

The doctoral dissertation was aimed at showing the importance of an integrated approach to the development of functional areas within the framework of the European Union's regional policy on the example of selected Polish implementation solutions. One of the instruments of the 2014-2020 financial perspective is Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), implemented in metropolitan centers of Polish cities, as well as areas related to them functionally. ITIs are a tool of approach in shaping the development of functional areas and partnerships. Actions undertaken under this tool are aimed at supporting areas of strategic intervention (OSI), on the basis of complementarity in the implementation of investment and financial activities of identified problem areas under operational programs.

In the presented research process, the result of which is this doctoral dissertation, on the basis of the subject criterion, the subject of the study was defined as functional areas. In the first chapter, the theoretical and definitional review of the subject of research was discussed in detail. Taking into account the aspect criterion of the research field, only those aspects that concern the integrated approach to the development of functional areas were taken into account. Limitations of the research field, including relatively dictated by the deficit of current knowledge and the state of research regarding this aspect of political influence on functional areas and their development.

The occurrence of the majority of phenomena occurring in social life is not uniform, but limited to specific cultures, as part of the refinement of the research field based on the spatial criterion, two functional areas located in the following provinces: Opolskie and Dolnośląskie. The choice of such a research field was dictated by the necessary conditions for conducting comparative studies. The justification for the choice has been described in detail in the section devoted to research methods.

In the humanities and social sciences, the majority of theorems have limited scope not only spatially, but also temporarily. Bearing in mind the importance of a precise determination of the research field, taking into account the temporal criterion, in this research the beginning of the temporary caesura marks the year 2014, when the implementation tool of the integrated approach to the development of functional areas was implemented for the first time as part of the European Union regional policy, Integrated Territorial Investments.

Taking into account the above-mentioned criteria allowed for a comprehensive and precise determination of the research field, which was subjected to a methodologically prepared research process.

Based on preliminary literature research, the main goal of the research project is to show the importance of an integrated approach to the development of functional areas within the European Union's regional policy on the example of selected Polish implementation solutions.

The following main research hypothesis will be verified in the research project: Implementation of an integrated approach to the development of functional areas within the framework of the European Union's regional policy results from the need to implement the Treaty objective, which is to strengthen the cohesion in the territorial dimension.

The theoretical part of the work was based on the analysis of the state of research on the role and importance of an integrated approach to the development of functional areas in EU regional policy. These considerations were based on literature studies using the desk research method.

The literature query has been divided into several interlocking stages. In the first place, key words were defined as a starting point for the analysis of the state of knowledge about the research subject subjected to research. Using the above criteria defining the research field, the following key phrases were selected: an integrated approach in the European Union regional policy, a functional area, and Integrated Territorial Investments. Key phrases were used in the English and German versions to search for relevant literature sources in these languages.

The analysis of the integrated approach to the development of functional areas in the European Union's regional policy covered published texts and electronic materials in the form of monographs and scientific articles, chapters of collective studies, conference texts, reports available in Polish, English.

The scientific literature necessary to prepare this doctoral dissertation was largely collected during the query in the Universitätsbibliothek in Vienna, the Library of the University of Warsaw, Wrocław, and the Library of the University of Economics in Wrocław.

As a source of electronic resources, successively used scientific bases: JSTOR, SCOPUS, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Wiley Online Library. The choice of electronic resources was dictated by the availability of high-quality scientific literature covering the issues of the analyzed research field. For the purpose of implementing the query of available source materials in the thematic area of an integrated approach to functional areas development within the European Union regional policy, a tool was developed using Excel, which enabled problematic and thematic organization of research material according to such criteria as source type, thematic area, response to formulated research questions.

After the literature query, an analysis of existing source materials regarding both functional areas and the integrated approach was carried out. In this respect, the selection of sources was dictated by the aspect and the temporal specificity of the research field. Due to the location of the subject of research in the European Union's regional policy, the analysis of existing data covered legal acts, documents, reports and reports prepared by the European Union institutions, i.e. Council of the European Union, European Parliament, European Commission, in particular Directorate General for Regional Policy and Municipal (DG REGIO) and the Committee of the Regions. It concerned not only the subject of research, which are functional areas, but also the aspect criterion of undertaken research, which is the integrated approach to the development of functional areas. Access to the materials was possible thanks to the electronic resources of individual institutions available on their websites: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/council-eu_pl, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/pl>, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/index_en, <https://www.muir.gov.pl/>, <https://www.aglomeracja-opolska.pl/>.

Due to the fact that the integrated approach to the development of functional areas in the regional policy of the European Union is implemented primarily on the basis of Integrated Territorial Investments, which is an instrument of EU regional policy since 2014, the analysis of the existing data covered sources designated by this border date, taking into account the importance of previously developed legislative solutions. This choice is at the same time consistent with the temporal limitations of the research field adopted in this dissertation. The collected research material has been ordered according to established criteria for selection of sources enabling their effective use to achieve the research goal. In order to organize the collected source material, each source was assigned to a specific category of EU law, i.e. sources of primary law, sources of secondary law and sources of a non-binding nature. Such an assignment made it possible, inter alia, to analyze the significance of the studied phenomenon in EU law by determining its place and rank in particular types of EU law. The use of content analysis and comparative tools also allowed to examine the potential evolution of the significance of the studied phenomenon in the European Union legislation. The results of these studies are presented in this dissertation and constitute cognitive material used for research on an integrated approach to the development of functional areas in Poland.

Due to the adoption of the defined spatial field of research, as part of the analysis of existing data, subordinated to the case study method and the comparative method, research material including sources of universally binding law as well as binding and non-binding documents were collected. The sources analyzed and published by Polish institutions at the

national, regional and local levels, so-called The government of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Investment and Development, due to the application of comparative studies in the discussed studies at the regional and local level, analyzed sources published and published by the Lower Silesian Local Government, the Opolskie Voivodeship Government, gmina localities included in the Integrated Territorial Investments of the Wrocław Functional Area and local governments communes included in the Integrated Territorial Investments of the Opole Agglomeration. The justification for the selection of cases and the use of the case study method and the comparative method are presented in the next part of the work.

The collected material was ordered in terms of subject and content, so that its analysis enabled the answer to research questions, and thus verification of the hypothesis and achievement of the main goal. It was possible thanks to the use of content analysis to study the collected material and the assignment of research results to the answers to specific research questions. The results of the analysis used are presented in this dissertation and supplemented by empirical studies.

In addition, the theoretical part of the work will be enriched with a built-in analytical model using the system analysis method. This model was developed by using the correlation between the Weber model and the ITI implementation model in two provinces of Lower Silesia and Opole. The Weber model is based mainly on the model of the ideal public administration management system. The analysis of the Weberian model makes it possible to compare the example of the Opole implementation model as well as the Wrocław ITI strategy.

The empirical part was planned in such a way as to enable the acquisition of research material allowing for the answer to research questions that did not verify the hypothesis put forward during the use of the desk research method. Three research methods were used to analyze the collected data: 1) system analysis fashion, 2) case study method, 3) comparative method.

As part of the system analysis, the aim is to describe the reality in terms of systems, their components and connections, both between the system components and between the system and its surroundings as well as various systems. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the reality studied is too complex to be fully understood and described, and certainly to understand all its parts and dependencies occurring between them. It is postulated, therefore, to replace the examined, complex object (system) with its model, in which it is possible to reproduce only the most important, aggregated parts and dependencies. Such modeling is possible only when the behavior of the model corresponds approximately to the behavior of the system being its

prototype. Thanks to this, it is possible to replace the examination of real objects and processes with the behavior of the model. On this basis, it is possible to formulate conclusions that retain their validity in relation to the examined fragment of reality.

Translating these methodological assumptions into a research reality, a model has been developed that has been described in chapters I and V of this dissertation. The developed model made it possible to characterize implementation solutions of the integrated approach to the development of functional areas in the EU regional policy. The method of system analysis was supplemented in the study with the case study method and the comparative method.

In the research, which resulted in this dissertation, the case study method was used because of its usefulness in the context of the possibility of examining the functioning of the subject of research on which there is still little knowledge in its real operating conditions. The inclusion of this context required the inclusion of a research topic on an integrated approach to the development of functional areas, the application of a method that allows the concept of an integrated approach in a specific context of reality. Assuming at the same time that one case may be insufficient to make any theoretical generalizations, two case studies were used in the research and comparisons were made in the comparative theoretical model using the comparative method. The application of deliberate selection of an example of the practical dimension of an integrated approach to the development of functional areas was considered sufficient. In the targeted selection of cases, it may be helpful to create a typology that would be a specific matrix of case types for research. In the adopted research entity, the integrated approach is implemented in the form of Integrated Territorial Investments. The availability of research material and the possibility of conducting empirical research determined the selection of cases of ITI implementation in Poland. ITIs are implemented in 24 functional areas, including 17 functional areas of voivodship cities (due to strong functional links for Bydgoszcz and Toruń, a joint ITI was created) and 7 in functional areas of subregional / regional cities, in four provinces: Śląskie (Częstochowa, Rybnik, Bielsko-Biała), Dolnośląskie (Jelenia Góra, Wałbrzych), Wielkopolskie (Kalisz-Ostrów) and Zachodniopomorskie (Koszalin-Kołobrzeg-Białogard). Two of the Integrated Territorial Investments implemented in Poland were selected for the study: Integrated Territorial Investments of the Wrocław Functional Area and Integrated Territorial Investments of the Opole Agglomeration.

Being aware that cases are never representative of the domain or population from which they are selected, rather than creating general solutions for this approach, it was more appropriate to present specific solutions of an integrated approach to functional areas development under specific, real conditions in the context of the research objective. . It is worth

noting here that the application of the comparative method was taken into account in the selection of cases. The choice of two case studies was determined by the greater cognitive abilities resulting from the use of the comparative method than the pure case study method.

The application of the comparative method was dictated by the intention to explore possible common features as well as differentiate the analyzed cases of implementing an integrated approach to the development of functional areas under real conditions.

The first chapter of the paper presents definitional problems, with particular emphasis on the methodological conditions of research on the importance of an integrated approach to functional areas development in EU regional policy, focusing on the review of the current state of methodology research on the importance of an integrated approach to functional areas development in EU regional policy. It will be important to present theoretical considerations regarding mainly the global conditions for the development of functional areas in EU regional policy.

The second part of the work will be devoted to a closer presentation of the conditions shaping territorial cohesion in the European Union, starting with legal and regulatory aspects. The importance of territorial cohesion in the European Union and its evolution in the EU regional policy, which will be subject to thorough analysis, which will allow to present the legal basis of EU territorial cohesion. The practical (implementing) dimension of territorial cohesion in the EU will also be presented.

The third part of the paper presents the integrated development of functional areas in the institutional framework of the EU. It will analyze the reasons for the emergence of an integrated approach system from the point of view of the EU regional policy pursued for the years 2014-2020. In combination with the concept, the importance of integrated development of functional areas in EU regional policy. Instruments for the implementation of integrated development of functional areas on an EU regional basis.

The fourth part of the dissertation discusses Integrated Territorial Investments as a tool for the implementation of integrated development of functional areas in the European Union by presenting ZIT in the EU legal catalog, in qualitative terms. Also the ITI was presented in the countries-regions of the EU Member States. It was also presented ZIT in selected regions of Poland.

In the fifth part of the work a presentation of the ITI implementation solution is planned in selected voivodships in Poland, using the system analysis method. A research model was developed through the use of a correlation between the Weber model and the ITI implementation model in two Lower Silesian and Opolskie voivodships as well as the

presentation of research results from individual interviews covering entities that participate in the implementation of ITIs. Characteristics of conditions affecting the implementation. Further considerations concern the directions of implementation solutions - supported by the application of ITI implementation models in voivodships and observations of similarities and differences in the ITI implementation. Determinants influencing the implementation of ITI will also be presented. The conclusions from particular sub-chapters and the verification of test dissertations hypothesis allowed to present possible directions of ITI influence on the integrated development of functional areas. along with the opportunities and threats facing ITI standing.

Key words: integrated approach, development of functional areas, EU regional policy, Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), regional development.

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