p.c. (PLN) | | Gross value added/ 1 employee (PLN) | | Total share of the registered unemployed in the working-age population (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | Ranking | Value | Ranking | Value | Ranking |
| Kaliski | 42 570 | 3 | 97 909 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Koniński | 35 407 | 6 | 93 558 | 5 | 6.7 | 6 |
| Leszczyński | 41 990 | 4 | 97 190 | 6 | 3.9 | 3 |
| City of Poznań | 92 232 | 1 | 137 475 | 1 | 2.4 | 1 |
| Pilski | 36 098 | 5 | 97 575 | 4 | 5.8 | 5 |
| Poznański | 57 221 | 2 | 124 136 | 2 | 3.1 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |
| Wielkopolska | 50 790 | | 110 968 | | 4.3 | |
| Poland | 46 792 | | 113 577 | | 6.5 | |

Source: prepared on the basis of the Central Statistical Office data, Local Data Bank.

The Koniński subregion remained the least competitive subregion. However, considering the increase in the value of fixed assets and investment expenditure in the examined period, an increase in gross value added per one employee can be expected in the future.

Taking into account the results of the correlation study between individual indicators of ex-post competitiveness and entrepreneurship in all the subregions, in Wielkopolska and in Poland in 2010-2015, the conclusions were as follows:

- in subregions: Kaliski, Koniński, Leszczyński and Pilski, as well as for the entire area of Poland, a statistically significant positive correlation was found ($p < 0.05$) between competitiveness indicators: GDP *per capita* and gross value added per 1 employee, and the entrepreneurship rate: entities entered into the REGON register per 10,000 population,
- in the same areas, a statistically significant positive correlation between competitiveness indicators: GDP per *capita* and gross value added per 1 employee, and the entrepreneurship rate: natural persons conducting economic activity per 100 persons of working age was found,
- the correlation was not demonstrated in any of the examined areas between the competitiveness indicators and the entrepreneurship indicator: newly registered entities per 10,000 working age population,
- in Poznań, no correlation was found between the analyzed indicators of competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

## 4. Conclusions

The article discusses the subject of competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the context of the economies in the subregions. The raised theoretical issues were extended by the results of our own research in the subregions of Wielkopolska. The definition of competitiveness of subregions was assumed as the ability to generate growing income with growing employment based on locally specific advantages. Finally, the special role of SMEs in the economies of subregions was pointed out. The specificity of this group of enterprises indicates the need for support from the institutional environment including the closest institutional environment in subregions. The required scope of SME support and entrepreneurship support is analyzed in the context of numerous empirical studies. The most important issues include access to financing sources, public policies regarding taxation and bureaucracy, entrepreneurship support program, education at the school level, commercialization of research results, technical infrastructure and socio-cultural norms. Business environment institutions conduct numerous intervention activities, but it is not known yet which of these activities lead to the best results in this area.

Taking into account the results of the authors' own research in subregions of the Wielkopolska region regarding indicators of entrepreneurship and competitiveness, as well as the relations between them, the following statements can be made:

- firstly, in terms of both entrepreneurship and competitiveness, the city of Poznań clearly distinguishes itself from the other subregions, often achieving results well above the national average;
- secondly, taking into account the adopted indicators, the most competitive subregions are: the city of Poznań, the Poznański subregion and the Kaliski subregion;
- thirdly, subregions with the highest number of business environment institutions show an increase or the smallest decrease in the number of newly registered enterprises in the analyzed period;
- fourthly, although the number of newly registered entities in the Wielkopolska region shows decreasing tendencies over the years, the remaining entrepreneurship rates show an upward trend, which is related to the falling number of deregistered entities in the analyzed period;
- fifthly, the value of fixed assets and the value of investments are correlated with gross value added per 1 employee in subregions (the best: Poznań and the Poznański subregion, the worst: the Leszczyński subregion); taking into account the trends in this area, an increase in the gross value added per 1 employee in the Koniński subregion should be expected;
- sixthly, the higher the GDP *per capita* and gross value added per 1 employee in subregions remote from the regional growth center, the higher the value of

entrepreneurship indices: entities entered into the REGON register per 10,000 population and natural persons conducting economic activity per 100 persons of working age; in Poznań, no such correlation was found.

Summing up the above considerations, it is important to note significant differences in the development of entrepreneurship and competitiveness between the central and peripheral subregions in the Wielkopolska region. In addition, the research results seem to indicate the existence of feedback between *ex post* competitiveness and selected entrepreneurship indicators in subregions remote from the regional center of growth. In addition, they emphasize the importance of SMEs in the economies of these subregions (the higher the GDP *per capita*, the higher the rate of natural persons conducting economic activity per 100 persons of working age). Based on the research results, it is possible to assume different processes in this respect between the central and peripheral subregions which require further research. From the point of view of intra-regional differences, study of these processes in this respect is particularly important in the case of less competitive regions. Considering the significance of SMEs in subregions and the authors' own research results indicating the lack of a positive correlation between ex-post competitiveness and the number of newly registered enterprises, one can assume the importance of crisis management in this sector of enterprises that may affect their survival. These issues also require further research, especially in the context of the activities of business environment institutions in subregions.

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