

Reviews – Polemics

PIOTR BÓRAWSKI

Katarzyna Smędzik-Ambroży:
ZASOBY A ZRÓWNOWAŻONY ROZWÓJ ROLNICTWA W POLSCE
PO AKCESJI DO UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ
(RESOURCES AND THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND AFTER THE ACCESSION
TO THE EUROPEAN UNION)

Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa-Poznań 2018, 285 pp.
ISBN: 978-83-0119-980-7.

The book being reviewed addresses an important problem i.e. the assessment of the sustainable agricultural development in Poland. It is voluminous, consists of the introduction, six substantive chapters, summary, references, list of tables and figures and an addendum.

The subject is extremely important and up-to-date. The Author assessed the sustainable agricultural development in Poland in terms of using production factors, i.e. land, labour and capital. Agriculture intensively uses natural resources, shapes the socio-cultural fabric of rural areas and affects ecological systems and, therefore, a need to respect the sustainable development principles is of particular importance. This particularly refers to agriculture, where the number of economic entities is large, and the multi-faceted variability and diversity make their assessment highly complicated in methodical terms.

The issue being analysed is set in the economics of sustainable development, which is one of modern trends. It develops based on the political economics and the sustainable development concept. The guidelines of this trend very clearly fit the economic sector of agriculture and related sectors of the national economy. Despite the develop-

ment of this concept in science, in practice it is still noted that the economic objective prevails over the ecological and ethical objectives. The observed state of imbalance arouses many controversies.

The title of the paper is formulated in a clear, concise manner and indicates that the study is of economic nature and applies to the farm sustainability differentiated in terms of resources. In addition, the issue of sustainability has been presented not only in the Wielkopolska region, but also in the voivodeships of Poland, which also makes the study embedded in the spatial economics.

The paper begins with the introduction, in which the Author presents the investigated issue and motives for dealing with this research problem. The Author presented the major objective of the study, which was to “identify the impact of the location and resulting resource conditions for the agricultural sector on the national or regional scales on the sustainability of private farming after the integration of Poland with the EU, based on the experience of existing FADN farms”. It must be stated that thus set objective is very important, comprehensible and also ambitious. To date, no such studies have been conducted in papers on the development economics. Therefore, the Author fills up the existing gap in the literature of the subject, which can be considered as her significant contribution to science. The major objective is complemented by research tasks, which are compatible with it, complement the deliberations and describe the research problem in the more accurate manner. Also the successful formulation of five research hypotheses has contributed to addressing the research problem:

1. *“In 2005-2014, compared to 2004, deepened the differences, with regard to the sustainability in economic and environmental terms, among individual FADN farms from areas with various resource conditions for the agricultural production.*
2. *In 2005-2014, compared to 2004, in areas with unfavourable agricultural resource conditions with respect to the reference area, the environmental sustainability of individual FADN farms increased while their sustainability in economic terms decreased.*
3. *In areas with favourable agricultural resource conditions with respect to the reference area, in 2005-2014, compared to 2004, the environmental sustainability of individual FADN farms decreased, while their sustainability in economic terms increased.*
4. *The institutional conditions stemming from the EU agricultural policy affect the environmental and economic sustainability of individual FADN agriculture in Poland and Wielkopolska, irrespective of resource conditions for this sector in the area concerned.*
5. *Equipping with production factors affects the environmental and economic sustainability of individual FADN agriculture in Poland and Wielkopolska, irrespective of resource conditions for this sector in the area concerned”.*

It should be stated that the research hypotheses formulated in this way are logically linked to the major objective. In this part of the thesis, the Author also presented sources of primary and secondary information and listed the research methods used and then described them in the third chapter. Such introduction does not raise any major substantive objections.

Summing up, the introduction should be considered as one of the strengths of the thesis. The reader becomes familiar with the issue and the Author’s intentions have been clearly presented. The set objective, tasks and research hypotheses are adequate, proper in substantive terms and quantifiable.

In habilitation theses, an important chapter in the paper is a theoretical part, sometimes focused on the review or synthesis and the development of the theory regarding the subject matter being investigated. The thesis being reviewed has two theoretical chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Resources in agricultural activities” and has 37 pages. Here, the Author described the economic theories, *inter alia*, by Thünen, Weber, Lösch, core-periphery, as well as production factors and function. In addition, the chapter presents deliberations on the convergence with regard to the sustainability of private farms in areas with various resource conditions. It also describes the causes of the convergence in theoretical terms and production factors i.e. labour, land and capital. The scientific discourse conducted by the Author, in this part of the paper, should be regarded as very important, necessary and at a high level and the very selection of described economic theories – as relevant. This chapter is necessary for the thesis and forms a specific background for the economic analyses presented in the further parts of the paper.

The second chapter is entitled “Agriculture in sustainable development”. The first part of the chapter is devoted to defining the sustainable development concept. The very settlement of the dispute in the literature of the subject relating to the proper definition of this issue must be regarded as an important reason for starting research and also as a contribution to science. In the further part of the chapter, the Author described the economic and environmental orders in the context of public goods and agriculture. It must be stated that these deliberations are important and necessary for the thesis. Interesting can be the Figure on page 85, where the Author presented the history of the CAP. In conclusion, this chapter is necessary for the thesis and has been prepared correctly in substantive terms.

The subject of deliberations in the third chapter are the methods to investigate the agricultural sustainability. The procedure of the synthetic indicator has been described in detail which is followed by detailed description of the selection of farms for research. The structure of this chapter is very interesting, as its individual sections describe the methodology used in the next chapters. As particularly important, we should consider the information presented in tables 3 and 4, which outline the characteristics of the variables used in the models built. The further part of the chapter presents the methods to measure the sustainable development.

The substantive chapters prepared based on the FADN data are a good point of the thesis. Chapter 4, in which the Author presented the diversity of resources used by private farming on the national scale and in Wielkopolska, should be considered as particularly important for the thesis. She presented the results of own research and analyses in the context of land, labour and capital, which enrich the results of analyses using the Mann–Whitney U test. The Author applied a very interesting approach here. First, she presented the differentiation of factors in the voivodeships, and then in the districts of Wielkopolska, using data clustering. The added value of the thesis and also a contribution to science in the field of new research methods are the synthetic indicators of agricultural resource conditions, which allowed to compare the voivodeships of Poland and the districts of Wielkopolska. This analysis allowed the Author to identify the regions with the favourable, neutral and unfavourable agricultural resource conditions. The results of the analyses carried out, as presented in Figures 3 and 4, should be considered as interesting and valuable for the thesis.

The fifth chapter of the thesis, in which the Author presented the differentiation of private farming from areas with various resource conditions for this sector on the national or Wielkopolska scale after the integration of Poland with the EU, should be considered as interesting in cognitive terms. At the very beginning of this chapter, the reader becomes familiar with the results of the analyses carried out. This chapter also verifies the research hypotheses. The chapter should be considered to be carefully prepared, with the high substantive value, is adequate and valuable for the thesis.

In the last chapter of the paper, the Author investigated the impact of institutional and resource factors on the sustainability of private farming in 2004-2014, on the national and regional scale. This chapter is very interesting. Its reading provides the information on constructed econometric models and constitutes an important summary of the thesis. The Author's research showed the impact of the EU funds on the economic and environmental sustainability. In addition, it shows the impact of the land and labour factors on the environmental sustainability of individual FADN agriculture. Summing up, this chapter is interesting in cognitive terms, presents the models and is the Author's contribution to science with regard to the applied and used new research methods.

The reviewed monograph has been prepared correctly using the vocabulary from economic sciences. The language style is generally correct.

The literature used is extensive, presents 351 publications, including 87 foreign, mainly English-language ones as well as statistical materials and internet sources. The extensive sources of information confirm the Author's ability to search for and use the global achievements in the field of agrarian economics.

The reviewed monograph by dr hab. Katarzyna Smędzik-Ambroży entitled is a valuable study. It confirms the scientific advancement of its Author and is a contribution to economic sciences due to the multi-faceted approach to the contents analysed. It has the high substantive value and the results and contents of each chapter form a logical whole.

I would like to congratulate the Author on preparing a valuable study.

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