

Paweł Gronowski

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE CRIME RATE AND THE LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE MAŁOPOLSKIE VOIVODSHIP

Abstract: Through the analysis of the crime level and the unemployment rate, the author aims to identify spatial relationships between these phenomena.

Key words: crime level, unemployment rate, long-term unemployment, right to unemployment benefit

1. Introduction

Crime and unemployment constitute phenomena of a dysfunctional nature which have intensified considerably over recent years. In Poland, during 1990-1999, the level of crime expressed as the number of crimes per 100,000 inhabitants has increased by as much as 25.4%, from 2313.4 in 1990 to 2900.5 in 1999.

Unemployment has increased even more over recent years. In 1990, the rate of unemployment in Poland was 6.1% and by 2000 it grew almost two and a half times to the level of 15.0%.

The intensification of those negative phenomena is certainly related to the social and political changes taking place in Poland after 1989 and to the process of departing from the centrally planned economy to the free-market one. As a consequence of this transition, many branches of the national economy are suffering from a long-term crisis which results in a slowdown of the economic growth rate, a decrease of investment in outlays, an increase of the unemployment and the population living standard deterioration.

The above-mentioned changes in Poland's political and socio-economic life are not without effect on the crime level. They have also encouraged crime forms not observed before or having marginal significance, such as organised crime, economic crime, informal employment or corruption.

This study aims at presenting the geographical differentiation of the crime level and the rate of unemployment in the Małopolskie voivodship in 2000, and attempts to identify the possible relationship, both quantitative and spatial ones, between the phenomena under consideration.

The source material used for research purposes comprised the official statistical reports of the Voivodship Police Headquarters in Cracow and official publications of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) concerning registered unemployment by poviats.

2. Spatial differentiation of the crime level in the Małopolskie voivodship

Before Poland's administrative reform of the 1st January, 1999, the former Cracow Voivodship was among those the most threatened by crime. In 1998, the crime level in this voivodship was 3763.3 (6th in Poland) and it was much over the national average of 2775.6. The former Tarnów and Nowy Sącz voivodships, which since 1999 have been included to the present Małopolskie voivodship, had been among the safest ones – ranking 46th and 44th respectively in terms of crime levels (there were 49 voivodeships in total).

After the above-mentioned reform, the Małopolskie voivodship was among relatively safe areas. In 1999, the crime level in the region was 2504.6, as compared with the national average of 2900.5, which ranked the voivodship on 12th place.

This paper analyses three selected categories of criminal acts: theft (art. 275 §1, 278, 279 §1 of the Polish Criminal Code), burglary (art. 279) and robbery (art. 280, 281, 282). The selection of these categories relates to the fact that they are included among crimes against property, and the reasons for such criminal activity can be traced to the financial position of the perpetrator.

In 2000, the crime level for all the above categories in the Małopolskie voivodship was 1656.0. Analysed by poviats, the highest levels were noted in the urban poviats of Cracow (3796.3), Nowy Sącz (2699.6) and Tarnów (2419.8), and in the poviat of Chrzanów (2074.1). Relatively high levels were also noted in the poviats of Zakopane (the Tatrzański Poviat) and Oświęcim (Tab. 1, Fig. 1).

The poviats showing the indices crime levels in the voivodship were: the rural poviat of Tarnów (329.7), and the poviats of Sucha Beskidzka (574.0) and Limanowa (596.2).

The spatial differentiation of the lowest crime indices in the Małopolskie voivodship is clearly determined by the voivodship's three largest cities, being centres of criminal activities. As much as 67.4% out of 53551 known acts perpetrated in contravention of the law were committed in the urban poviats of Cracow, Tarnów and Nowy Sącz, and only in that of Cracow itself the share was as high as 52.6% (28510 criminal acts). This confirms that crime belongs to phenomena of a dysfunctional nature that tend to be particularly intense and concentrate on highly urbanised areas.

The relatively high crime level noted in the Zakopane (Tatrzański) poviat is probably determined by the tourist function of the area and the considerable concentration of tourists where potential victims of criminal activities can be found.

Tab. 1. Crime level and rate of unemployment in the Małopolskie voivodship in 2000

Tab. 1. Przestępczość i bezrobocie w woj. małopolskim w 2000 r.

Name of area/powiat	Number of crimes				Crime rate (number of crimes per 100.000 inhabitants)				Unemployment		
	Theft	Burglary	Robbery	Total	Theft	Burglary	Robbery	Total	Rate of unemployment in%	Percentage of unemployed:	
										Without right to benefit	Long-term
Bochnia	274	286	92	652	278.8	291.0	93.6	663.3	12.0	84.6	19.0
Brzesko	211	338	66	615	234.9	376.3	73.5	684.6	13.8	86.0	26.0
Chrzanów	746	1514	456	2716	569.7	1156.2	348.2	2074.1	14.1	86.5	14.5
Dąbrowa Tarnowska	187	332	39	558	317.6	563.9	66.2	947.7	17.0	79.0	30.4
Gorlice	285	464	83	832	263.3	428.6	76.7	768.6	18.6	79.1	34.6
City of Cracow	13201	12512	2437	28150	1780.3	1687.4	328.7	3796.6	6.3	79.5	12.4
Kraków	784	1279	127	2190	331.8	541.2	53.7	926.7	11.3	81.8	15.0
Limanowa	332	347	28	707	279.9	292.6	23.6	596.2	17.3	74.2	32.9
Miechów	163	199	12	374	309.1	377.4	22.8	709.3	9.1	87.6	21.7
Myślenice	244	613	38	895	215.4	541.0	33.5	789.9	12.6	82.4	18.2
Town of Nowy Sącz	852	1218	208	2278	1009.7	1443.4	246.5	2699.6	13.0	74.9	23.9
Nowy Sącz	373	784	120	1277	193.2	406.0	62.1	661.3	19.1	74.9	27.4
Nowy Targ	518	677	70	1265	288.3	376.8	39.0	704.1	11.6	83.2	19.2
Olkusz	525	612	71	1208	424.2	495.1	57.4	977.3	16.5	78.5	21.8
Oświęcim	649	1274	118	2041	420.0	824.6	76.4	1321.0	14.2	81.4	19.9
Proszowice	149	150	16	315	333.1	335.4	35.8	704.3	9.1	88.6	20.3
Sucha Beskidzka	166	285	15	466	204.5	351.1	18.5	574.0	10.2	84.9	22.6
Town of Tarnów	1061	1636	251	2948	870.9	1342.9	206.0	2419.8	10.6	88.8	21.3
Tarnów	248	285	63	596	137.2	157.6	34.8	329.7	14.7	88.0	25.8
Zakopane(Tatrzański)	483	345	195	1023	733.0	523.6	295.9	1552.5	8.1	86.6	17.4
Wadowice	398	862	44	1304	256.7	555.9	28.4	841.0	13.5	87.5	23.3
Wieliczka	393	638	110	1141	391.4	635.4	109.6	1136.3	13.6	83.0	14.3
Total	22242	26650	4659	53551	687.8	824.1	144.1	1656.0	11.9	81.5	21.9

Source: based on Biuletyn Statystyczny Temida ... and Bezrobocie rejestrowane w 2000

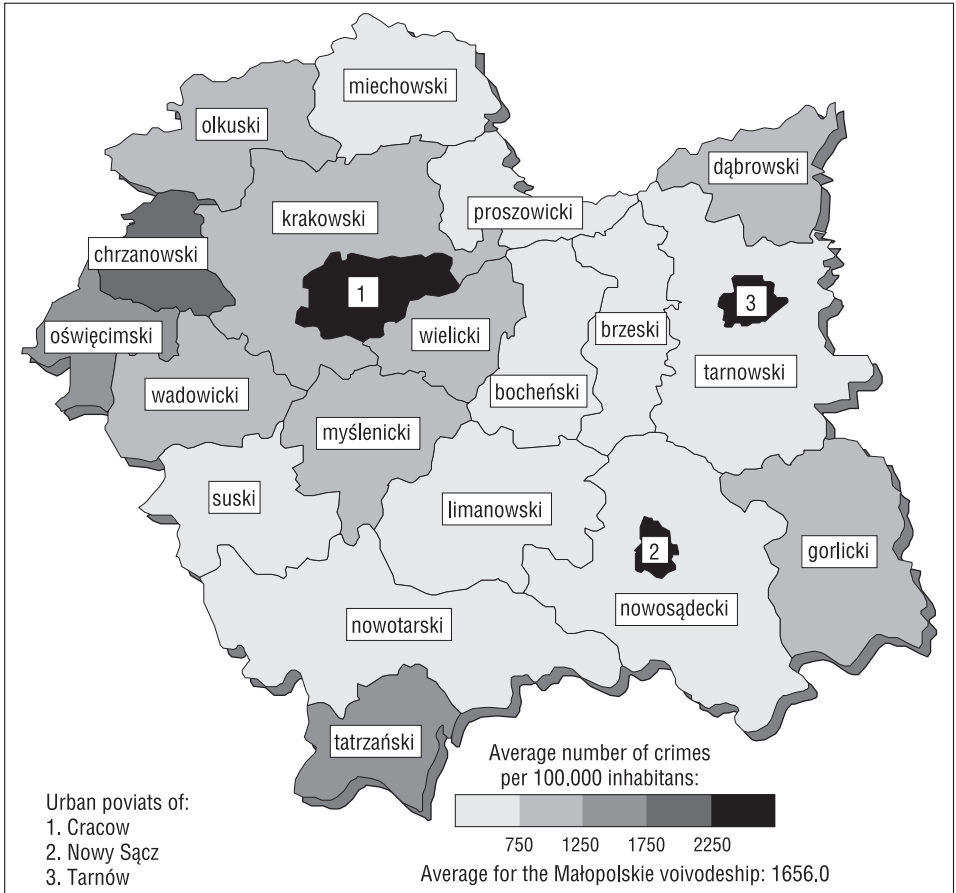


Fig. 1. Crime level in the Małopolskie voivodship, by poviats (31.12.2000)

Ryc. 1. Wskaźnik przestępczości w woj. małopolskim, wg powiatów (31.12.2000)

3. Spatial differentiation of the level of unemployment in the Małopolskie voivodship

3.1. Unemployment rate

At the end of December 2000, the rate of registered unemployment in Poland reached 15.0%. The Małopolskie voivodship was among areas with the lowest unemployment rates. Its level of 11.9% was the 2nd nationwide – just after the Mazowieckie voivodship, where the discussed rate was 11.0%.

However, the spatial differentiation of the unemployment rate in the Małopolskie voivodship, by poviats, was very differentiated (Tab. 1, Fig. 2).

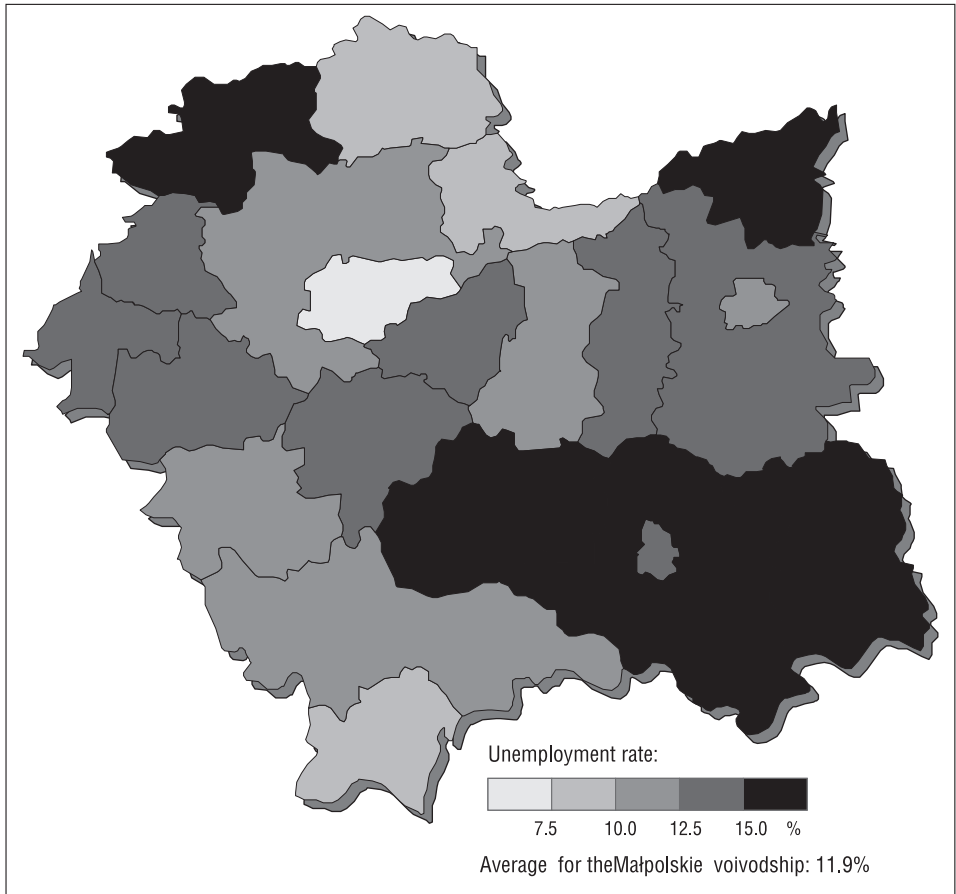


Fig. 2. Rate of unemployment in the Małopolskie voivodship, by poviats (31.12.2000)

Ryc. 2. Stopa bezrobocia w woj. małopolskim, wg powiatów (31.12.2000)

The lowest unemployment rate was noted in the urban poviats of Cracow – 6.3%. The low rates were also found in the poviats of Zakopane (Tatrzański) (8.1%), Miechów (9.1%) and Proszowice (9.1%). The rates were the highest in the rural poviats of Nowy Sącz (19.1%), and the poviats of Gorlice (18.6%), Limanowa (17.3%), Dąbrowa Tarnowska (17.0%) and Olkusz (16.5%).

3.2. The percentage of unemployed without the right to the unemployment benefit

At the end of 2000, as many as 81.5% of the unemployed in the Małopolskie voivodship did not have the right to unemployment benefit, while the national average amounted 79.7%. This rate was higher only in the Silesian (Katowice) and the Lublin voivodships – 84.9% and 84.4% respectively.

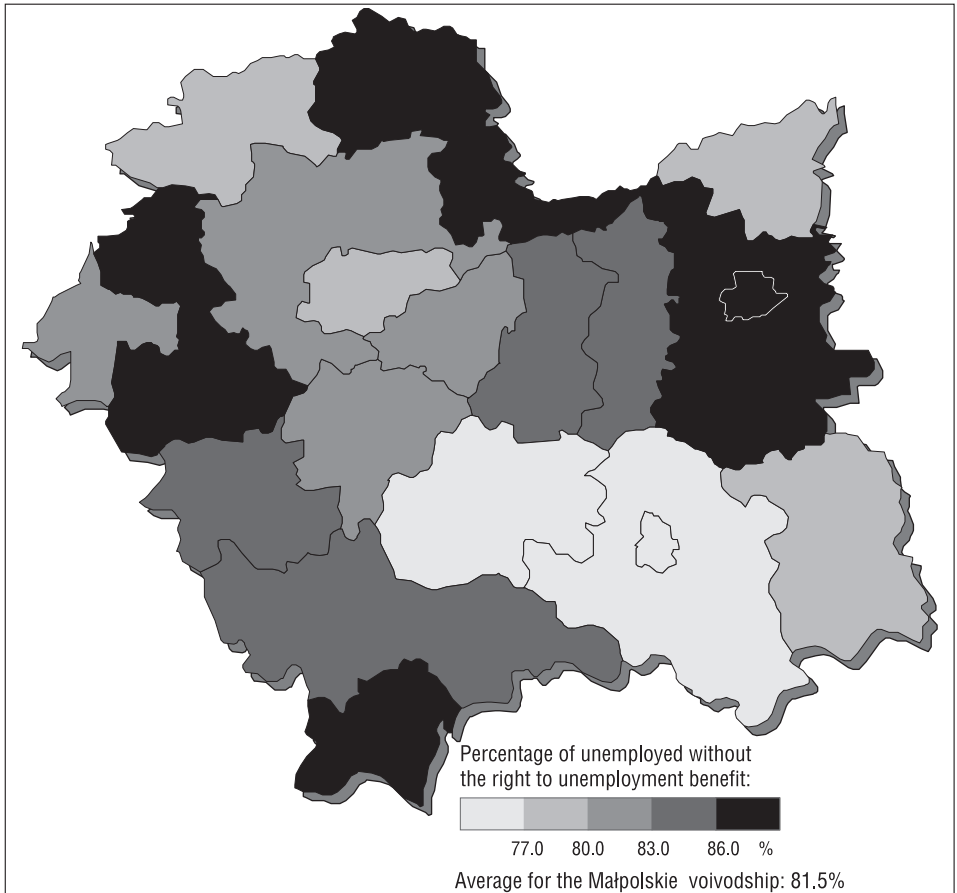


Fig. 3. Rate of unemployed without the right to the unemployment benefit in the Małopolskie voivodship, by poviats (31.12.2000)

Ryc. 3. Odsetek bezrobotnych nieposiadających prawa do zasiłku w woj. małopolskim, wg powiatów (31.12.2000)

Throughout the voivodship, the highest rates of unemployed without the right to unemployment benefit were noted in the urban poviat of Tarnów (88.8%), the Proszowice poviat (88.6%), the rural poviat of Tarnów (88.0%), and the Miechów (87.6%) and Wadowice (87.5%) poviats, too. The lowest rates were noted in the poviat of Limanowa (74.2%), and the rural and urban poviats of Nowy Sącz (74.9% in both) – (Tab. 1, Fig. 3).

3.3. Duration of unemployment (long-term unemployment)

In 2000, the long-term unemployed, that is unemployed for 24 months or more, in the Małopolskie voivodship constituted 21.9% of the total figure. With that rate, the voivodship ranked 8th in Poland. The rate was the lowest in the Silesian (Katowice)

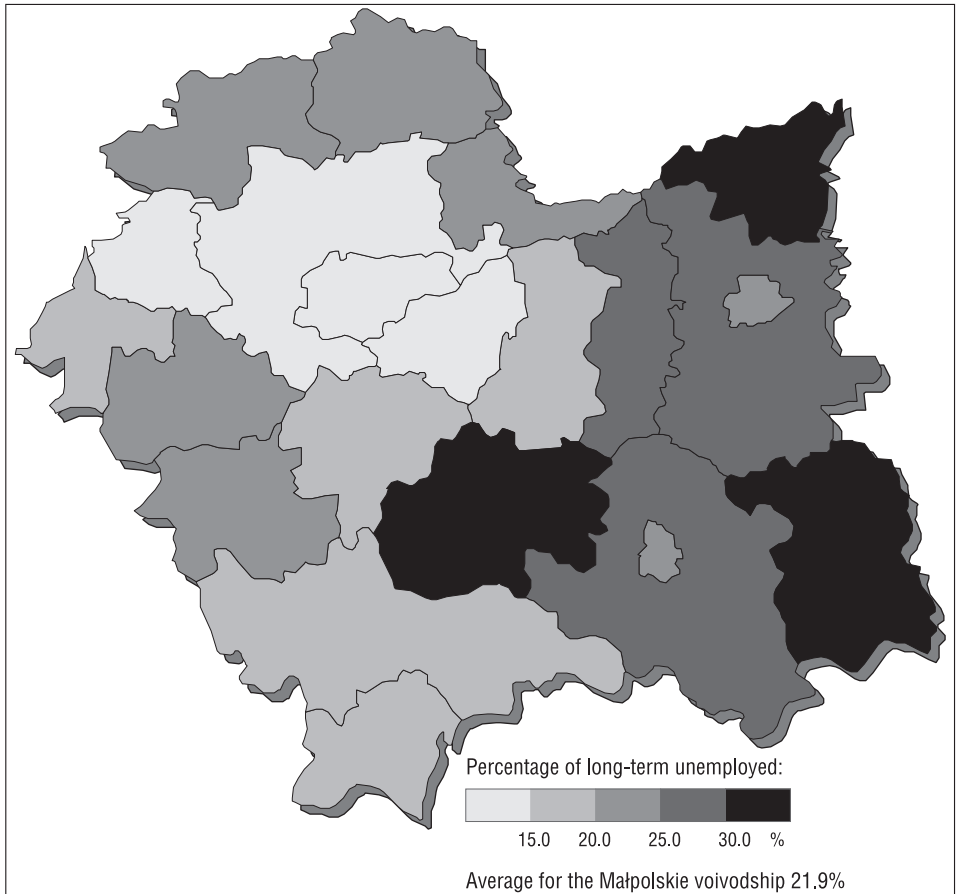


Fig. 4. Rate of long-term unemployment in the Małopolskie voivodship, by poviats (31.12.2000)

Ryc. 4. Odsetek długotrwale bezrobotnych w woj. małopolskim, wg powiatów (31.12.2000)

Voivodship, with 17.7% of the total figure being long-term unemployed, and the highest (28.8%) in the Podkarpackie (Rzeszów) voivodship, with the national average of 22.5%.

In the Małopolskie voivodship, the lowest rate of the long-term unemployed was noted in the urban poviats of Cracow (12.4%), the Wieliczka (14.3%) and Chrzanów (14.5%) poviats and the rural poviats of Cracow (15.0%). The rate was the highest in the Gorlice (34.6%), Limanowa (32.9%) and Dąbrowa Tarnowska (30.4%) poviats, the same ones with the highest rates of unemployment in the analysed voivodship (Tab. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 4). This further aggravates the poor situation on the local labour markets there, especially that those are weakly industrialised areas with an insufficient level of investment, and the population's income is generated mainly from agricultural activities.

4. Crime level vs. unemployment rate

In the Małopolskie voivodship, no clear quantitative or spatial relationships between the level of crime and the unemployment rate have been noted.

Among areas most threatened by crime, it is only the urban Nowy Sącz powiat and the powiat of Chrzanów that note unemployment rates above the voivodship average: 13.0% and 14.1% respectively (Tab. 1). On the other hand, the urban powiat of Cracow, with the highest crime level (3796.3), and the Zakopane (Tatrzański) powiat, with a relatively high crime level (1552.5), are among the areas where the lowest unemployment rates are noted: 6.3% and 8.1% respectively. It is worth to note that areas most affected by the unemployment - the rural powiat of Nowy Sącz (19.1%), the Gorlice (18.6%), and Limanowa powiats (17.3%), are among the safest in the voivodship, with the following crime levels: rural powiats of Nowy Sącz – 661.3, Gorlice – 768.6 and Limanowa – 596.2 (Tab. 1, Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

The absence of clear relationships between the crime level and the rate of unemployment suggests that in the Małopolskie voivodship the phenomenon of unemployment is not among the main crime-generating factors.

The fact of having the right to the unemployment benefit does not relate clearly to the crime level either. Zones with the highest percentages of unemployed without the right to the unemployment benefit are characterised by both high (Chrzanów, Zakopane (Tatrzański) and urban Tarnów powiats) and low (Miechów, Proszowice, rural powiat of Tarnów and Wadowice powiat) crime levels. Also among areas where the unemployment rates are the lowest, there are powiats with both high (urban powiats of Cracow and Nowy Sącz) and low (Limanowa, rural powiat of Nowy Sącz, and the powiats of Olkusz, Dąbrowa Tarnowska and Gorlice) crime levels (Tab. 1, Fig. 1, Fig. 3).

Neither the rate of unemployment, the right to the unemployment benefit or the duration of unemployment seem to affect the intensification of criminal activities. Furthermore, an analysis of the spatial differentiation of the crime level and the long-term unemployment rate (Tab. 1, Fig. 1, Fig. 4) indicates that the areas with the highest crime levels are characterised by a relatively lowest share of long-term unemployed in the total unemployment. An example can be the urban powiat of Cracow with the highest crime level in the voivodship (3796.3 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants) and, at the same time, the lowest rate of long-term unemployed (12.4%).

Similar relationships were noted in the Chrzanów powiat, where the rates under consideration were 2074.1 and 14.5%, and in the Zakopane (Tatrzański) powiat – with the figures of 1552.5 and 17.4%. The exceptions are the urban powiats of Nowy Sącz and Tarnów, but there too the rates of long-term unemployed are around the voivodship average (23.9% and 21.3% respectively, with the average figure for the voivodship being 21.9%).

5. Conclusions

The results of the analysis of the differentiation of the crime levels and unemployment rates in the Małopolskie voivodship lead to the formation of the argument that the phenomenon of unemployment does not affect significantly the development in the crime level.

Neither the rate of unemployment, the right to unemployment benefit or the percentage of long-term unemployed seem to be among major crime-generating factors.

The share of the urban poviats of Kraków, Tarnów and Nowy Sącz in the total of as much as 67.4% of crimes found, a relatively high crime rate noted in the Chrzanów powiat as well as the fact that areas with the lowest rates concerned are among the least urbanised and industrialised in the voivodship, make the Małopolskie voivodship a classical example that confirms the dominating role of a high level of urbanisation and the concentration of heterogeneous and anonymous population in the development of crime levels.

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Przestrzenne zróżnicowanie przestępczości oraz poziomu bezrobocia w województwie małopolskim

Streszczenie

W ostatnich latach wystąpiło w Polsce poważne nasilenie się zjawisk patologicznych, wśród nich przestępczości i bezrobocia. Proces ten ściśle związany jest z przemianami polityczno-społeczno-gospodarczymi zachodzącymi po roku 1989.

Nadrzędnym celem niniejszego opracowania jest próba identyfikacji na przykładzie woj. małopolskiego wzajemnych relacji przestrzennych pomiędzy przestępczością a poziomem bezrobocia.

Materiał źródłowy stanowiły opracowania statystyczne Komendy Wojewódzkiej Policji w Krakowie oraz Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego w Warszawie.

W wyniku przeprowadzonej analizy przestrzennego zróżnicowania poziomu przestępczości i bezrobocia w woj. małopolskim w roku 2000 stwierdzono, iż pomiędzy analizowanymi zjawiskami nie występują wyraźne zależności przestrzenne.

Spośród obszarów najbardziej zagrożonych przestępczością tylko dwa, powiat nowosądecki grodzki oraz pow. chrzanowski, notują wskaźniki stopy bezrobocia powyżej średniej wojewódzkiej. Z kolei powiat krakowski grodzki, obszar koncentrujący aż 52,6% ogółu analizowanych czynów przestępczych (kradzieży, włamań, rozbojów), oraz pow. tatrzański, charakteryzujący się relatywnie wysokim wskaźnikiem przestępczości, notują jedne z najniższych wartości stopy bezrobocia (Tab. 1, Ryc. 1, Ryc. 2).

Na poziom przestępczości nie wpływa także fakt przysługiwania bezrobotnym prawa do zasiłku. Obszary notujące najwyższe odsetki bezrobotnych pozbawionych prawa do zasiłku legitymują się zarówno wysokimi (powiat tarnowski grodzki, powiaty chrzanowski i tatrzański) jak i niskimi (powiaty: miechowski, proszowicki, tarnowski ziemski, wadowicki) wskaźnikami przestępczości. Także wśród obszarów, gdzie ów udział jest najniższy znajdują się jednostki w dużym (powiaty grodzkie: krakowski i nowosądecki) i w małym (powiaty: limanowski, nowosądecki ziemski, olkuski, dąbrowski, gorlicki) stopniu zagrożone zjawiskiem przestępczości (Tab. 1, Ryc. 1, Ryc. 3).

Wysokiego poziomu przestępczości nie determinuje także, jak się wydaje, czas pozostawania bez pracy. Co więcej, zaobserwowano, iż obszary najbardziej zagrożone przestępczością notują jednocześnie najniższe odsetki długotrwale bezrobotnych. Wyjątek stanowią powiaty grodzkie: nowosądecki i tarnowski, jednakże i w tym przypadku wielkości odsetka bezrobotnych pozostających bez pracy co najmniej od 24 miesięcy są zbliżone do średniej wojewódzkiej (Tab. 1, Ryc. 1, Ryc. 4).

Przeprowadzone postępowanie badawcze dowodzi, iż na obszarze woj. małopolskiego nie wystąpiły w 2000 r. istotne relacje przestrzenne pomiędzy poziomem przestępczości a poziomem bezrobocia.

Paweł Gronowski
Institute of Geography and Spatial Management
Jagiellonian University
Cracow

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