

# Marcin Bogdański

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## Regional Differentiation of the Foreign Direct Investment Inflow in Poland in 2003–2008

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Olsztyn Economic Journal 6/2, 331-342

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2011

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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**REGIONAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE FOREIGN  
DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOW IN POLAND  
IN 2003–2008**

***Marcin Bogdański***

Department of Macroeconomics  
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

**Key words:** region, foreign investments, regional development.

**A b s t r a k t**

The inflow of foreign direct investments (FDI), according to many theories, can be a factor facilitating the processes of regional business convergence. These concepts indicate that FDI not only create additional demand in the internal market, but also contributes to the improvement of the efficiency of domestic entities through the transfer of new technologies and production organization methods. At the same time, there is a group of theories which emphasize the significant role of FDI in deepening spatial disproportions in the level of economic development.

This study is an analysis of regional diversity in the inflow of direct foreign investment in Poland in 2003–2008. In particular, the research focuses on settling the issue of whether FDI have reached the least developed provinces and contributed to the reduction of regional development disproportions in Poland, or on the contrary, have been concentrated in regions with a relatively high level of development.

The results indicate that the inflow of FDI in Poland in 2003–2008 were spatially-concentrated. The most-developed provinces were the main source of their location, which indicates that FDI could have contributed to the increase in developmental disproportions in Poland.

**REGIONALNE ZRÓŻNICOWANIE NAPŁYWU BEZPOŚREDNICH INWESTYCJI  
ZAGRANICZNYCH W POLSCE W LATACH 2003–2008**

***Marcin Bogdański***

Katedra Makroekonomii  
Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie

**Słowa kluczowe:** region, inwestycje zagraniczne, rozwój regionalny.

**A b s t r a k t**

Napływ bezpośrednich inwestycji zagranicznych (BIZ) w myśl wielu teorii może być czynnikiem, który będzie wspomagał procesy regionalnej konwergencji gospodarczej. W koncepcjach tych się wskazuje, że BIZ nie tylko kreują dodatkowy popyt na rynku wewnętrznym, lecz także przyczyniają

się do poprawy efektywności podmiotów krajowych przez transfer nowych technologii i sposobów organizacji produkcji. Jednocześnie istnieje wiele teorii, w których podkreśla się istotną rolę BIZ w pogłębianiu przestrzennych dysproporcji w poziomie rozwoju gospodarczego.

W pracy przeanalizowano regionalne zróżnicowanie napływu bezpośrednich inwestycji zagranicznych w Polsce w latach 2003–2008. Skupiono się na rozstrzygnięciu kwestii, czy napływały one do województw najsłabiej rozwiniętych, czy mogły więc przyczynić się do zmniejszenia regionalnych dysproporcji rozwojowych w naszym kraju, czy przeciwnie, lokowano je przede wszystkim w regionach o relatywnie wysokim poziomie rozwoju.

Wyniki przeprowadzonych analiz pozwalają stwierdzić, że napływ BIZ w Polsce w latach 2003–2008 był przestrzennie skoncentrowany. Źródłem ich lokalizacji były głównie województwa najlepiej rozwinięte, co pozwala na stwierdzenie, że BIZ mogły przyczynić się do wzrostu dysproporcji rozwojowych w naszym kraju.

## Introduction

Foreign direct investments are often listed as one of the factors which can influence the process of levelling out the degree of economic development in regions. In view of the high dynamics of international capital flows, including FDI, and their significant effect on the economy of the host country or region, this issue has received a lot of attention in research and popular science studies in recent years. The prevailing opinion is that foreign direct investments constitute an important and beneficial element of regional development and, for this reason, local, regional and state authorities often try to attract the highest possible level of FDI (NOWARA, RYNARZEWSKI 2006, p. 199). The aim of this study is to settle the question of whether the inflow of FDI has been a factor increasing regional development disproportions in Poland, or to the quite contrary, if it has reduced such disproportions.

### Aim, hypotheses and scope of research

Poland is one of the countries in which a significant regional differentiation in terms of economic development can be observed. Moreover, in recent years these disproportions have increased (BOGDAŃSKI 2010, p. 274–275). One of the reasons for the polarization of economic development could be the spatial concentration of foreign direct investments in the areas of the most-developed provinces.

The aim of the study was to carry out an analysis of the regional diversity of the FDI inflow in Poland in 2003–2008, and to assess its possible effect on changing regional disproportions in economic development. The study adopted the hypothesis that the inflow of FDI in the examined period was subject to strong concentration in the region characterized by the highest level of the economic development. Therefore, it was one of the factors that affected the growth of regional development disproportions in our country.

In order to verify the thesis, an analysis of statistical data reflecting the dynamics of FDI inflow into Poland in 2003–2008 was carried out in a regional perspective. It was performed with application of descriptive and tabular methods and an analysis of the index of saturation with foreign direct investments. Data concerning the dynamics of the FDI inflow were presented both in direct and indirect approach. They were analysed for individual provinces, as well as for groups of provinces characterized by different levels of economic development.

The selected time frame of the research was determined by the availability of comparable statistical data. The data were derived from publicly available databases of the Central Statistical Office, including the online Local Data Bank ([www.stat.gov.pl/bdl](http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl)). The studies were preceded by presentation of theoretical concepts explaining the motives for the FDI inflow and the effects of their location on the regional economy.

### **Determinants and results of the foreign direct investments inflow**

Regardless of the industry structure or the amount of FDI, the main motive of the foreign investor is to achieve additional benefits. The literature of the subject provides various concepts accounting for the causes of this form of capital involvement. The concept which comprehensively explains the motives of the FDI flow between countries and regions is the so-called OLI paradigm by Dunning. Pursuant to this paradigm, benefits (advantages) obtained due to investments are of three kinds. Thus, investments in countries and regions offering specific localization advantages make it possible to reach additional internalization advantages, which can be the source of ownership advantages (WINT, WILLIAMS 2002, p. 363).

Localization advantages are achieved by the foreign investor obtaining access to raw materials and resources of production factors specific for the host country or region. Their sources are varied depending on the integration degree of national enterprises. In case of horizontal integration, localization advantages emerge when the market of the host country is so large as to ensure profitability of the investment, and the costs of transport are so high that it would be unprofitable to provide for this market through export. On the other hand, when DFI enables vertical integration, their sources will derive from differences between remuneration for production factors in the country exporting and receiving the investments (CIEŚLIK 2005, pp. 30–31). According to some authors, a higher level of social and economic development of the host country or region implies a higher level of location advantages achieved (BITZENIS 2003, p. 97).

Ownership advantages are most often related to intangible assets, owned by the entire enterprise, and not by individual subsidiaries. These assets, such as patent-protected ownership rights, brands, trademarks or goodwill, provide the enterprise with the possibility to conduct business at lower costs than competitors in the host country (CIEŚLIK 2005, pp. 29–30).

On the other hand, changes in the level of transaction costs can be a source of internalization advantages. International enterprises sometimes engage in foreign markets by commissioning domestic entities to perform specific operations. It is particularly justified in cases when the foreign investor does not have sufficient knowledge concerning the specificity of running the business activity in the area of the given country. Such cooperation poses a risk that the licensee will take over a part of the investor's assets (usually knowledge) and will use it for its own, competitive business activity. In order to minimize the risk and achieve internationalization advantages, the international enterprise can change the form of its involvement by making direct investments (CIEŚLIK 2005, p. 31).

From the point of view of the regional policy, the most important problem is posed by the effects of locating FDI in a given country or region. If they are to be the source of regional economic convergence, their positive effects must exceed the costs related to locating them in a given area. The type of prevailing effects depends mainly on the structure of the inflowing investments. Generally, the most desired investments are of the greenfield type, i.e. consisting of the establishment of new enterprises from the ground up, as opposite to brownfield investments, meaning the entire or partial purchase of existing business entities. The emergence of the first type of investments usually involves the creation of new jobs and of additional demand in the regional and national market. Similarly, the prevailing opinion is that investments made by small and medium foreign enterprises are more attractive for the host region or country, since these entities are more interested in developing business activities requiring higher expenditures of labour (OZIEWICZ 1998, p. 118).

The most important, positive effects of FDI for the economy of the host region and country can be divided into three categories. They are related to (after CIEŚLIK 2005, pp. 223–234):

a) financial external effects resulting from vertical relations between foreign entities and local enterprises. These effects are related, above all, to creating additional demand in the internal market and growing specialization of domestic enterprises;

b) financial external effects resulting from the flow of the labour force. Migration of employees from foreign enterprises (usually better-managed and having the newest technologies at their disposal) to domestic entities contributes to the improved competitiveness of the latter group;

c) technological external effects accompanying local research and development activities (R&D). Cooperation between domestic and foreign entities also contributes to more intensive transfer of knowledge and technology.

Business practice also demonstrates that the level of technology and innovation potential of the host country are other important factors conditioning the flow of knowledge and technologies within FDI. The technological advancement of domestic enterprises must be high enough to enable efficient implementation of new technologies and production methods (WIŚNIEWSKA 2004, pp. 88–89). This explains why FDI are generally concentrated in selected regions of the country, usually being the capital city areas and/or most industrialized regions.

The strength of impact of positive effects resulting from FDI on the economy of the host country also depends on the branch structure of the investments made. Investments in fields characterized by the highest competitiveness and the level of added value generated are the most desirable from the perspective of creating economical development. They include: production of highly processed goods (ICT, household appliances and automotive goods) and development of telecommunication and information technologies. Location factors for these types of investments include factors that are typical for metropolitan or strongly urbanized regions – living conditions, access to education and culture, access to qualified workforce, efficient market institutions and favourable political and business climate, good transport connections with other centres of growth and technology parks, etc. (DZIEMIANOWICZ, JAŁOWIECKI 2004, pp. 24–26).

An alternative takes the form of investments aimed at the production of standardized goods, with low processing which do not require qualified workforce resources. This production is characterized by a low level of added value generated and high sensitivity to changes in production costs including, above all, personnel costs. It is transferred to the least developed regions and countries, the competitiveness of which, pursuant to the classification proposed by M. Porter, can be described as competitiveness based on production factors (RADŁO 2003, p. 20). This means that countries and regions can count on the location of these types of investments on the condition that their competitiveness is based on the price of employing production factors. Therefore, they will be competitive as long as their level of economic development is low. In other words, as long as they are poor.

Another aspect of the FDI inflow to host countries is also an increase in the capital equipment of those countries, which makes it possible to overcome the problem of low capital accumulation (POPLAWSKI 2008, p. 276). This is particularly important in such countries as Poland, where due to the shortage of national savings, there is not any other alternative for an increase in the total capital resources in the economy than through FDI (BIENKOWSKI 2006, p. 352).

The most important negative results of the FDI location include the growth of competition in domestic markets, the consequences of which include the bankruptcy of domestic parts of enterprises and the draining of local personnel and material resources. However, it is generally assumed that positive effects of DFI outweigh their negative impact (BOGDAŃSKI 2009, p. 29).

### **Spatial diversification of the FDI inflow in Poland in 2003–2008**

The inflow of FDI in the latest years has significantly contributed to the growth of the economic development rate of Poland, thus reducing the gap between it and other more developed European countries. However, the question arises as to whether and to what extent the inflow of FDI has contributed to the decrease of regional disproportions concerning economic development in Poland. According to classical and neo-classical theories of regional development, the capital will flow first of all to the poorest regions, which are relatively poor in capital and abundant in labour. On the other hand, migrations of the labour force will take the opposite direction. This process will last until the levels of extreme work efficiency and capital and levels of economic development align in both regions. This is how the mechanism of regional convergence should work, e.g. according to W. Rostow, (ANCYPAROWICZ 2009, p. 1). However, according to the proponents of the New Economic Geography (NEG), a free flow of capital, also in the form of FDI, will rather result in increasing regional economic disproportions. The areas better equipped with infrastructure, human capital or natural resources are usually seen as more attractive for locating foreign direct investments (FDI) than more backward areas (KULAWIK 2006, p. 25).

Therefore, the question is: how has the process of the inflow of foreign investments occurred in Poland? Table 1 presents the dynamics of changes in FDI in Poland in 2003–2008 for individual provinces. The value of basic capital taken over by foreign entities was used as the measure of foreign investors' involvement in the business activity in Poland. This quite imprecise perspective results from the lack of data of suitable quality. The Central Statistical Office does not follow the commonly assumed definition of FDI and publishes data concerning all enterprises in which foreign capital is involved (according to the OECD, direct foreign investments take place when the foreign contractor takes over at least 10% of the shares in the domestic entity, intending to influence its business and to carry out the activity for a longer period) (DZIEMIANOWICZ 2003, p. 2).

Table 1  
Regional diversification of the inflow of basic foreign capital in Poland in 2003–2008

Province	Value of basic capital in PLNm								Structure of basic capital (Poland = 100%)									
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Łódzkie	2 423.9	2 632.4	2 941.5	3 207.8	3 776.9	4 094.3	2.00	2.05	2.22	2.20	2.46	2.39	2.00	2.05	2.22	2.20	2.46	2.39
Mazowieckie	70 638.5	69 839.5	68 668.1	74 335.3	77 794.3	86 864.5	58.41	54.47	51.86	50.97	50.77	50.80	58.41	54.47	51.86	50.97	50.77	50.80
Małopolskie	8 490.6	9 224.6	9 905.8	12 001.4	10 629.0	11 308.0	7.02	7.19	7.48	8.23	6.94	6.61	7.02	7.19	7.48	8.23	6.94	6.61
Śląskie	8 068.1	10 645.1	11 142.4	11 660.8	12 628.1	14 447.6	6.67	8.30	8.42	7.99	8.24	8.45	6.67	8.30	8.42	7.99	8.24	8.45
Lubelskie	719.0	817.2	822.8	823.9	782.7	897.4	0.59	0.64	0.62	0.56	0.51	0.52	0.59	0.64	0.62	0.56	0.51	0.52
Podkarpackie	1 758.8	2 221.8	1 515.6	1 853.7	1 951.7	2 253.7	1.45	1.73	1.14	1.27	1.27	1.32	1.45	1.73	1.14	1.27	1.27	1.32
Podlaskie	313.6	278.2	267.1	276.9	430.3	445.6	0.26	0.22	0.20	0.19	0.28	0.26	0.26	0.22	0.20	0.19	0.28	0.26
Świętokrzyskie	2 277.6	2 557.0	2 997.0	3 155.6	3 164.8	3 012.5	1.88	1.99	2.26	2.16	2.07	1.76	1.88	1.99	2.26	2.16	2.07	1.76
Lubuskie	1 469.3	1 858.3	1 444.6	1 991.8	2 199.7	2 136.3	1.22	1.45	1.09	1.37	1.44	1.25	1.22	1.45	1.09	1.37	1.44	1.25
Wielkopolskie	9 324.9	10 489.2	10 926.9	11 317.5	12 469.9	14 041.9	7.71	8.18	8.25	7.76	8.14	8.21	7.71	8.18	8.25	7.76	8.14	8.21
Zachodniopomorskie	2 622.9	2 730.5	3 004.2	3 035.3	3 306.3	3 892.2	2.17	2.13	2.27	2.08	2.16	2.28	2.17	2.13	2.27	2.08	2.16	2.28
Dolnośląskie	5 654.5	7 458.6	10 213.4	12 179.1	13 890.5	15 526.5	4.68	5.82	7.71	8.35	9.06	9.08	4.68	5.82	7.71	8.35	9.06	9.08
Opolskie	1 328.1	1 253.4	1 440.4	1 481.0	1 544.7	1 692.5	1.10	0.98	1.09	1.02	1.01	0.99	1.10	0.98	1.09	1.02	1.01	0.99
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	1 307.9	1 583.6	1 896.5	2 098.0	2 322.0	2 564.4	1.08	1.24	1.43	1.44	1.52	1.50	1.08	1.24	1.43	1.44	1.52	1.50
Pomorskie	3 423.6	3 681.1	4 523.0	4 824.3	4 804.6	6 281.7	2.83	2.87	3.42	3.31	3.14	3.67	2.83	2.87	3.42	3.31	3.14	3.67
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	1 104.2	955.5	688.8	1 609.7	1 548.2	1 538.0	0.91	0.75	0.52	1.10	1.01	0.91	0.91	0.75	0.52	1.10	1.01	0.91
POLAND	120 925.5	128 225.9	132 398.0	145 852.0	153 243.8	170 977.1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: own study on the basis of the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office [http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/dane\\_podgrup.dims?p\\_id=390005&p\\_token=0.7146447155900781\(31.05.2011\)](http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/dane_podgrup.dims?p_id=390005&p_token=0.7146447155900781(31.05.2011)).



The inflow of FDI to Poland in 2003–2008 was subject to strong regional diversification. The province of Mazowieckie clearly stands out against the rest of the country, as it accumulated almost half of the foreign capital flowing into the country in the period under analysis. This is obviously caused by the capital city of Warsaw situated within its boundaries, being at the same time the largest Polish city and the most important economic centre. However, the scale of advantage over the province of Dolnośląskie, next in the ranking, leads to the conclusion that differences in the economic development level observed so far will deepen even further and one of the reasons for this will be the concentration of FDI in more developed regions. Similar tendencies (which, to some extent, could account for currently existing disproportions in the development level between regions) which were already noted in the past and confirmed by research carried out e.g. by A. CIEŚLIK and M. STAWICKA (CIEŚLIK 2005, pp. 87–90, STAWICKA 2007, pp. 108–112).

The research carried out by the above-mentioned authors also indicate that in the 1990s, a significant majority of FDI were located within the area of several provinces which currently make up part of Mazowieckie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie Provinces.

Taking into account the level of economic development of individual provinces in 2003 (using the value of regional GDP per inhabitant as a measure of this development), the provinces can be divided into three quite uniform groups.

Table 2  
The structure of the foreign basic capital inflow in groups of provinces in 2003–2008

Group	Structure of basic capital (Poland = 100%)					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Group 1	77.47	76.76	76.25	75.07	76.21	76.54
Group 2	17.42	17.91	19.00	19.64	18.65	18.70
Group 3	5.11	5.33	4.75	5.29	5.14	4.76

Source own study on the basis of data from Table 1.

The first group includes provinces in which the value of regional production per inhabitant was at least 100% of the GDP *per capita*. These are the following provinces: Mazowieckie (155.28%), Śląskie (108.99%), Wielkopolskie (104.61%) and Dolnośląskie (102.44%).

Group 2 includes the provinces where the GDP value *per capita* ranges from 80% to 99% of the domestic level: Pomorskie (98.18%), Zachod-

niopomorskie (94.74%), Łódzkie (92.39%), Kujawsko-Pomorskie (89.61%), Lubuskie (86.45%), Małopolskie (85.68%) and Opolskie (80.39%).

Group 3 is composed of provinces in which the value of regional production per inhabitant is below 80% of the value of this indicator for the entire country. These are the remaining provinces forming the so-called “eastern wall”: Warmińsko-Mazurskie (78.83%), Świętokrzyskie (78.16%), Podlaskie (75.96%), Podkarpackie (70.79%) and Lubelskie (70.69%).

On the basis of the division of provinces into groups differing in the level of economic development, the regional structure of the FDI inflow, measured by the value of the basic capital, would look as follows.

Also in this case, the regional concentration of FDI can be clearly noticed. It can be observed for all years under analysis that over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all foreign investments were located in the area of Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie and Dolnośląskie Provinces. Obviously, such a large advantage of regions from group 1 over other provinces results from the absolute dominance of the Mazowieckie Province in the structure of the foreign investments received. It is also worth noticing that after a gradual lowering of the share of this group of provinces in the value of the foreign basic capital involved in 2003–2006, in 2007 and 2008, an increase of over 1 percentage point took place.

In provinces from group 2, the value of the basic foreign capital involved in each of the years under analysis was over three times lower than in group 1. The province which stands out in this group of provinces is Małopolskie, which during the period under examination “took over” almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total foreign investments directed to this group of provinces.

Provinces of the “eastern wall” come out definitely worse in this regard. On average, only 5% foreign investments were located in this conventional macroregion. In this context, the situation of Podlaskie and Lubelskie Provinces is the worst, as those provinces received, on average, only 0.2% and 0.6% of foreign investments, respectively.

In order to obtain a more complete picture of regional diversity concerning the intensity of foreign investors; involvement in Poland, the index of saturation with FDI was calculated for each of the separated groups of provinces, where the value of the basic capital owned by foreign entities was applied as a FDI measure. This index was calculated according to the following formula:

$$IN_{FDI} = (FDI_G):(FDI_K) / (GDP_G):(GDP_K)$$

where:

- FDI<sub>G</sub> – value of FDI involved in a given group of provinces;
- FDI<sub>K</sub> – value of the FDI stream in the scale of the entire country;
- GDP<sub>G</sub> – value of GDP produced in the group of provinces;
- GDP<sub>K</sub> – national GDP.

If the value of INFDI is higher than 1, this means that the given group is characterized by a larger share of FDI accumulation than would result from the value of the GDP produced. In other words, these are the provinces where the foreign capital flows in with the highest intensity. On the other hand, when the value of the indicator drops below 1, this shows a low interest of foreign investors in a given area. The values of the calculated indicators of saturation with direct foreign investments for groups of provinces are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Index of saturation with direct foreign investments (FDI) in groups of provinces in 2003–2008

Group	Structure of basic capital (Poland = 100%)					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Group 1	1.51	1.49	1.47	1.44	1.46	1.47
Group 2	0.53	0.55	0.58	0.60	0.57	0.57
Group 3	0.32	0.34	0.31	0.35	0.34	0.30

Source own study on the basis of the data from Table 1 and Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office, <http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl>. (3105.2011).

The data included in the table once more confirm the thesis that direct foreign investments are characterized by strong spatial concentration. A definite majority of them, in relation to the GDP produced, were located in the area of the following provinces: Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie and Dolnośląskie. The region which stands out in particular is the Mazowieckie Province, where in each of the years under analysis the value of basic foreign capital was almost by 50% higher than would result from the volume of the production output in this region. This proves the very high potential of the Mazowieckie Province in attracting foreign investors. It can also be expected that in the future, investments will contribute to even more dynamic development of the region. Similar tendencies with high probability will also be visible in other provinces of this group.

In regions from group 2, the FDI saturation index, except for two last years from the examined period, was characterized by a growing trend. Although the value of foreign basic capital involved in this group of provinces is lower in relation to the value of the GDP produced, in the future, the maintenance of the growing trend could contribute to making up for the economic distance between this group of provinces and the most developed regions. An increased interest of foreign investors in provinces of this group could result from various implemented and planned infrastructural investments, mostly related to the construction of motorways in the area of

Łódzkie, Małopolskie, Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie Provinces. As demonstrated by R. Domański, over 70% of greenfield type investments are located within 30 km from existing or even planned transportation infrastructure (DOMAŃSKI 2001, p. 92).

Clearly, the situation of provinces from group 3 is the least favourable. They attract the lowest interest of foreign investors. The FDI saturation index in the period under analysis was very low (without a clear growing tendency) which, taking into consideration a low share of those regions in the value of the GDP produced in the scale of the entire country is particularly alarming.

### Summary and conclusions

To summarize, it can be concluded that Poland shows a clear spatial concentration of FDI and location advantages, whereas the division into groups of regions that are the most and the least attractive for investors (and thus “receiving” the largest and the lowest share of FDI) overlaps with the previously carried out division into the most and the least urbanized and economically developed regions. In value terms, almost 1 of FDI is located within the boundaries of four most developed provinces: Mazowieckie, Dolnośląskie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie, while five provinces, the so-called “eastern wall”, receive the lowest share. The differences that are currently observed result from the processes which occurred in the past. The accumulation and interrelations between them are the reasons for the increasing development gap.

The relative durability of this division partially accounts for the differences in the level of economic development observed nowadays. However, this also suggests that those differences will continue to deepen in future unless a radical change in the regional FDI structure occurs.

Translated by JERZY GOZDEK

Accepted for print 26.07.2011

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