

Contemporary socio-economic development processes are increasingly dependent on the quality of transport infrastructure. Road accessibility affects not only the mobility of inhabitants, but also the conditions for economic activity, the attractiveness of settlements and the spatial cohesion of regions. In the conditions of Poland, where thousands of kilometres of new motorways, expressways and ring roads have been built in the last two decades, it is reasonable to ask the question: how do these investments actually affect local development? It becomes particularly interesting to examine whether improvements in road infrastructure translate into permanent and measurable changes in the socio-economic structure, or whether these effects are dispersed, difficult to capture or limited to selected areas.

The aim of the project is to investigate how changes in road accessibility translate into demographic and socio-economic phenomena on a local scale - at the municipal level. The analysis will cover a long time horizon, capturing both immediate and delayed demographic and socio-economic responses. The research will be carried out in a comparative and spatial perspective, enabling an assessment of whether infrastructure investments are bringing uniform benefits or exacerbating existing development differences between areas. Particular emphasis will be placed on the variation of effects according to the type of municipalities and their location in relation to major transport corridors. The study will also take into account spillover processes of development effects to neighbouring municipalities to capture potential effects of the scale and extent of the impact of linear investments.

The project responds to the growing need for an in-depth knowledge of the effects of infrastructure policy. Although the development of the road network is often seen as an engine of development, there is so far a lack of comprehensive, empirically-based analyses confirming this relationship. The project fills this gap by integrating statistical and spatial data and analysing them in the context of local transformation processes. In this way, the research combines geographical, social and economic perspectives, offering a multidimensional view of the mechanisms of local and regional change. The analyses carried out in the project will be based on reliable and replicable research methods, allowing not only to draw conclusions from the past, but also to formulate scenarios for future development based on hard data.

The expected outcome of the research will be a deeper knowledge of local development mechanisms and a better understanding of the spatial extent and impact of infrastructure investments. The particular value of the project lies in taking into account temporal and spatial differences in the response of local communities to changes in road transport accessibility. The results will enable not only a scientific diagnosis of past processes, but also the formulation of more realistic assumptions for the planning of future development activities. The project will provide a valuable contribution to research in socio-economic geography, regional studies and spatial policy, contributing to a more informed and balanced shaping of territorial policy in Poland. The knowledge gained in the course of the project may also become an important reference point for international analyses, especially in countries with a similar spatial structure and stage of infrastructure development. In addition, the methodological approaches developed under the project may find application in other fields of spatial research, providing a foundation for further empirical and comparative work.