

CHANGES IN THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER TOWNS APPLYING FOR CITY STATUS. CASE STUDY OF LUBLIN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

Motives: In the past 20 years or more, many towns that had lost city status during the partitions of Poland have applied for the restoration of municipal rights.

Aim: The aim of the research conducted in 2020 was to identify changes in the functional and spatial structure and in the public spaces of four towns that had been deprived of municipal rights: Goraj, Izbica, Turobin, and Żółkiewka. The analysed towns are located in the least urbanised part of Lublin Province.

Results: In the course of the research process, changes in the size of developed areas between 1965 and 2020 were analysed, and the functions of newly urbanised areas, their present functional and spatial structure, and the proportion of agricultural homesteads in total housing resources were determined and identified. Additionally, downtown areas in each studied location were assessed with the use of the “sensory perception curve” method, which is also known as Wejchert’s method, and local community members were surveyed. The respondents were asked to evaluate public spaces and the functional and spatial structure of each town, and to assess its chances of regaining city status. Survey results indicate that the functional and spatial structure, as well as public spaces in all studied locations justify the efforts to restore these towns’ municipal rights.

Keywords: small town, functional and spatial structure, public space, restitution, Poland

INTRODUCTION

For the last 20 years, at least, there has been a noticeable trend of restoring municipal rights to towns that lost city status when Poland was partitioned. Since 2014, this phenomenon has also been noticeable in the Lublin Province, a peripheral region, one of the least urbanised in Poland and one that has been experiencing some definitely adverse demo-

graphic processes. The province has 51 towns and cities, including four with county (powiat) status. As many as 47 towns have a population of less than 50 thousand, including 40 with less than 20 thousand inhabitants.

There are specific criteria referring to space, population, functions etc, but they are enshrined in legal documents. It is evident that newly established towns and cities in Poland do not meet many of these

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criteria. The fact of having city status in the past turns out to be the most important. The role of spatial development in the efforts of a locality to regain city status is intriguing from the scientific perspective. It is extremely difficult to draw a clear distinction indicating when a village does indeed become a town or city.

The objective of the research conducted in 2020 was to identify changes in the functional and spatial structure with a particular emphasis on public spaces of four former towns – Goraj, Izbica, Turobin, and Żółkiewka (Fig. 1) – in the context of restoring their city status. All the localities under study are similar in that they have a small population (from about

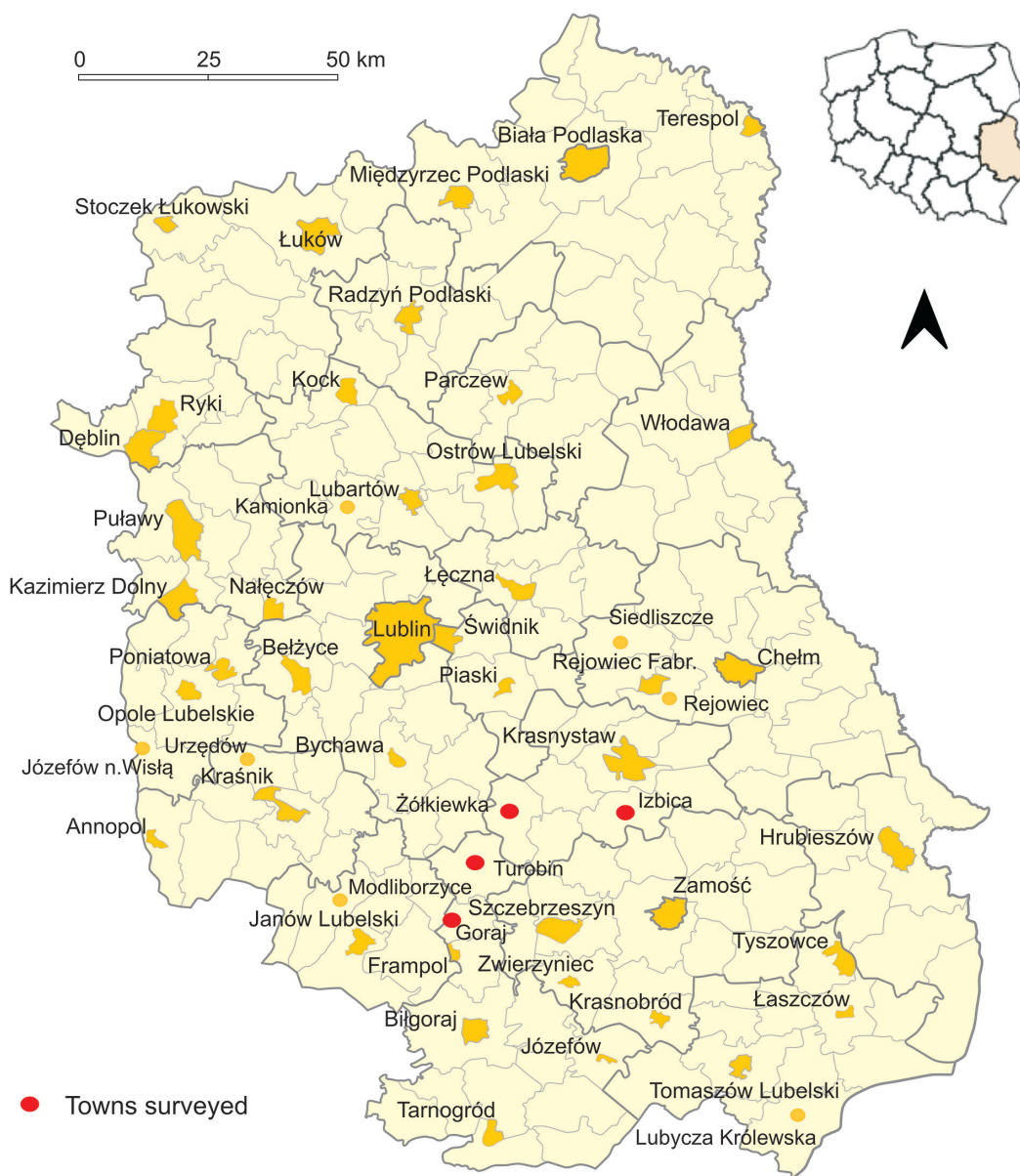


Fig. 1. Location of the localities under study against the network of towns/cities in the Lublin Province
Source: prepared by the authors.

800 to 1,400 inhabitants) and had been towns from the 15th/18th century until 1869. They are located in the least urbanised part of the Lublin Province, in the Lublin Upland and Roztocze mesoregions. Krzysztofik (2006) believes that these regions are where the idea of urban restitution can be propagated. This is because it is one of the zones of diffusion of the idea of urbanity in Poland, called the Zamosc zone (since the 1980s there has been a trend of restitution of town rights in neighboring towns). It was assumed that the research would answer the question whether the present-day functional and spatial structure (including public space) of these localities could be indicative of their urban character. It should be noted that such research had not been conducted for these localities thus far. However, it is worth noting the study of landscape transformations for selected towns of the Lublin Region (Przesmycka, 2001) and synthetic analyses for the following provinces: Łódzkie (Sokołowski, 2011), Podlaskie (Sokołowski, 2013), the eastern part of Mazowieckie (Sokołowski, 2016), Podkarpackie (Sokołowski, 2017), Lubuskie (Sokołowski, 2018), and Wielkopolskie (Sokołowski, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The functional and spatial structure of the city

A town is a type of a settlement unit characterised by a continuous built environment and predominance of non-agricultural functions (Szymańska, 2009). From the perspective of Polish law, a town is a locality with municipal rights. However, many authors point out the existence of localities in Poland which do not have the characteristics of a village, but do not have municipal rights either. Przesmycka (2001) describes them as “small towns” and defines them as settlements having or acquiring urban characteristics. Small towns, functioning as centres serving the surrounding rural areas, are a significant element of the settlement structure of a region (Bański, 2022). These settlements usually have a local impact and assume the role

of centres serving the neighbouring agricultural areas, usually within a district whose authorities are based in these settlements (Wiśniewska, 1999). However, according to some authors, including Gzell (1996), this basic function of small towns disappeared after World War Two, as a result of which they lost their former development potential.

The spatial layout of a town usually results from its historical origins (Przesmycka, 2001). Szymańska (2009) distinguishes two primary kinds: a regular layout, with strong geometrical trends, and an irregular layout, often determined by difficult terrain conditions. Given that most of the towns in the Lublin region originate from the Middle Ages, it can be stated that the grid layout, characteristic of mediaeval towns, is the predominant type of spatial layout there (Gzell, 1996). The low degree of spatial development of small towns is the reason for a phenomenon, perceived as very positive, namely the existence of a clear boundary between the continuous built environment and the surrounding agricultural areas. A small town is an intermediate form between a typical village and a typical urban environment in terms of building density. Chmielewski (2001) considers this to be a favourable phenomenon considering the need to provide comfort of living to the inhabitants.

The market square or town square is the key public space of a town while also serving as the economic centre of the town and district. It is here where many commercial establishments and services as well as public institutions are usually located (Nowakowski, 1990). In nearly every district town in the Lublin region, the market or town square (or its substitute) is the venue for the weekly fair that combines the economic and social functions. The town square is also a place where most of the cultural and social activities take place. Furthermore, it usually plays the role of an urban and functional dominant feature (Nowakowski, 1990). Besides, assuming that an optimum living space should ensure a sense of familiarity (Pawłowska, 2001), an appropriately developed and utilised town square seems to be a very good basis for creating “small town atmosphere” (Kobylarczyk, 2012).

In a model functional and spatial structure of a district town, one should strive to segregate services. In general, most of them should be located in the centre, i.e. usually in the vicinity of the town square. Many authors, however, also identify onerous services, such as the sale of building materials, services for agriculture or car repair shops. Many entities providing such services require areas that are quite large in relation to the centre of a town. Other services generate undesirable noise. Therefore, such facilities and entities should be located outside the centre of a town. Furthermore, it is advantageous to concentrate these service providers within a specific area in order to avoid spatial conflict (Kachniarz, 1970). The same principle applies to the location of functional and storage areas in the space of a town. Many authors also indicate that the location of schools and other entities related to education in the vicinity of the town square is undesirable. They should rather be in a location allowing convenient access from the residential areas of the town (Banaszak & Izdebska, 1994).

Since they cover a small area, small towns favour the development of inner pedestrian and cycling traffic. This seems self-evident to a certain degree, but sometimes it is the appropriately organised spatial structure of a town that determines giving priority to motor or pedestrian/cycling traffic. This is of particular importance in towns located along busy national or provincial roads. Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists makes it possible, to some extent, to implement the idea of a compact town (Gehl, 2014).

Restitution of towns

In the middle of the 20th century, after wave of the town degradation had subsided, some towns regained city status. After World War Two, the award or restoration of city rights occurred almost exclusively in localities where industrial facilities existed (Krzysztofik, 2005). In the 1980s, and particularly in the 1990s, following the change of the political and economic system, many former

towns in the Lublin region began making efforts to regain city rights (Przesmycka, 2015). According to Krzysztofik (2006), the Lublin Province ranks third in Poland with regard to the number of new towns (the number of towns increased by nearly 20%). Some of them completed their efforts within a few years, a relatively short period, while other towns have undergone this process gradually. These efforts are often manifested in the attention devoted to urban and architectural features typical of small towns, such as the town square and its surroundings (Krzysztofik & Dymitrow, 2015). Krzysztofik (2005) also notes that one of the reasons for that wave of urban restitution was a greater sense of local identity and prestige, and enhanced self-governance, which in turn resulted in the emergence of bottom-up initiatives seeking the restoration of city status to a given locality (Szymkie, 2015). This occurred and is still taking place sometimes in spite of the demographic and economic trends occurring in these towns. Another interesting phenomenon is the transfer of the idea of the restoration of city rights from town to town (diffusion of the idea of urbanism).

In Poland, the granting of city status to a district or locality is regulated by the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 9 August 2001 on the procedure for submitting applications for the creation, merging, division, abolition, and determination of the boundaries of districts, the granting of city status to a district or a locality, the determination and change of the names of districts and the headquarters of their authorities, and the documents required in these matters. The first step towards granting city status is taken by the district council that must submit an application to this effect to the minister responsible for public administration, via the provincial governor. Such an application should contain numerous documents, including the results of public consultation on the matter, a historical outline of the district or locality, information on the employment structure, architectural monuments, as well as an extract from the local spatial development plan containing information on the transport and urban design layout and technical infrastructure.

The power to grant city status is vested in the Council of Ministers. The explanatory memoranda to the ordinances granting municipal rights show that, for several years, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (MIAA) has been using five basic criteria to determine whether a district council's application for municipal rights is approved or not. These criteria are as follows: a population of more than 2,000; more than 60% of the inhabitants making their living from non-agricultural activity; a distinct central area of the locality, within which the existence of agricultural homesteads is excluded; having municipal rights in the past, and having basic technical infrastructure such as waterworks and sewerage. Public support, verified during a mandatory public consultation process, is also a very important element in the efforts to achieve city status (Rajan, 2010). However, the criteria to be met by a potential city, as set out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), are often very loose and are followed to a varying degree depending on the individual nature of the case (Szymytkie, 2018). Krzysztofik (2006) points out that the requirements mentioned above are followed more strictly when municipal rights are granted to localities that have never had them before, whereas the fact of having held the status of a town in the past is usually the deciding factor for the restoration of municipal rights despite the other criteria not being met. Given

the latitude in adhering to the above criteria in the process of granting municipal rights, many authors highlight other factors in favour of granting these rights, such as a sufficient number of historic buildings (Dawidejt-Drobek & Drobek, 2015).

Revoking city status has not occurred in Poland since the 1970s, while the process of granting municipal rights to various rural localities has continued with varying intensity (Fig. 2). Over the last decade, these have been exclusively localities that lost their city status in the past, mainly in 1869/1870 pursuant to the tsarist decree, which was widely regarded as revenge for the participation of Poles in the January Uprising (the surveyed localities also belong to this group).

Many experts believe that prestige is the primary reason why many localities seek city status. When a district town gains municipal rights, the district changes its status from rural to urban/rural, and the district head becomes mayor. It is an honour for the local authorities and residents of such a locality (Dawidejt-Drobek & Drobek, 2015; Szymytkie, 2015). Many district heads seeking the restoration of city status for their localities openly admit that they have high hopes for keeping young people in the district. It is also argued that towns more often attract the attention of potential investors who can help improve the economy of a given district and

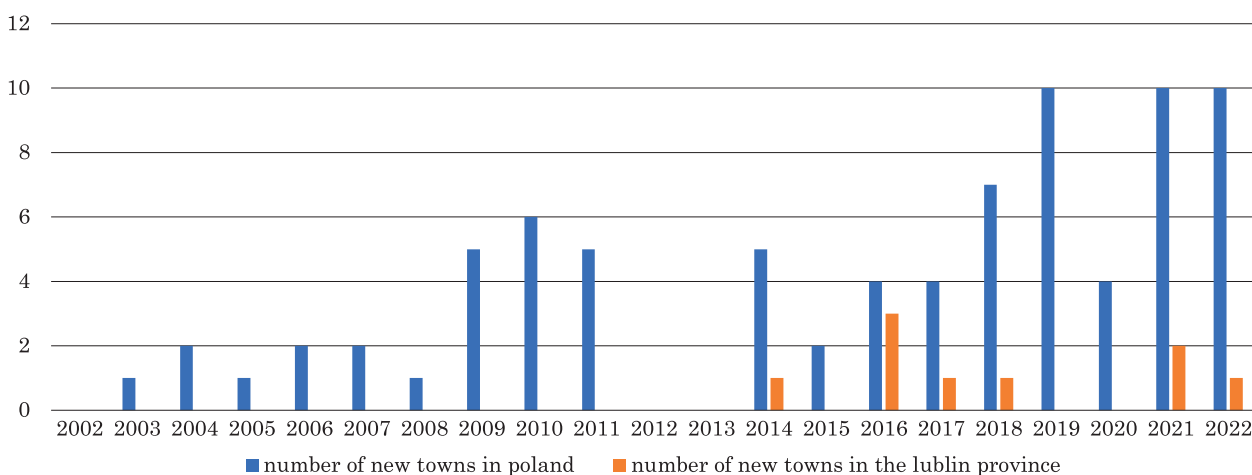


Fig. 2. The dynamic of granting city status in the years 2000 to 2022 in Poland and the Lublin Province

Source: prepared by the authors.

improve the local job market (Cudo & Rydzewski, 2017). In a town with a newly acquired municipal status, the value of land and properties rises and new transport links can be developed. The availability of EU funds remains a matter of debate. Some experts claim that villages and rural districts have greater chances of obtaining such funding than a town or urban/rural district, while others assert quite the opposite – that the granting of municipal rights increases the availability of external funding (Cudo & Rydzewski, 2017). Residents of some of the towns with restored city status often regard this restitution as an act of historical justice and do not expect their lives to noticeably improve following this change. An example of such a locality is Opatowiec (Świętokrzyskie Province) that regained its city status in 2019, after 150 years, and has a population of just slightly more than 300 people. This shows the flexible attitude of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Interior towards the criteria to be met by a locality granted municipal rights (Szmytkie, 2018).

According to Sokołowski (2022), what primarily differentiates former towns with a chance to regain city status from other former towns and most rural localities are the following characteristics: relatively high population density, urban spatial layout and built environment, well-developed social and functional links with the surroundings, multifunctional character of the economy (clear majority of people working outside agriculture), above-average (in relation to most villages) development of social infrastructure establishments, and technical infrastructure facilities. Localities having most of the characteristics listed above stand a real chance of being included in the ‘cities’ category. Gaining city status, however, involves meeting several requirements, including demographic criteria (2,000 inhabitants is the informal threshold), spatial and urban planning criteria (e.g. having an urban spatial layout and urban character of the built environment, an enacted local spatial development plan, an adequate level of technical and municipal infrastructure development), functional (having institutions with supralocal functions, at least two

thirds of the population employed outside agriculture), and social criteria (support of the local community).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the first, preliminary stage of research, the local determinants affecting the localities under study were analysed based on, among others, planning and strategy documents as well as field inventory-taking. The main stage consisted of several parts. The first one was about examining changes in the functional and spatial structure of Goraj, Turobin, Żółkiewka, and Izbica in the years 1965 to 2020. This time frame was chosen due to the limited access to archival spatial data, including large-scale topographic studies. Changes in the size of the built-up (developed) areas and the dynamic of these changes in the periods 1965–2003 and 2004–2020 were analysed within the cadastral districts of Goraj, Turobin, Żółkiewka, and Izbica. This was carried out using QGIS software, while a 1:10 000 topographic map from 1965 (provided via the *Mapo Tero* application) and orthophotomaps from 2003 and 2020 (provided by geoportal.gov.pl) were used as base maps. Then the present-day functions of sites located in areas urbanised after 1965 were examined using data obtained from the Topographic Objects Database as well as the authors’ own observations.

The next step was to analyse the present-day functional and spatial structure of the localities under study taking into account the development type, i.e. residential housing, services, functional/storage areas, and public spaces. This analysis was carried out based on the Topographic Objects Database as well as the authors’ own observations. Since some public spaces located in the localities under study did not meet all the criteria defining them, the authors distinguished semi-public space as well. In view of some indications in the scientific literature suggesting an intermediate form between public space and private space, the authors refer to a space used by the local community only on certain days, i.e. closed on a daily basis and not fully accessible, as semi-public space.

An attempt was then made to estimate the share of agricultural homesteads in total housing stock in the centres of the localities under study. It is assumed that the central part of each locality comprises the immediate surroundings of the town square/market square, of comparable size, bounded by the streets adjoining the square, where there is a strong concentration of central functions such as service and retail establishments or public institutions. The analysis was carried out based on an up-to-date orthophotomap from geoportal.gov.pl as well as a field inventory.

The sensory perception curve method, also known as Wejchert's method (1984), was then applied. The key assumptions of this method were adapted to the needs of assessing the functional and spatial structure and public spaces of a given fragment of space of the localities under study. At first, the assessment path was determined. In each of the four cases, it was a 500-metre stretch of the main street of a given locality, running along one of the sides of the town square/market square. The score-based assessment was performed at ten equidistant points, taking into account six criteria (accumulation of public institutions, urban centre services, onerous services, aesthetics of the landscape, harmonious composition of all landscape elements, presence and attractiveness of public spaces). The rating scale ranged from 0 to 10, where 0 denoted an undesirable state and 10 denoted an ideal state. In the case of favourable factors, such as the accumulation of urban centre services, a high score meant a high level of accumulation, whereas in the case of the only negative factor among the six, i.e. the accumulation of onerous services, a high score meant a very small number or absence of such facilities. Urban centre services are understood as those kinds of activity whose concentration in the centre of a locality leads to mutual benefits, i.e. the service-providing establishment enjoys having more clients while its vicinity becomes a place for intensive human interactions in the economic and social sphere (e.g. grocery stores, hairdressers, florists, pharmacies). Onerous services are construed as those kinds of activity whose location in the centre does

not impact the profitability of an establishment, but it generates effects that are harmful to the environment and its users, such as noise, pollution, non-aesthetic appearance (e.g. building depots, car repair shops, agricultural produce dealers, agricultural machinery dealers). The results of the research conducted using a modified Wejchert's method were compiled using Microsoft Excel in the form of line graphs. They present the averaged score of the evaluation by each criterion at each point of the surveyed centers. In addition, the average score was calculated for the entire assessed route in each center.

The final stage of the research consisted of conducting a survey among the inhabitants of the localities under study. Twenty persons from each locality were surveyed. The survey consisted of six questions. In the first, the respondents were asked to evaluate the development of public spaces. The next two questions were aimed at examining how the respondents evaluated the functional and spatial structure of their locality and what problems they saw in its functioning. The further two questions were about the evaluation of the chances for regaining city status and residents' perception of their locality as a town, village or something in between. The last question offered an opportunity to give a free response to the proposed changes in the space of the localities under study.

RESULTS

The analysis of local determinants in the localities under study unequivocally demonstrated that the functional and spatial structure and public spaces are what clearly sets each locality apart from the neighbouring rural localities. Since these localities are situated in areas subject to depopulation, it should be noted that, unlike in the neighbouring villages, the abandoned houses there converted into shops and other service establishments (particularly in the centres). On the other hand, significant changes had occurred in the appearance of the localities under study as a result of wooden buildings being displaced by brick buildings after World War Two. Due to these

changes, the buildings characteristic of small towns disappeared from these localities to a large extent, giving way to the often chaotically distributed Modernist single-family and multi-family housing. What is also quite significant is a low coverage with local spatial development plans (only Goraj is fully covered by such a plan) and the superficial nature of the provisions in the existing plans. The path that is most frequently chosen by district authorities is the preservation of the current state of spatial development, which undoubtedly has an adverse impact on the formation of spatial order. Summing up the topic of spatial planning in the localities under study, it is also worth noting the way that district towns are distinguished from other localities in spatial development conditions and directions studies. Goraj, Turobin, and Izbica were indicated in these documents as single-family housing areas and main service centres forming the urban zones in the space of districts. In the case of Żółkiewka, on the other hand, there is no tendency to highlight its “urban nature”: single-family housing is interspersed with agricultural homesteads.

The analysis of the changes in the functional and spatial structure in the years 1965–2020 clearly demonstrates that all the localities under study saw an increase of developed areas but the changes had a slightly different dynamics, direction, and charac-

ter, and the intensity of building activity varied in the particular periods within the time frame under study (Fig. 3). While the intensity of building activity in Izbica (where it reached the highest level), Żółkiewka, and Goraj recently increased, it decreased in Turobin. On the other hand, taking into account the entire study period, the highest degree of spatial development can be observed in Turobin alongside Izbica. Żółkiewka is at the other end of the spectrum, with the lowest, virtually negligible increase of developed areas in the study period. Such a gap between the fast-developing Turobin and Izbica and the slowly developing Goraj and Żółkiewka is confirmed by the analysis of the functions of the newly-built structures in areas urbanised after 1965. In Turobin and Izbica (unlike in Goraj and Żółkiewka), relatively many new single-family houses were recorded. Besides, a lot of outbuildings were built in all the localities under study. This resulted from the addition of garages, halls, and sheds to the existing homes; these additions can hardly be viewed as a manifestation of spatial development because they did not correspond with an increase in the number of homes and settlement of new residents.

The analysis of the current functional and spatial structure provides a picture of the distribution of public spaces and service areas in the space of the localities under study. In all of them, functional and

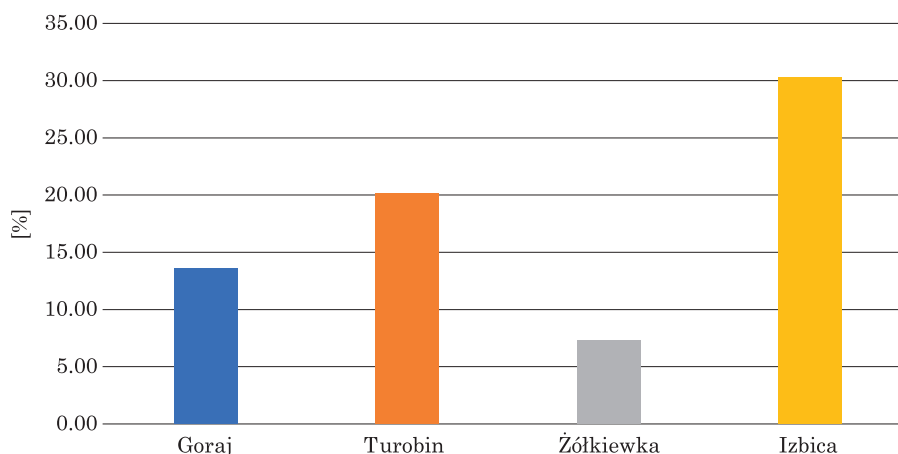


Fig. 3. Changes of urbanized area of Goraj, Turobin, Żółkiewka, and Izbica in the years 1965 to 2020

Source: prepared by the authors.

storage areas, in accordance with good planning practice, are clustered in one place and relatively isolated from the rest of a given town. Service areas, on the other hand, are located in the centres of the localities under study, with the greatest concentration in the vicinity of the market square in Goraj, Turobin, and Izbica. Furthermore, Turobin and Izbica also feature a few other, smaller service centres located at some distance from the main town square. The situation in Żółkiewka is slightly different in this respect because services are clustered, sometimes chaotically, along Żółkiewskiego Street, rather than around the town square. With regard to public spaces, the best situation occurs in Turobin and Izbica where there is more than one attractive public space (it is the so-called Fire Station Park, apart from the town square, in Turobin, and recreational grounds by the Wieprz river in Izbica). The town square is the only space of this kind in Goraj and Żółkiewka. However, it is worth mentioning that the inhabitants of Żółkiewka have access to public space located in the recreational area by the artificial lake in Żółkiew Kolonia, less than one kilometre from the town square in Żółkiewka. During the analysis of the functional and spatial structure of the localities under study, it was observed that the absence of local spatial development plans led to a high degree of dilution of the built environment in Izbica.

Another analysis, aimed at estimating the share of agricultural homesteads in total housing stock in the centres of the localities under study, confirmed the dichotomy dividing the localities into two pairs: Goraj and Żółkiewka versus Turobin and Izbica. In Goraj and Żółkiewka, the share of homesteads the centre, though never higher than 15%, was clearly higher than in Turobin or Izbica (Fig. 4).

The authors' assessment of the functional and spatial structure and of the public spaces in the centre of each of the localities under study (along with the town square), modified with Wejchert's sensory perception curve method, demonstrated certain differences in the perception of the functioning of the specific parts of the centres as well as all the studied localities compared to one another (Fig. 5). In Goraj and Turobin, and partially in Izbica, it is the town square and its immediate vicinity that undoubtedly stand out thanks to the presence of all the characteristics of the centre of a small town. In Żółkiewka, this assessment is more evenly distributed due to the lack of a distinct centre and the distribution of services and public institutions along Żółkiewskiego Street. The town square does not stand out from its surroundings. In all the other localities under study, the high score of the town square and its vicinity results from the fact that the town square is the most attractive and often the only

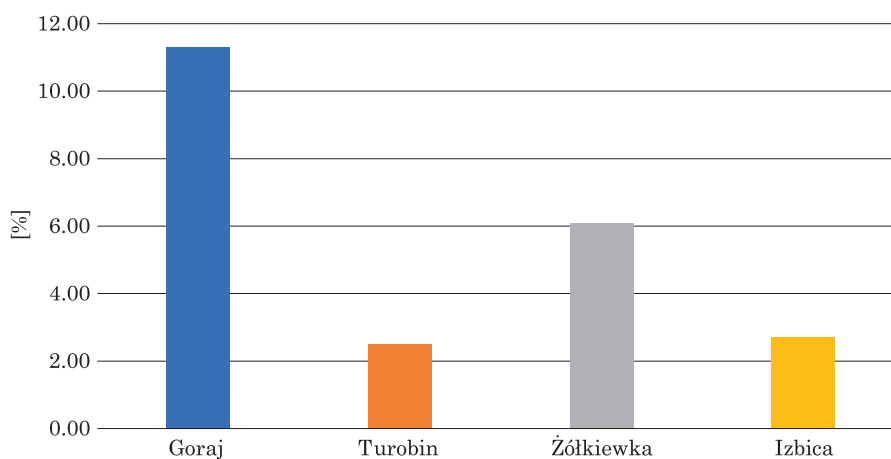


Fig. 4. The share of agricultural homesteads in total housing stock in the centre of the localities

Source: prepared by the authors.

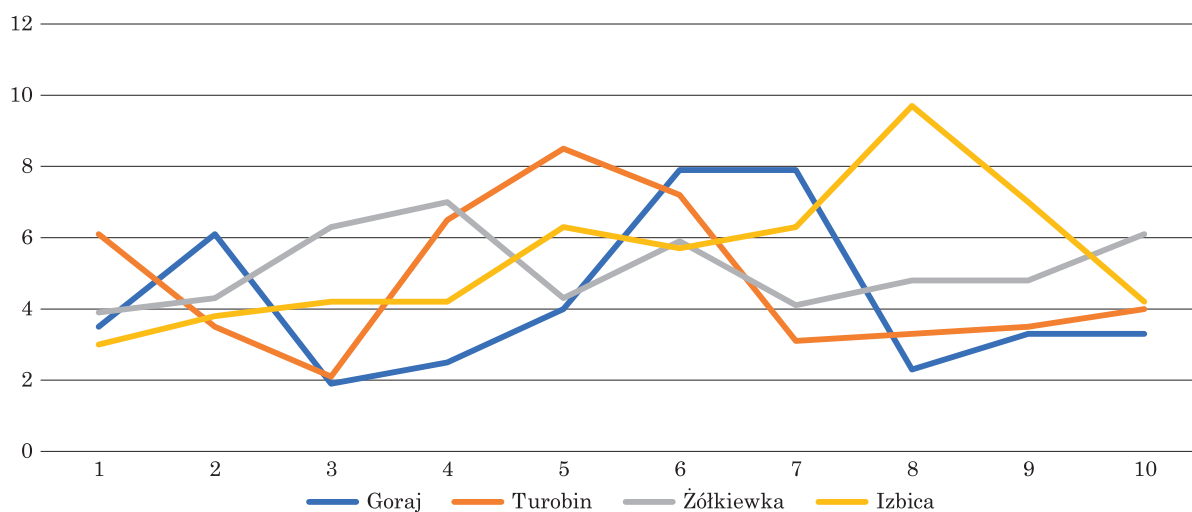


Fig. 5. The sensory perception curves of the averaged index of assessment of the functional and spatial structure of the studied centers

Source: prepared by the authors.

so intensively used, multifunctional public space. On the other hand, if the mean score for the entire route assessed is considered, Izbica ranks first (mean score: 5.45 points) and Żółkiewka ranks second (mean score: 5.13 points). Without a doubt, this is influenced by the distribution of urban centre functions in these localities along the main streets: Lubelska Street in Izbica and Żółkiewskiego Street in Żółkiewka.

The survey results revealed what residents and users thought about the space of the localities under study. The residents of Izbica were the most satisfied with public spaces, which may result from the diversity of such spaces, e.g. existence of recreational areas by the Wieprz river, in Izbica. The inhabitants of Goraj, Turobin, and Izbica had a positive view of the functional and spatial structure of their locality. On the other hand, the chaotic distribution of services and lack of a distinct centre were reflected in the much poorer opinions expressed about Żółkiewka. Despite a generally favourable perception of the space of Turobin, the respondents there indicated the greatest number of issues in its functioning, the most common being the lack of an appropriate town or market square and lack of places for recreation. This may be due to the fact that the regular Turobin fair, taking place in the very heart of the town and regarded as the biggest in the area, which leads to many

spatial conflicts and dissatisfaction of residents and users of the space of Turobin. The lack of places for recreation is a problem that was almost unanimously pointed out by the respondents in all the localities under study, which suggests a general trend in society to practice sports and keep physically fit, as well as the need for recreation in the open air. This is a hint for planners and local governments which should seriously consider ensuring the effective development of recreation areas in the future.

The respondents in Izbica showed the highest level of awareness of living in a town. This corresponds with the high mean score given to the centre in Izbica according to the modified Wejchert method. Żółkiewka is at the other end of the spectrum in this respect. Goraj stands out with regard to the assessment of chances for regaining city status since nearly all the respondents expressed the view that Goraj would soon become a town. According to the authors, this is directly related to the fact that when the survey was conducted, the efforts for the restoration of Goraj's city status were already well under way, of which the inhabitants were surely aware of. The respondents in Turobin were slightly more sceptical on this subject. In Izbica, and particularly in Żółkiewka, the prevailing view is that the granting of municipal rights is a remote prospect. According to the authors, these

patterns in the respondents' answers are largely linked to how the question of regaining municipal rights by a given locality is viewed by local governments as well as whether and to what extent local governments take steps towards the restoration of municipal rights.

Despite some differences observed between the localities under study in the course of the survey, it should be noted that in many cases these are minor differences. Although these differences quite clearly translate into the distinction between localities with a more and less "urban" character, they should not lead to conclusions about which of these localities have a chance and should become towns, and which should not. The present survey makes it possible to determine the order in which these processes should occur. The survey results also show how much effort the local governments of the localities concerned should make, and in which areas, so that the functional and spatial structure of these localities corresponds to the structure of a small town. In view of the above, Izbica has the best chance

of regaining municipal rights, of course considering the spatial aspect only, while Turobin comes in second. In these two cases, the influence of exogenic factors, particularly the location, is significant. Izbica owes many of its developmental factors to its close proximity to Krasnystaw and Zamość, which can result in a more effective flow of capital and people. Turobin, on the other hand, with its more peripheral location in relation to medium-sized towns than the other localities under study, can be viewed by many as a potential place of concentration of economic activity and possible development of residential functions for the neighbouring rural areas.

Goraj lags behind Izbica and Turobin in many respects such as poor spatial development, absence of some institutions (e.g. post office, secondary school), and high percentage of agricultural homesteads in the centre. On the other hand, in terms of aesthetics, Goraj has the most attractive central area along with the town square (Fig. 6). Finally, although Żółkiewka has some potential, it shows a lack of "urban" aspirations



Fig. 6. The 600th Anniversary Market Square in Goraj
Source: own photo.

among its residents and district authorities, which is also reflected in the spatial policy.

CONCLUSIONS

The survey results demonstrate that efforts aimed at the restoration of city status are justified by the functional and spatial structure and public spaces of all the localities under study. The justification is not limited to historical justice, but it is also based on the fact that in most cases the functional and spatial structure of these localities is definitely different from that of a typical village. Typically, new towns are not artificial entities elevated to city status exclusively thanks to the political efforts of their mayors. The restitution process is largely based on restoring their former rank and setting the future development of these localities on the right track.

Taking into account the spatial/functional and social criteria, it has been concluded that Izbica has the best chance of regaining city status, followed by Turobin. Goraj has the most aesthetically attractive public space and an up-to-date local spatial development plan. Besides, the inhabitants clearly expressed their support for the restoration of municipal rights.

The survey was conducted in 2020. Since then, two of the localities under study have already regained their municipal rights: Goraj in 2021 and Izbica in 2022. This can be evidence of the diffusion of the idea of urbanism (cf. Krzysztofik & Dymitrow, 2015), particularly if the other localities – Turobin and Żółkiewka – regain their city status in the years to come. According to the 25 July 2022 Ordinance of the Council of Ministers, 15 localities are to be granted municipal rights on 1 January 2023, but the application submitted by Turobin in 2022 was rejected. The applications from Milejów and, earlier, Końskowola, were unsuccessful too. However, these rejections resulted from administrative or social issues rather than an inappropriate functional and spatial structure. The functional and spatial criteria, as well as the social criteria reflected in the support from residents, should be a significant part in the

efforts to obtain city status. Having an adopted local plan is also important (cf. Sokołowski, 2022). The fact of having municipal rights in the past is insufficient. City status offers opportunities for real development, but can also lead to the stagnation of a town (cf. Cudo & Rydzewski, 2017). Idealistic beliefs (“city status equals greater prestige”, “something to be proud of”) are often a manifestation of the aspirations of the local authorities. A clash between such aspirations and strong rural traditions can lead to divisions among residents. Therefore, it is crucial to secure the backing of the population and define the prospects of development after obtaining city status. The surveys made it possible to identify centers whose residents express support for the restitution of urban rights. In addition, they made it possible to assess public spaces and identify problems in their functioning. Public spaces are part of a place’s identity and, according to Zaniewska et. al. (2015), it is important to take care of a local identity in efforts for restituted towns which is undermined by investment projects inconsistent with the landscape and by the liquidation of historical sites. A new identity should not be understood exclusively in terms of tourism development even though the latter does offer opportunities (cf. Kosiński, 2000).

Finally, it should be noted that while the present research consists of case studies, it shows general trends occurring in all of Poland, similarly to efforts to gain health resort status (cf. Bernat & Harasiumiuk, 2019). The method used in this research makes it possible to assess the chances of a locality to regain municipal rights from the structural and functional perspective. It can be used for other localities provided that a greater percentage of inhabitants takes part in the survey.

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