

MA Łukasz Komorowski

Doctoral dissertation

Executive summary

***Smart villages jako koncepcja rozwoju obszarów wiejskich***  
**[Smart villages as a concept of rural development]**

The main aim of the dissertation was to explore the issue of smart villages, which in the discussion on rural development appears both as a theoretical concept and as a development policy instrument. The author intended to prove the thesis that smart villages are a new concept of rural development, based on the pursuit of an improved quality of life through the local communities' response to diagnosed development challenges.

The study used several complementary research methods. Firstly, a critical review of the literature was carried out, which allowed to explore the studied topic and to plan and conduct empirical research more precisely. Secondly, based on material on the smart villages instrument, including selected CAP Strategic Plans (CAP SPs) for the period 2023-2027, an assessment of this instrument was made. Thirdly, the empirical study used methods from the group of multidimensional comparative analyses, which allowed for the development of an ordinal classification and the identification of the internal structure of the studied issue in the form of a typology. The study covered all rural and urban-rural municipalities in Poland, i.e. 2175 units. The temporal scope of the analysis was determined by two time shots – static (state) and dynamic (change), essentially covering the period 2005-2021.

The study found that the smart village instrument in the EU CAP 2023-2027 has been embedded in member states in the LEADER/CLLD approach. However, the interventions in the individual CAP SPs are not very concrete and mostly devoid of separate funding. The instrument, at the EU level, is intended to respond to the universal challenges of rural development: 1) population change; 2) social participation; 3) digitalisation; 4) climate change; and 5) development polarisation. Within these challenges, 11 local challenges specific to Poland have been identified. The spatial distribution of local challenges is different in the two studied approaches – static and dynamic. The case of most of the challenges are related to the centre-periphery order, but the exception is climate change, concentrated in central and western Poland. The typology of rural areas showed that they are characterised by a significant diversity of local challenges in each of the time shots.