

# General Comparison of the Impact of Local Spatial Development Plans and Development Conditions for small towns in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

## Abstract

Small towns constitute an essential element of the Polish urban landscape and a constituent of the material heritage of the country. Their natural features are consistent with the principles of sustainable development, which determine their potential. That said, nowadays small towns are experiencing an economic, social and spatial crisis.

Given the observed phenomena, it is appropriate to verify how the basic planning tool - Local Spatial Development Plans and the additional Development Conditions - affect the quality of space in small towns. To this end, a survey was conducted for a representative group of 42 Świętokrzyskie towns. Subject to analysis were the strategies used to regulate space (LSDPs, DPs, mixed) and the condition of space in small towns. The spatial assessment was made through local inspections, the observations of which were compared with a reference list of features, prepared through a synthesis of literature.

The survey proved that the general (related to planning) and detailed (related to individual elements) condition of space in towns is far from the reference model (and therefore inappropriate), and this effect is not affected by the spatial regulation method. On this

basis, it was concluded that it is not only the Decisions on Development Conditions, but also the Local Spatial Development Plans, that represent inappropriate tools regulating the development of small towns in their present legal form.

**Key words** towns | spatial planning | urban planning | local spatial development plan | development conditions

## Introduction

Small towns constitute a major element of the Polish urbanized landscape<sup>1</sup> and a substantial constituent of the material heritage<sup>2</sup>. Further, their natural urban and social features are consistent with many principles of sustainable development<sup>3</sup>. The contemporary development of

<sup>1</sup> H. Adamczewska-Wejchert, *Małe miasta: problemy urbanistyczne stale aktualne*, Warszawa 1986; P. Korcelli P. et al., *Ekspercki projekt koncepcji przestrzennego zagospodarowania kraju do roku 2033*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 22-25; P. Pedrycz, *Dom małomiasteczki. Potrzeba definicji w kontekście realizacji programu Mieszkanie Plus*, in: *Mieszkanie. Problem publiczny, społeczny czy prywatny? Problematyka najnowszych realizacji mieszkań społecznych na wynajem*, Warszawa 2018, p.45.

<sup>2</sup> B. Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy urbanistyczne na obszarze ziemi krakowskiej w XIII i XIV wieku, część I – Miasta Ziemi Krakowskiej, chronologia procesów osadniczych i typologia układów urbanistycznych* i część II – *Katalog lokacyjnych układów urbanistycznych*, Kraków 2004; D. Kłosek-Kozłowska, *Ochrona wartości kulturowych miast a urbanistyka*, Warszawa 2007.

<sup>3</sup> M.M. Edwards, A. Haines, *Evaluating Smart Growth: Implications for Small Communities*, "Journal of Planning

small towns can be stimulated by technological<sup>4</sup> and civilizational changes<sup>5</sup>. That said, nowadays small towns are experiencing an economic, social<sup>6</sup> and spatial crisis<sup>7</sup>.

In the context of the indicated potential of a small town, a spatial threat is the loss of “town identity”, or the characteristic morphological features that distinguishes this type of settlement from other centers (large cities, towns). The distinctiveness of towns as a settlement type has been repeatedly indicated<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, the aim of planning and designing activities in the space of small towns should be to maintain their spatial character - not only by protecting the historic substance, but also by transplanting its morphological features into new buildings. That does not always mean designing pseudo-historical architecture, or rather preserving the general typological logic of urban and architectural solutions.

The final development is influenced by

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Education and Research”, 2007, vol. 27, issue 1; P. Knox, H. Meyer, *Small town sustainability. Economic, social, and environmental innovation*, Basel 2013; A. Friedman, *Planning Small and Mid-Sized Towns: Designing and Retrofitting for Sustainability* Routledge, New York 2014; K. Mazur-Belzyt, *Współczesne podstawy rozwoju małych miast na przykładzie sieci miast Cittaslow*, „Problemy Rozwoju Miast. Kwartalnik Naukowy Instytutu Rozwoju Miast”, XI, 2014, no. 3.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bonenberg, *Przyszłość małych miast w kontekście rozwoju technologii informacyjnych i komunikacyjnych oraz komunikowania masowego*, in: *7ULAR - Odnowa Krajobrazu Miejskiego. Przyszłość miast średniej wielkości*, Gliwice, Łódź 2013.

<sup>5</sup> M. Castells, *Siła tożsamości*, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>6</sup> M. Bierca, et al., *Światła małego miasta. Jak się żyje w najmniejszych polskich miastach. Raport z badania jakościowego i ilościowego*, Warszawa 2017, 95-97.

<sup>7</sup> K. Mazur-Belzyt, op. cit.; J. Sepioł (coord.), *Przestrzeń życia Polaków – raport*, Warszawa 2014, pp. 45, 56.; A. Kowalewski, T. Markowski, P. Śleszyński (ed.), „Studia Komitetu Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju Polskiej Akademii Nauk”, Volume 182: *Studia nad chaosem przestrzennym*: Part I: A. Kowalewski, M. J. Nowak, *Chaos przestrzenny i prawo. Uwarunkowania, procesy, skutki, rekomendacje*, p. 173; Part II: A. Kowalewski, T. Markowski, P. Śleszyński (ed.), *Koszty chaosu przestrzennego*, p. 437, Part III: *Synteza. Uwarunkowania, skutki i propozycje naprawy chaosu przestrzennego*, p. 231, Warszawa 2018.

<sup>8</sup> K. Wejchert, *Miasteczko polskie jako zagadnienie urbanistyczne*, Warszawa 1947; S. Gzell, *Fenomen małomiejskości*, Warszawa 1987.

an innumerable number of conditions, including economic, social, political, and often also random factors. The complexity of these conditions and the difficulty in their objective examination do not exempt from the necessity of analyzing partial issues in individual fields. In this case, such a field are planning regulations.

The purpose of this article is to investigate whether the planning tools present in the Polish legal system, i.e. the Local Spatial Development Plan, as well as administrative decisions - Development Conditions, or DC - that are not directly planning tools, but fulfill such a role, are conducive to shaping a harmonious space in small towns. The adverse impact of DCs was repeatedly raised by studies dealing with spatial chaos in Poland. But in the light of the aforementioned spatial crisis and the general observations of researchers<sup>9</sup>, a thesis is put forward that Local Plans do not achieve good results as well, that is: **The elementary planning tools present in the Polish system (and the assisting “nonsystem” tools) are not conducive to maintaining the typical small-town spatial character.**

The current structure of the planning and architectural system in Poland is based on the following legal acts:

- Act on spatial planning and development (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 80, item 717, as amended) with the instruments specified therein;
- Construction Law (Journal of Laws 1994 No. 89 item 414 as amended) with the instruments specified therein;
- And additionally: The Act on the protection and guardianship of monuments (Journal of Laws of 2003 No. 162 item 1568 as amended), the Revitalization Act (Journal of Laws of 2015 item 1777), on real estate management (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 115, item 741), Nature and Landscape Protection

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<sup>9</sup> J. Sepioł (coord.), op. cit.; P. Śleszyński (coord.), A. Deregowska et al., *Analiza stanu i uwarunkowań prac planistycznych w gminach w 2017 roku*, Warszawa 2018.

Act (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 75, item 690) and the so-called Special Housing Act (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1496) and numerous other regulations.

The entire system can be essentially categorized into two spheres:

1. Spatial planning;
2. Location, design and completion of investments.

From the viewpoint of the considerations at the urban level, the former is more important; it is a sphere of legal and administrative regulations - from the national level to the local level - establishing the rules and conditions for designing and implementing investments. The nature of this sphere is regulatory and does not contain any decisive design solutions. The subject of this sphere is the community, and the object is the broadly understood environment of it.

The distinctive part of the Polish system is that it bears some hallmarks of hierarchism (like most systems in the world), but not entirely. It means that the detailed planning act must form part of the solutions adopted in the more general act, but only the lowest level (Local Spatial Development Plan) is binding on the investment project. Thus, what matters for an investment (construction initiative) are the provisions of the Local Spatial Development Plan for a given region, which at the time of adoption must comply with the provisions of the commune's Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development. This structure is to ensure synchronization of construction plans for the whole territory. However, the development of Local Plans is not obligatory and, consequently, most of the country's territory is not covered by these plans.

In the remaining area, investment plans are regulated by administrative decisions, the so-called Development Conditions, which are issued individually at the request of the investor, after the office has carried out an urban analysis of the neighborhood. Notably, the analysis takes

into account only the existing buildings, not the provisions of higher-order planning acts (in particular the Study). The study, which is compulsory and must cover the entire territory of the commune, is not an act of local law, and its findings are binding on the commune authorities only in the preparation of Local Plans. In this way, there emerge two very different paths of spatial regulation (and deregulation):

1. Top-down - by means of a hierarchical sequence of Plans and studies, the culmination of which is the LSDP;
2. Bottom-up - by means of a DC decision issued on the basis of an ad hoc urban planning analysis. Thus, the impact of these two different paths shall be the subject of this article.

## Method

### Research framework

The aim of the study was an indication of how the tools, which are elements of the Polish urban and architectural system, affect the space of Polish towns. This was taken forward for a representative sample of towns by comparing data on the applied urban instruments with the spatial effects of these regulations. They were assessed mainly through local visits.

The investigated area was the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. The choice was dictated by several reasons - first of all, local towns have a clear historical (location) structure, "archetypal" for most of Poland. Moreover, this is an area where there is no strong dominance of a big city. The capital of the voivodship - Kielce, has a slight "drainage" power, which cannot be compared to cities such as Warsaw or Krakow, which allows to consider towns in themselves, rather than as part of the metropolitan network of a large city.

The examination covered all 42 towns in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship meeting the determined criteria:

- Population up to 10,000;
- Historical origin (location);
- City rights at any historical point;
- No status of a capital of the county.

The study was performed in two stages:

1. Collection of data on spatial shaping tools used in these towns. Based on these figures, an initial quantitative analysis and selection of a detailed sample was performed (15 locations in three groups of 5);
2. Description and analysis of small-town spaces from the detailed sample in terms of matching the reference morphological features of a small town.

The last part consisted in comparing the observed spatial phenomena with the data on the planning instruments used, which allowed to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of these instruments.

#### Study of planning instruments

The use of the above-mentioned instruments in small towns of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship was one of the fundamental elements of the study. During the first stage, data was collected by sending inquiries to the following institutions:

- Municipal Offices;
  - County Administrative Offices;
- as well as consultations and obtaining additional information from:
- Office of the Province Monument Conservator;
  - Local Department of the National Heritage Institute;
  - a local branch of the Association of Polish Architects;
  - the Local Chamber of Polish Architects;
  - internet portals containing geodetic and planning data.

The enquiries concerned: the presence or absence of individual spatial policy instruments, in particular:

- Local Spatial Development Plans (how

many; adopted/considered, for which areas);

- Locational decisions: Decisions on Development Conditions (issued/negative) and Decisions on the Location of Public Purpose Investments;
- Building Permits (for the construction of new buildings and in general), which is the direct interest of this article, as well as additional instruments, which are not analyzed in this text:
  - Territorial entries to the Register of Monuments (for municipal layouts);
  - Landscape Resolutions resulting from the so-called Landscape Act;
  - Local Regeneration Agendas and Special Revitalization Zones resulting from the so-called Revitalization Act;
  - Conducted consultations/workshops (in cooperation with commercial entities, NGOs, public universities);
  - Tenders, competitions, other forms of procurement for design and construction works regarding the revitalization of public spaces in towns.

Data on building permits related in particular to permits for new constructions. In cases where it was impossible to obtain such data, the basis was the estimated number, which is the product of the count of all issued permits (including for demolition, reconstruction, expansion and all types of building facilities) and the 65% indicator calculated on the basis of information from municipalities which provided more detailed data.

All researched towns were analyzed in terms of the share of DCs in investment processes (which is the opposite of the share of the LSDP). As there are no information on the planning basis for issuance (LSDP or DC) in the Building Permit Registers (BPR), the DC share was calculated as the quotient of the number of Building Permits and the number of positively issued DCs in a given commune. Such an enumeration is represented by the entered DCI coefficient

(Development Conditions Index).

The DCI coefficient was used to distinguish groups of towns with various degrees of coverage under the Plans. It is an abstract factor (in particular, the value 1 does not mean that all building permits were issued on the basis of the BP - because not all of the building permits are "consumed", and not all BPRs must be preceded by the decisions of the DC or LSDP), but objectified, as the number of issued DCs refers to the dynamics of the investment process in a given commune, and not to the area or population in it. This is a simplified calculation based on the assumption that the more DCs are issued in relation to the Building Permits, the more of these permits are based on the DCs (and not on LSDPs).

During the next stage, research was necessary to confront the towns presenting extreme ways of regulating spatial development - i.e. (1) planned (based on LSDP) and (3) ad hoc (based on DC). For greater consistency within the above categories (the distance between extreme groups), they were joined by the category (2) "intermediate", with a mixed investment preparation strategy. Acknowledging that the share of LSDPs and DCs in the construction process in individual towns varies and changes continuously, the "dividing lines" have been drawn so as to divide the population into groups of similar size, while maintaining the greatest internal consistency in each of them. The only criterion was the DCI coefficient.

For the purposes of further analyses, five representative cities were selected from each of the above categories, based on the following criteria:

- Priority for towns included in the Register of Monuments;
- Disposing of/not disposing of city rights (in each group);
- Occurrence (in each group) of towns from the Kielce powiat - as located in the zone of influence of the main voivodeship

urban center.

The selected 15 towns were subjected to a detailed spatial analysis.

### Study of the condition of small-town space

The investigation covered the broadly understood space of selected towns. At the center of interest was both space on a small scale, perceived from the perspective of an individual, and the entire layout of the town. The condition and form of buildings and spatial relations were determined primarily by own local inspections (conducted in 2015-2018, objectified by an environmental interview - among architects and residents - and consultations with the local branch of the National Heritage Institute) and an analysis of the plans and photographs of the studied towns.

The adopted morphological method consisting in checking the presence of characteristic spatial features in relation to individual systems<sup>10</sup> was based on a synthetic proposal by Michał Witwicki and Krzysztof Pawłowski<sup>11</sup>, consisting in the analysis of historical centers in relation to: layout, public space, private and public buildings. The list of features, which is a peculiar "test" of the space in a small town, is included in Tables 2, 3 and 4. It is based on a list prepared by Sławomir Gzell<sup>12</sup>, but it has been modified (expanded) as a result of a synthesis of literature<sup>13</sup> and the author's

<sup>10</sup> M.R.G. Conzen, *Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis*, London 1960; K. Dziewoński, *Zagadnienie typologii morfologicznej miast w Polsce*. „Czasopismo Geograficzne”, Y. 33: 1962, no. 4, pp. 441-457.

<sup>11</sup> K. Pawłowski, M. Witwicki, *Problemy oceny wartości zabytkowej historycznych zespołów miejskich*, „Ochrona Zabytków”, R. 1968, no. 4 (83), pp. 3-12.

<sup>12</sup> S. Gzell S., op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> I. Drexler, *Odbudowanie wsi i miast na ziemi naszej*, Lwów, Warszawa, Kraków 1921; J. Pudelko, *Zagadnienie wielkości i proporcji rynków w badaniach nad rozplanowaniem niektórych miast Średniowiecznych*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Wrocławskiej”, no. 36, „Architektura”, z. 4, Wrocław 1960, s. 25-45; K. Pawłowski, *Urbanistyczno-konserwatorskie problemy małych miast i miasteczek Kielecczyzny*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Stowarzyszenia PAX”, 1977, no. 1/14; A. Berdecka, *Lokacje i zagospodarowanie miast królewskich w Małopolsce*

morphological analyses. Compliance or non-compliance with the reference features of small towns was the determining criterion for assessing the condition of the space of individual towns and their groups.

### Application of statutory instruments in Świętokrzyskie towns

#### Results

Table 1 shows a set of all 42 towns with basic geographic, administrative and demographic data, as well as information on the

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za Kazimierza Wielkiego (1333-1370), Warszawa 1982; eadem, *Lokacje miast małopolskich za Władysława Łokietka (1306-1333)*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XXXI 1983, no. 3; A. Dunin-Wąsowiczowa, *Uwarunkowania pomiarowe kształtu i wielkości średniowiecznych placów miejskich*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XL 1992; P. Urbańczyk, *Plac miejski – skutek czy warunek powstania miasta*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XL 1992, no. 3; R. Szczygieł, *Rola handlowa placów miejskich w średnich i małych miastach Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLI 1993, no. 3; Z. Morawski, *Funkcje religijne placów miejskich w średniowiecznej Polsce*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, XL 1992, no. 3; idem, *Miejskie układy przestrzenne, Architektura gotycka w Polsce*, pt.1, Warszawa 1995; F. Kiryk, *Urbanizacja Małopolski: województwo sandomierskie XIII-XVI wiek*, Kielce 1994; A.L. Jastrebeckaja, *Małe miasta: specyfika średniowiecznej urbanizacji w Europie*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLIII 1995, no. 1; K. Pawłowska, *Idea swojskości w urbanistyce i architekturze miejskiej*, Kraków 1996; H. Samsonowicz, *Ulica w mieście średniowiecznym: szlak, miejsce działań, przekaz informacji*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLVI 1998, no. 3-4; T. Zarębska, *Badania historyczno-urbanistyczne metodą analiz przestrzennych*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLIII 1995, no. 1; eadem, *Ewolucja zasad kształtowania ulic w miastach Polski przedrozbiorowej*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLVI 1998, no. 3-4; S. Gawlas, *Ulica jako przestrzeń społeczno-kulturowa w miastach polskich*, cz. II, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej”, R. XLVII 1999, no. 1-2; K. Głowacki, *Układy przestrzenne historycznych miast regionu sandomiersko-kieleckiego XIII-XX w.*, Kielce 2002; W. Komorowski, *Średniowieczne ratusze w Małopolsce i na ziemiach ruskich Korony*, in: *Civitas & Villa, Miasto i wieś w średniowiecznej Europie Środkowej*, Wrocław, Praha 2002; B. Krasnowolski, *Z badań nad rynkami i placami w planach urbanistycznych i programach lokacyjnych miast Małopolski*, in: *Wratislavia Antiqua. Studia z dziejów Wrocławia*, volume 13: *Ulica, plac i cmentarz w publicznej przestrzeni średniowiecznego i wczesnonowożytnego miasta Europy Środkowej*, Wrocław 2011; R. Eysymontt, *Wartościowanie i ochrona miasta średniowiecznego*, in: *Wartościowanie w ochronie i konserwacji zabytków*, Warszawa – Lublin 2012.

basic planning instruments used. It is evident that the differentiating criterion is the presence and number of valid Local Plans: 7 out of 42 communes do not have any Local Plan. There are 174 Plans in force in all towns, which is on average over 4 per commune. The proportion of “planned” areas is not, however, a direct translation of the number of Plans. The biggest share of areas covered by the local spatial development plan occurs in towns that adopt one Plan for the entire area of the commune.

The observation of the areas of Local Plans in individual communes suggests that the authorities adopting them are guided by specific strategies for determining their scope. These are:

- **Global** – the whole commune is covered with one Local Plan, possibly divided into several parts - 7 communes;
- **Administrative** – the plans are adopted for the entire areas of individual village councils or towns that are components of a municipality according to the administrative division - 9 municipalities;
- **Problem** – the Plan covers fragments of the commune’s area with potentially significant development features - e.g., a historic center, new developments. In the extreme case, it takes the form of an “intervention” - when the plan covers a single plot, whose development according to its guidelines is necessary for some reason - 10 communes;
- **Infrastructural** and geographical – in which it is important to plan not so much the development but the features of the infrastructure and landscape, e.g., mines, water reservoirs - 3 communes;
- **Mixed** – 6 communes.

From the point of view of this study, the most important areas of the analyzed communes are their centers – i.e. historic towns in which the communes have a seat. The presence or absence of local spatial development plans for these areas was another examined category. Out of all towns, only 16 had such a Plan. The additional three had

a Plan for fragments of the historical core.

In areas without any Plans, the functions and parameters of development are determined on the basis of the DC. The number of such decisions issued (in 2014, 2015 and 2016) was another subject of the study. The number of DCs issued in communes ranges from 0 to 420. The study also covered the Decisions on the Location of Public Purpose Investments, which are the public equivalent of "private" DCs. Their number varies from 0 to 91. A large number of issued DCs may indicate a considerable investment traffic in a given town but also the lack of Local Plans to control this traffic.

The data collected in the next column of the table indicate the number of Building Permits (BPs) issued in a given commune in the last three years (2014-2016). These numbers show in an objective manner the dynamics of construction investment, which is an important subject of the study. The number of permits shows the count of new buildings under construction in a given commune and represents a reference point (better than the commune's population itself) for the scale of the issue of DCs.

The last column is the coefficient (DCI) is meant for evaluating the share of DCs in the total investment and construction traffic in a given town (as a ratio of the number of issued BPs to positively considered DCs). The lower the value, the more significant the presence of the DCs; the higher that number, the smaller the influence of the DCs and the greater of Local Plans. The research results allow for determination of the division between groups of towns representing different spatial planning strategies.

### Designation of working groups

The results of the DCI coefficients allowed to determine limiting values (0.75/1.5), dividing the population into three collections of similar numbers, while maintaining the maximum internal consistency in each of them. Consequently, a sample of cities was selected

for a detailed spatial analysis, synthetically presented in the next section of the article. The sample for detailed research was selected in each category according to the criteria described in the introduction. And so, three categories were distinguished with groups of five towns representing them (marked in *italics*):

- **Ad hoc** – the share of DCs in the investment process is dominant (DCI up to 0.75) - towns: *Bodzentyn, Chęciny, Ćmielów, Działoszyce, Iwaniska, Krasocin, Nowa Słupia, Nowy Korczyn, Opatowiec, Pacanów, Skalbmierz, Suchedniów, Tarłów, Waśniów, Wąchock, Wiślica, Wodzisław;*

- **Intermediate** – the share of DCs in the investment process is evident (DCI from 0.75 to 1.5) - towns: *Chmielnik, Fałków, Gowarczów, Klimontów, Łagów, Oleśnica, Osiek, Ożarów, Pierzchnica, Radoszyce, Stąporków, Stopnica, Zawichost;*

- **Planned** – the share of DCs in the investment process is, at best, negligible (WSE above 1.5) - towns: *Bogoria, Daleszyce, Koprzywnica, Kunów, Małogoszcz, Oksa, Połaniec, Raków, Secemin, Sędziszów, Sobków, Szydłów.*

### The condition of small-town space in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

An analysis of space was conducted in terms of conforming to the reference morphological model of a small town. The generalized observations were tabulated with a predefined list of typical spatial features. For each of the features, its presence/fulfillment in the examined towns was determined. Within each of the three groups of towns, a generalization was made for individual features. In the further part, the results were generalized and described - taking into account the analysis of towns also outside the specific group.

### Generalization - layout

Besides the towns subject to a detailed analysis and description, the examination covered other towns - in a simplified manner, through

Table 1.

no.	Name	Powiat	Resident of comm.	Resident Town	Area of commune [km <sup>2</sup> ]	Area of city [km <sup>2</sup> ]	LSDP	Coverage strategy	LSDP center	Issued total DCs	Rejection total DCs	Decisions on public purpose investment premises	Building permit	DC coefficient
1	Bodzentyn	kielecki	9495	2227	160	8	1	section of town	-	420	14	no data	148	0.35
2	Bogoria	staszowski	8037	1081	123	-	2	whole commune	+	0	no data	0	109	∞
3	Chęciny	kielecki	14856	4332	127	14	19	various	-	403	8	91	172	0.43
4	Chmielnik	kielecki	11332	3766	142	8	+	various	fragm.	129	no data	28	109	0.84
5	Ćmielów	ostrowiecki	7355	2973	118	14	6	village councils and infrastructure	-	61	0	21	23	0.38
6	Daleszyce	kielecki	15647	2911	222	16	25	village councils	-	88	0	10	302	3.43
7	Działoszyce	pińczowski	5150	914	106	-	-	-	-	103	0	no data	21	0.20
8	Fałków	konecki	4451	1050	132	-	1	sections of town	-	95	1	21	91	0.96
9	Gowarczów	konecki	4775	1405	101	-	1	mine	-	121	5	11	93	0.77
10	Iwaniska	opatowski	6940	1370	105	-	3	deposits and urban center	-	116	1	13	55	0.47
11	Klimontów	sandomierski	8322	1947	99	-	2	almost the entire commune	+	106	2	18	86	0.81
12	Koprzywnica	sandomierski	6861	1600	69	18	1	urban center	+	53	7	no data	91	1.72
13	Krasocin	włoszczowski	10765	1119	192	-	17	various	+	192	0	30	134	0.70
14	Kunów	ostrowiecki	9857	3000	114	7	1	whole commune	+	0	0	0	37	∞
15	Łągów	kielecki	7020	1584	113	-	14	village councils	-	89	13	no data	95	1.07
16	Małogoszcz	jędrzejowski	11773	3814	146	10	1	whole commune	+	0	0	0	127	∞
17	Nowa Słupia	kielecki	9800	1359	86	-	2	-	-	190	8	28	119	0.63
18	Nowy Korczyn	buski	6095	979	117	-	-	-	-	88	0	13	55	0.62
19	Oksa	jędrzejowski	4709	792	91	-	2	whole commune	+	1	0	0	46	45-50
20	Oleśnica	staszowski	3954	1852	53	-	-	-	-	76	0	15	59	0.77
21	Opatowiec	kazimierski	3334	309	69	-	2	section of town	-	50	0	4	17	0.34

22	Osiek	staszowski	7917	2047	129	18	1	town	+	128	0	no data	94	0.75
23	Ożarów	opatowski	10951	4610	183	8	12	various	+	84	0	5	71	0.85
24	Pacanów	buski	7496	1105	125	-	1	single plot	-	125	0	12	77	0.61
25	Pierzchnica	kielecki	4656	1059	105	-	4	various	fragm.	156	3	32	125	0.80
26	Polanec	staszowski	11991	8213	75	17	7	sections of town	+	62	0	22	133	2.15
27	Radoszyce	konecki	9095	3218	147	-	2	villages	-	203	1	32	173	0.85
28	Raków	kielecki	5715	1074	191	-	1	whole commune	+	0	0	0	93	∞
29	Secemin	włoszczowski	4893	1264	163	-	6	towns	+	0	0	0	59	∞
30	Sędziszów	jędrzejowski	12979	6674	146	8	4	various	+	0	0	1	145	∞
31	Skalbierz	kazimierski	6710	1312	88	7	1	reservoir	-	105	0	13	62	0.59
32	Sobków	jędrzejowski	8509	1015	144	-	8	village councils	+	61	1	no data	102	1.67
33	Stąporków	konecki	17374	5705	232	11	4	various, sections of town	-	184	0	26	218	1.18
34	Stopnica	buski	7759	1202	125	4	2	sections of town	-	143	1	20	107	0.75
35	Suchedniów	skarżyski	10342	8490	75	60	11	various, sections of town	fragm.	94	1	17	62	0.66
36	Szydłów	staszowski	4844	1114	108	-	2	town	+	26	2	12	102	3.93
37	Tarłów	opatowski	5416	933	164	-	-	-	-	65	0	9	34	0.52
38	Waśniów	ostrowiecki	6979	457	112	-	-	-	-	160	3	7	29	0.18
39	Wąchock	starachowicki	2791	4140	82	16	-	-	-	100	0	10	60	0.60
40	Wiślica	buski	5700	501	100	-	-	-	-	91	0	6	51	0.56
41	Wodzisław	jędrzejowski	7203	1142	177	-	6	village councils	-	163	3	11	92	0.57
42	Zawichost	sandomierski	4582	1753	80	20	2	whole commune	+	53	1	8	44	0.82

a survey and an local inspection. The following comments therefore apply to all 42 towns.

The most general and common observation regarding small towns is their uncontrolled spread (“spilling”). Most often it consists in the construction of a large number of detached houses along the exit roads.

The generally good preservation of the original urban layout in the very center of the town is also evident. The area of particular interest are further street blocks, which retain many clear features of the structure typical of a small town, but are also influenced by the functional influence of modern buildings – therefore, they are relaxed, they lose their expressiveness. The typical “interior layout” of a town is disturbed here - the relation between open and closed spaces.

Market squares continue to play the role of the most important public spaces in Polish towns. However, their former functional and symbolic richness has significantly diminished. First, many important public buildings were moved to the outskirts of cities. Secondly, the market square has lost its commercial function - even in the towns which hold fairs, they are located in suburban squares intended exclusively for this function. In some markets there is only “pure” trade in souvenirs and small-scale fruit, most often on the occasion of mass events.

On the other hand, the markets remained urban “salons”, and even more so than they were in the past - they are generally aesthetic, well-groomed and representative spaces. In order to adapt them to this function, most of them underwent the so-called revitalization, understood in this case as far-reaching reconstruction (but without the surrounding buildings) and development. Most of the examined towns have “revitalized” their market square, few have started but not yet finished the process. In general, the purpose of the intervention is to restore historical appearance and character, but not function. It is related to the felling of trees that were re-planted (but

already historically, since the start of the 1930s). However, it is not uncommon to keep several specimens or replace old trees with new, smaller ones. The pavements made of paving slabs and asphalt are also replaced with slabs and granite cubes. Therefore, there is an image dissonance between the new, “sterile” market square and the surrounding buildings of different architectural quality and technical condition.

The replacement of surface is to unify the market square paving, restoring its original single-dimensional nature. In reality, however, this effect is superficial. In terms of organization, the markets retain their modernist system consisting in the separation of movement and function, and only the fencing of individual parts has become more subtle.

Non-market open spaces are dominated by communication. The organization of traffic in whole towns is based on functional segregation and road signs (which also overly interfere with their visual appearance), which does not favor small-scale mobility and spontaneity of urban life (so desired in the slow movement). Similarly, it is currently difficult to assign the status of a square grouping the local community to the surroundings of parish churches; separated by fences, they are basically just a bypass of increasingly closed temples. They have become an institutional space – a church, but not public.

### **Public buildings**

In line with its historical character, the service and commercial function in today’s towns usually occurs in old residential buildings at the market square where life is focused. Most of the ground floor are occupied by commercial and service points - these are mainly small grocery stores, “general purpose” stores, confectioneries, hairdressers and, less and less often, small eateries. In larger towns with a better socio-economic situation, such as Chęciny or Małogoszcz, services are also present further from the market square, in street blocks. In most cities, small trade is

Table 2. Group A, "Ad hoc": Bodzentyn, Chęciny, Nowy Korczyn, Wąchock, Wiślica

Characteristic + present / partially present - absent	Bodzentyn	Chęciny	Nowy Korczyn	Wąchock	Wiślica	Group A Ad hoc
Evident separation of the urban structure from the surroundings	/	+	/	-	+	/
Loosening the layout as we continue moving away from the main square	+	/	/	/	/	/
Profile with a fragmented geometry of the roofs and greenery with the dominant feature of the tower, visible urban and suburban zones	+	+	/	-	+	/
Legibility of the original regular layout	+	+	+	/	/	/
Hierarchy of open spaces	+	+	+	/	+	+
Multitude of alleys and irregularity of secondary public spaces	+	+	/	-	+	/
Interior layout - perception of public spaces as interiors with annexes	+	+	-	/	+	/
Evident separation (building or wall) between public and private space	+	+	/	-	/	/
Close perspectives of viewing and the ability to perceive details	+	+	+	/	+	+
Multifunctionality of public spaces - a small number of fixed elements of equipment	/	+	+	-	+	/
Spontaneous mobility, without segregating different means of transport	/	/	-	-	-	-
Presence of decorative and recreational greenery in the urban zone	+	-	+	/	/	/
Reserving a large scale for community-wide (public) buildings	-	-	+	/	+	/
Location of the town hall in a central place - in the market square	-	+	-	-	-	-
Location of the church in a central place - in the market area	+	/	+	-	+	/
Highlighting the importance of a public building by an element of considerable height or monumental architecture	+	/	/	-	-	-
Tenement typology of a single-family town house	+	+	/	/	+	/
The height of the building depends on the degree of the city's development, usually one or two storeys, exceptionally three.	+	+	+	+	+	+
Total ( $\Sigma = 90$ )						45 + 26 / 19 -

Table 3. Group B, "Intermediate": Klimontów, Łagów, Pierzchnica, Stopnica, Zawichost

Characteristic + present / partially present - absent	Klimontów	Łagów	Pierzchnica	Stopnica	Zawichost	Group B
Evident separation of the urban structure from the surroundings	-	-	/	/	+	-
Loosening the layout as we continue moving away from the main square	+	+	+	/	-	/
Profile with a fragmented geometry of the roofs and greenery with the dominant feature of the tower, visible urban and suburban zones	/	/	-	+	/	-
Legibility of the original regular layout	/	/	+	+	/	/
Hierarchy of open spaces	/	+	+	+	-	/
Multitude of alleys and irregularity of secondary public spaces	/	/	/	/	+	/
Interior layout - perception of public spaces as interiors with annexes	+	/	/	/	-	-
Evident separation (building or wall) between public and private space	+	-	/	+	/	/
Close perspectives of viewing and the ability to perceive details	+	-	+	+	/	/
Multifunctionality of public spaces - a small number of fixed elements of equipment	+	+	/	+	-	/
Spontaneous mobility, without segregating different means of transport	-	/	/	-	-	-
Presence of decorative and recreational greenery in the urban zone	+	+	/	/	-	/
Reserving a large scale for community-wide (public) buildings	+	+	/	/	/	/
Location of the town hall in a central place - in the market square	-	+	-	-	-	-
Location of the church in a central place - in the market area	/	+	-	+	/	/
Highlighting the importance of a public building by an element of considerable height or monumental architecture	/	-	-	-	-	-
Tenement typology of a single-family town house	+	/	/	+	-	/
The height of the building depends on the degree of the city's development, usually one or two storeys, exceptionally three.	+	/	/	+	/	/
Total ( $\Sigma = 90$ )						31 + 36 / 23 -

Table 4. Group C, "Planned": Daleszyce, Koprzywnica, Małogoszcz, Raków, Szydłów

Characteristic + present / partially present - absent	Daleszyce	Koprzywnica	Małogoszcz	Raków	Szydłów	Group C Planned
Evident separation of the urban structure from the surroundings	/	/	/	/	+	/
Loosening the layout as we continue moving away from the main square	/	-	-	+	+	-
Profile with a fragmented geometry of the roofs and greenery with the dominant feature of the tower, visible urban and suburban zones	-	/	/	/	+	-
Legibility of the original regular layout	/	+	+	+	+	+
Hierarchy of open spaces	+	+	/	+	+	+
Multitude of alleys and irregularity of secondary public spaces	/	+	/	/	+	/
Interior layout - perception of public spaces as interiors with annexes	+	+	/	+	+	+
Evident separation (building or wall) between public and private space	-	/	/	+	+	/
Close perspectives of viewing and the ability to perceive details	-	/	/	/	+	/
Multifunctionality of public spaces - a small number of fixed elements of equipment	+	+	+	+	+	+
Spontaneous mobility, without segregating different means of transport	-	/	/	/	/	-
Presence of decorative and recreational greenery in the urban zone	-	/	+	+	+	/
Reserving a large scale for community-wide (public) buildings	-	+	/	/	+	/
Location of the town hall in a central place - in the market square	+	+	-	-	+	/
Location of the church in a central place - in the market area	-	+	/	/	/	-
Highlighting the importance of a public building by an element of considerable height or monumental architecture	/	/	+	-	-	-
Tenement typology of a single-family town house	-	/	+	+	/	/
The height of the building depends on the degree of the city's development, usually one or two storeys, exceptionally three.	/	+	+	+	+	+
Total ( $\Sigma = 90$ )						42 + 34 / 14 -

currently threatened by large convenience stores and discount food stores operating in large-scale facilities located on the outskirts of the old center, with a scale and form alien to local, traditional buildings.

The function of the town hall - the seat of local government authorities - remains important. Contrary to the situation of churches, their social role does not translate into due rank in space. The physical representation of this authority, the town hall building, generally loses its symbolic role (as a sign of the status of power, representativeness, independence, freedom, aspiration or prosperity), fulfilling only the functional role of an office building and a "window" for dealing with matters. Its location in the city, external appearance and internal organization are subordinated to purely practical needs, and often result from a combination of cases and possibilities.

In history, the central location of the town hall played a key role - meanwhile, out of the 15 towns examined in detail, none of them has a town hall located in the middle of the market square; it is located in the market frontage in only four (Chęciny, Daleszyce, Szydłów, Łagów). In some, it adjoins a secondary public space (the second market square), but is usually located in the further quarters of the town, in a place not distinguished by spatial values, but determined by the accessibility and capacity of the area as well as convenient communication. The Commune Offices in the examined towns, entered in area in the register of monuments, are rarely located in historic buildings; these include only Offices in Chęciny and Klimontów. Most often they are occupied by buildings from the 1960s and 1970s. Only one of the towns in the detailed group (Łagów) has completed a new town hall.

The school is a public building of considerable importance. This function is most often performed in the suburbs as a free-standing building of a dominant scale (especially if it has a recently erected gymnasium), creating competition for historical dominants in the

discussed towns (e.g. Chęciny, Działoszyce, Klimontów, Wąchock, Wiślica). Its layout is subordinated to the convenience of access and parking as well as the location of sports facilities. In this case, the peripherality itself is not unequivocally negative - this function does not have to represent the entire commune. However, as an important part of life, it deserves an exposed location. The principles of shaping the panorama would also indicate that buildings of larger dimensions should be placed closer to the compositional center of the town. In this context, it is worth mentioning the example of Bodzentyn, where the school occupies several neighboring tenement houses. Such a solution not only gives the property a proper rank, but also enlivens the market space by introducing a large number of users. That said, the authorities perceive this location as unfavorable - mainly due to the inability to build the necessary sports infrastructure in its immediate vicinity.

#### **Private - residential housing**

Housing construction, as the basic substance of every city, directly reflects its condition. New or well-kept old houses testify to the vitality of the town; vacancies and ruins mark its demise. Observing today's Polish towns, we meet both cases. At the same time, the differentiation between individual centers is surprisingly large. In some homes, the number of homes in decline is higher than those built or refurbished, while in others the opposite is true. Despite this diversity, there are some common phenomena: buildings in street blocks, i.e. within the old city core, but not in the very center, are in the worst condition. There are many neglected, dilapidated and abandoned houses here. The condition of the houses near the market square is usually better. It is true that there are also vacancies, but the buildings in the exposed location are so valuable (in the economic and image sense) that they are generally kept in good condition. It is also not uncommon to find

completely new buildings - not recreating the historical development; they are usually objects with a service function. New residential buildings are rarely located in historic centers, although there are a few cases here and there (e.g. in Wiślica). Expansion of new buildings takes place in the suburbs. This expansion progresses in two steps:

- Spontaneously - new single-family houses are built along the existing outlets of communication routes (this applies to most of the examined towns, a clear example of which is Daleszyce), which in an uncontrolled way deforms the entire body of the city, giving it a star-shaped form;
- In a planned manner, after the self-government authorities draw conclusions from uncontrolled development. New buildings appear in areas specially designated in the Local Plan, de-agriculturalized and equipped with the necessary infrastructure.

There are small rectangular plots of land designated there, allowing for the construction of standard single-family houses. The image of such housing estates (present, for example, in Pierzchnica) does not differ far from the suburbs of large Polish cities in its characteristics. These are extensive monocultures of single-family houses with quite diverse architecture, however, fitting into a certain model. The only public space are access roads, often without pavements. In turn, the private space associated with them is characterized by considerable "publicity" due to the location of the gardens around the centrally set house, which opens them up to the street and neighboring properties. Such a manner of developing plots, combined with a relatively small size, creates plenty of residual, incomplete spaces next to buildings, which only fulfill the role of necessary distances provided for in the construction regulations. Nevertheless, based on the dynamics of the location of new single-family housing, it can be concluded that there is continued interest in the urbanization of small-

town communes.

Another phenomenon, although relatively rare in small towns, is a multi-family block of flats. Among the thoroughly analyzed towns, the cases of Chęciny and Małogoszcz are exceptional. In these towns, taking advantage of the economic boom of the middle PRL, several-block housing estates (typical blocks of 3-4 floors) were erected outside the old town centers, with a free urban layout characteristic of the 1970s.

For the purpose of the greatest possible generalization, the observed phenomena have been tabulated with the previously identified typical features of a small town. Table 5 evidently shows that contemporary spatial phenomena are far from desirable.

## Conclusions

### Research results and confirmation of the thesis

It is difficult to verify the direct agency of planning instruments towards spatial phenomena - at least in a good sense, i.e.: to what extent is the condition of the space a result of specific regulations? The final form of space is the result of the activity of numerous entities (both public and private, as well as accidental factors) that implement their intentions. Each of these entities is the "cause" of a fragment of the whole, which is the town space. Planning instruments play the role of a regulator (and sometimes a catalyst) of these processes, and this role should be "accounted for". As a preliminary remark, a thesis was put forward concerning the Act on Spatial Planning and Development and the Local Plans and Development Conditions which it invoked, as not conducive to maintaining the typical spatial character of a small town.

Despite the inherently subjective esthetic assessment, the towns were analyzed in terms of their space matching the set of previously formulated exemplary features. This analysis has shown conclusively that towns usually develop in ways that contradict their history and identity.

Tabela 5.

Characteristic + present / partially present - absent	Group A Ad hoc	Group B Intermediate	Group C Planned	świętokrzyskie (PL) Voivodeship
Evident separation of the urban structure from the surroundings	/	-	/	-
Loosening the layout as we continue moving away from the main square	/	/	-	/
Profile with a fragmented geometry of the roofs and greenery with the dominant feature of the tower, visible urban and suburban zones	/	-	-	/
Legibility of the original regular layout	/	/	+	/
Hierarchy of open spaces	+	/	+	+
Multitude of alleys and irregularity of secondary public spaces	/	/	/	/
Interior layout - perception of public spaces as interiors with annexes	/	-	+	/
Evident separation (building or wall) between public and private space	/	/	/	/
Close perspectives of viewing and the ability to perceive details	+	/	/	/
Multifunctionality of public spaces - a small number of fixed elements of equipment	/	/	+	/
Spontaneous mobility, without segregating different means of transport	-	-	-	-
Presence of decorative and recreational greenery in the urban zone	/	/	/	/
Reserving a large scale for community-wide (public) buildings	/	/	/	/
Location of the town hall in a central place - in the market square	-	-	/	-
Location of the church in a central place - in the market area	/	/	-	/
Highlighting the importance of a public building by an element of considerable height or monumental architecture	-	-	-	-
Tenement typology of a single-family town house	/	/	/	/
The height of the building depends on the degree of the city's development, usually one or two storeys, exceptionally three.	+	/	+	+
Total ( $\Sigma = 54$ )				8 + 32 / 14 -

The spatial phenomena encountered therein are inappropriate (morphologically alien), and the final visual effect leaves a lot of room for improvement.

The analysis of the town space in three groups representing a different official approach to the investment regulation process showed that individual groups are similar in terms of spatial quality. It has been observed that the Ad hoc group and the Planned group obtained a similar result of in the spatial assessment, and the presence of the Plans is often associated with inappropriate forms of development. Neither a large number nor a large area of plans guarantee obtaining satisfactory spatial effects.

In the analyzed cases, no significant qualitative difference was observed between the towns regulating the space by means of the LSDP, nor the DC. What is interesting is that the relatively worst assessment of the state of space falls on the intermediate group. This trend may follow from indecision about choosing a spatial regulation strategy, or simply a lack thereof.

After proving the thesis, the issues of instruments resulting from the Act on Spatial Planning and Development should be analyzed in greater detail. The issues reflected below refer directly to the phenomena observed during the study of the towns and the interviews that took place during the research, but they are not a general assessment of planning instruments.

### Local Spatial Development Plan

Information obtained from representatives of local governments indicate the basic flaws of Local Plans, which are common reasons for ceasing their application. The most important drawback is a lengthy and complex procedure that does not guarantee a good effect - many municipalities, after the adoption of the labor-intensive and costly Plan, encountered problems that were a direct result of its drawbacks. One can suppose that this is a consequence of the low quality of the study, resulting from the

selection of designers in the tender procedure with the use of the lowest price criterion.

An equally frequently reported problem is the rigidity of planning records, which causes the commune's inability to adapt to the changing socio-economic conditions and even to take advantage of the investment opportunities. The functionalist planning priority is also revealed in the difficulties in defining the final destination of the multi-functional areas of the historic center. In LSDP, for statutory compliance (examined by the Voivode) and in order to prepare a financial forecast, it is necessary to clearly specify the target function of buildings, e.g. natural small-town simultaneity and interchangeability of use.

The above-mentioned drawbacks and potential obsolescence of the Plan are difficult to remove as they require repeating the entire multi-stage planning procedure. Such rigidity of provisions does not correspond to the nature of investing in small towns, where the basic forces are small private owners. A common solution to this problem is very permissive, general regulation of the areas of the Plan. However, this causes a rather unlikely effectiveness of its provisions.

An equally important problem is the high costs of plot acquisition, which appear immediately after the adoption of the Plan and must be included in the municipal budget draft. These expenses are not compensated by the planning pension, which in practice is calculated using the minimum percentage rates.

Farther, the discrepancy between the number of Plans and the share of the municipal area covered by them, as well as the nature and manner of delineating the areas of the Plans, show a great freedom in using this tool. On the one hand, this is an advantage of LSDPs, as it indicates universality, but on the other hand it proves that the role and function of the LSDP in a spatial shaping system (and thus its "identity") is unclear: since the Plan can in a general manner regulate the entire area of the commune (like

a “strengthened” Study) or provide very detailed accounts of the development of a single plot (such as the decision about the DC), it raises doubts as to whether its statutory framework and its actual meaning have been sufficiently specified. Despite describing the required scope of the Local Spatial Development Plan project in the relevant regulation (Journal of Laws 03.164 of August 26, 2003), in practice there are various standards regarding the depth and detail of the spatial planning process.

As regards the aesthetic layer, the plans are not able to enforce satisfactory results of individual investments, as they operate with (at most) objective parameters such as: height, width of facade, roof angle, choice of colors. Within the framework of generally defined dimensions, many solutions are possible, including those that are contrary to the local tradition, color, logic and typology.

### **Development Conditions**

The Development Conditions Tool is recognized by the design environment (especially town planners and architects) as one of the underlying causes of spatial chaos in Poland. Despite the undeniable flaws and proven harmfulness, the in-depth analysis of the situation of small towns does not allow us to unambiguously attribute all “blame” for the poor condition of space specifically to them.

The key threat resulting from the DC is the lack of any superior control over the urbanization process. The study does not refer to the DC and even in areas where this document prohibits development, it is possible to obtain a favorable decision. It is therefore a mechanism that contradicts the very idea and the necessity of urban planning. Its existence and functioning carry the message that “you can build basically anywhere, as long as it is related to the parameters of the surrounding buildings”. In a specific dimension, such an approach leads to an overflow of buildings, but also to its “dilution”: in order

to mitigate the possible adverse impact of the investment on the space, and at the same time upon the inability to refuse to issue a decision, low parameters are determined, which aim at extensiveness, distance from the street, and creating anti-urban conditions. There is also an averaging of parameters, which, admittedly, prevents abuse and excessive exposure of new facilities, but also eliminates any urban composition, leading to the formation of the so-called “carpet development”.

On the other hand, the Development Conditions are considered to be a flexible (susceptible to local influences) convenient tool conducive to investment, although the related urban analysis procedure appears to be a significant current burden on communal offices.

### **Inference Restrictions**

In this study, we omitted numerous conditions that have a major impact on the well-being of towns, in particular: the local economy and the labor market, social structure and other social and civilization processes, especially tourism. Another question, which is no less important, are changes in cultural patterns and the following changing dominant typologies of buildings. It especially pertains the increasing popularity (or even domination) of the detached single-family house (villa) type, which is crowding out the traditional, more economical and ecological compact types.

Taking such conditions into account and comparing them with spatial data could bring additional conclusions. However, this would require a broad interdisciplinary analysis that exceeds the scope of this study.

Another constraint is excluding the quality of the LSDP and including only its “zero-one” presence or absence. Considering the qualitative scope would shift the focus of this study from the analysis of tools to analysis of the working methods of individual professionals. Meanwhile, just the mere quantitative analysis

gives an accurate picture of a given planning instrument, because it allows to become acquainted with it in practical terms (far from perfect, but meeting formal requirements). In analyzing the LSDP tool, it should be expected that it will not always be implemented as accurately as possible. Sometimes the poor quality of the Plans (and other planning documents) proves not only the poor skills of the contractors who prepare them and the objective obstacles they encounter, but also the inadequate specification of the requirements, standards and scope of these instruments.

### Conclusions

The study consisted in a multiple comparison between specific data sets, which have different relationships with each other. These sets are primarily:

- A set of typical features of a small-town space that represents a benchmark;
- A set of spatial policy instruments constituting the cause (along with

demographic, economic, social, cultural and technological phenomena) of the observed phenomena;

- A set of spatial phenomena, which is a direct object of observation and constitutes the effect of the small-town involved processes and used instruments.

To conclude the research, it should be stated that the urban and architectural system bears partial responsibility for the poor condition of the space in Polish towns. It does not provide adequate instruments to control the spatial development of communes or does not require their proper application. The problem lies not only in the lack of the obligation to prepare local spatial development plans (resulting in their small number) but also in their very nature.

Under such circumstances, further in-depth studies are necessary, both of the LSDP and the DC (e.g. examining the relationship between the detailed provisions of the Plans and the spatial effect) and on other elements (instruments) of the planning system (e.g. SUIKZP, Landscape Resolutions, Revitalization tool, etc.).

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