

**Autor rozprawy doktorskiej:**

Agnieszka Alicja Drzazga

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*Uwarunkowania rozwoju przedsiębiorczości w formie pozarolniczej działalności  
gospodarczej na obszarach wiejskich w Polsce*

*Conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the form of non-agricultural economic  
activity in rural areas in Poland*

### **Abstract**

The development of entrepreneurship in the form of non-agricultural economic activity, related to the creation of new economic entities and the development of existing ones, is particularly important in rural areas in Poland. The importance stems from the ongoing process of deagrarization of the countryside, which reduces the share of agriculture in the development of not only the village, but also the entire country. The engagement of rural inhabitants in non-agricultural business ventures holds particular significance as it helps overcome various challenges such as: unemployment, rural to urban migration, low income of farming families, entitlement attitudes in rural communities or monofunctionality of rural areas. Therefore, it is crucial to take a holistic approach and identify factors, that stimulate or limit the creation, functioning and development of non-agricultural enterprises in rural areas, owned by rural inhabitants. However, the review of the literature indicates the lack of sufficient findings in this specific area.

The main objective of the study is to identify and characterize the conditions that shape the development of entrepreneurship in the form of non-agricultural economic activity in rural areas in Poland as well as to assess the level of competitive advantage of non-agricultural enterprises in these areas.

To address the identified cognitive gaps and achieve the assumed main goal, the study includes a review of the existing Polish and foreign theoretical and empirical findings related to the conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the form of non-agricultural economic activity in rural areas. Additionally, original research was conducted in this area employing both quantitative methods – using the survey method, using CAWI and CATI techniques with a sample of 391 enterprises, and qualitative – such as case study using the semi-structured interview technique with a sample of 10 enterprises.

The results of the research indicate that the key motives for engaging in non-agricultural economic activity in rural areas in Poland by the inhabitants of these areas align with the positive motives for starting a business identified in literature. The main internal factors for the functioning and development of non-agricultural enterprises located in rural areas in Poland are related to the specificity of the entrepreneur and the enterprise, while the primary internal barriers are limited to capital resources. External factors that stimulate the functioning and development of the indicated enterprises are diverse, but mostly fall under the category of market factors. On the other hand, the main external barriers mostly stem from the insufficient policy support of entrepreneurship in rural areas in Poland. The research, also revealed that the majority of non-agricultural enterprises located in rural areas in Poland, owned by residents of these areas demonstrate a medium or high level of competitive advantage. The key factors determining their advantage include: high quality of products / services, strong brand image, tailored offerings that meet the customer's needs, flexibility in terms of responsiveness and competent management and employees. Furthermore the research identified the majority of owners of non-agricultural enterprises located in rural areas in Poland possess a high or medium level of development of entrepreneurial competences, and the entities they manage, for the most part, exhibit a medium or high level of entrepreneurial orientation. These findings highlight additional internal conditions that shape the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas in Poland.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship development; rural areas; non-agricultural economic activity; internal and external conditions, stimulators and barriers