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MANAGING OF TYPES OF FUNCTIONS POLISH SMALL TOWNS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT: The article is related to the background analysis of the development dilemmas and problems of small towns. The quantitative situation of small towns in Poland was included, as well as a recognition of their functional types and identification of development barriers and dilemmas. And its management challenges. Small towns are important polycentric development centres, being a bridge between large agglomerations and rural areas. The article aims to attempt a typology of small towns in terms of their functions. To better understand the existing types of towns, the case study method and the analysis of literature and existing achievements were used, based on which new functional types of small towns were selected.

KEYWORDS: small towns, types of towns, development problems and dilemmas, management

Introduction

The development of urbanisation around the world is reaching unprecedented proportions. In the modern world, the majority of citizens live in cities, and the urbanisation rate of 50% was exceeded at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In addition to large urban centers, agglomerations, and rapidly growing megalopolises, to which many scientific publications have been devoted, small towns with a population of less than 50,000 inhabitants are particularly interesting research material. Often, their development opportunities are closely related to the types of functions performed by these settlement units. The article aims to analyse the various functions performed by small urban centres in the context of development opportunities.

Small towns are an extremely important component of the polycentric structure of the country because, from the local perspective, they are development poles. The core of the finances is the revenues of municipalities and possible compensatory subsidies for cities with lower incomes. However, the range of income is very large – according to the vice-president of the Union of Polish Towns Eugeniusz Gołembiewski (Parchimowicz, 2015). Different levels of income, diverse locations of small towns in the Polish space, and various social, population, cultural, and organisational potentials increase the range of individual approaches to the subject of development problems. A certain attempt to answer the discernment of these problems is to draw up a typology and generate types of small towns that will allow us to understand the development path of a given urbanised area. In the article, an attempt is made to identify types of small cities based on the method of analysing individual cases and on the analysis of literature addressing this issue. The developmental challenges faced by cities necessitate a personalised approach to each city, involving an analysis of its specific circumstances, followed by the synthesis of similar cases and the identification of common characteristics that unite and classify individual cities into relatively homogeneous groups (typologies). The literature in the field serves as an additional means of validation, with the authors of this article cross-referencing the newly devised typologies with existing typologies found in the literature, particularly with the typology established by Professor Grzegorz Węclawowicz, as presented in his publication titled “Social Geography of Cities.” (Węclawowicz, 2003).

Previous scientific research on this matter has predominantly encompassed two distinct streams of inquiry. Firstly, there has been a focus on city typologies (not exclusively limited to small cities), entailing the classification of cities and the adoption of various typological criteria. Such research has been conducted by scholars such as Węclawowicz (2003), Shrestha and Rijal (2017), and Jerczyński (1997). On the other hand, there has emerged a strand of research exclusively dedicated to small cities, wherein knowledge about the developmental challenges of small cities has been deepened through monographs and case studies,

as exemplified by publications authored by Bański et al. (2016) and Czarnecki (2012). This article endeavours to amalgamate both of these approaches, constituting a somewhat innovative perspective. In the 2022 issue of the *Geographical Review*, an article was published that delved into considerations regarding the classification of small cities (Bański, 2022). The main objective guiding the authors of this publication is to survey the developmental challenges faced by small cities and, based on this examination, formulate a typology.

Typology of small towns

The criterion for distinguishing a group of small towns is their population, which is up to 50,000 inhabitants. There are many spatial models and attempts to systematise knowledge about cities, including small cities. This subject, taken up more and more often by geographers and sociologists, strives to discern the socio-spatial diversity of cities and to distinguish the cultural, landscape, or economic background. Cities are specific settlement units; they are a social phenomenon located in space. Hence, their research and analysis is a space bordering on sociology and geography.

Considering the typology of small towns, one can get the impression that small cities are one of the categories of cities and what is connected with it – their typology may be an extension or extension of already existing urban typologies. However, for the typology of smaller units to correspond to reality to a greater extent and to be more similar to the actual state, a set of factors that determine small-town character should be distinguished. This peculiar close-up of the spotlight on small towns allows us to identify differences and take them into account in the process of constructing the foundations for a new typology. Such special features of small towns undoubtedly include the size and, consequently, the scale of the phenomena. A smaller area associated with fewer inhabitants directly affects the development of urban functions of such small (up to 50,000 inhabitants) settlement units. A smaller population may be the reason for less social, economic, and spatial diversity in a given city. Less diversity, in turn, may translate into a more expressive character of a given locality. In other words – comparing a large city (e.g. Warsaw) with a small settlement unit with city rights (e.g. with Kudowa Zdrój), one can see, even based on research based on cartographic material, a much smaller variety of spatial forms occurring in this smaller town. This is expressed, for example, in the appearance and semantic range of terms used in the legend for the map. While on the plan of the city of Kudowa Zdrój in the legend are distinguished elements of spatial development such as residential buildings, shops, parks, administrative facilities, and communication network; in the case of the plan of the city of Warsaw, the range of signs reflecting elements of the capital space is much more extensive (e.g. philharmonics, theatres, cinemas, universities, government buildings, stadiums, metro stations, tram stops,

airports, factories, etc.). This is undoubtedly due to the scale of the phenomenon that is the city, i.e. the multifunctionality of large urban centres. An important variable related to these differences is the rank of the locality, and its administrative functions (e.g. central local or regional center). All this entails the existence of specific buildings assigned to a given rank of the city (e.g. municipal centre, provincial court, ministry building). After the administrative reform carried out in 1999, the number of voivodships, and thus their capitals, decreased significantly. From the previous 49 urban centres with the rank of the capital of the province, a dozen or so cities remained that maintained these functions. The decline in the importance of the city and the degradation of the rank of impact from regional to local entailed lower investment attractiveness, frequent depopulation, and a kind of peripherality. As an example, we can mention the city of Chełm, which, after losing the function of the capital of the province, lost many institutions and jobs. Such cities received state higher vocational schools as compensation, which built their academic function and developed, thanks to the presence of a large number of students, services (e.g. catering, housing rental market, printing, etc.), and some offices (e.g. the headquarters of the District Examination Board, ARIMR). Free investment zones were also located in some of them.

Considering the existing typologies, one can try to lead to their modification, a certain redirection of accents, as well as on their basis, taking into account the properties and features of a small city, one can try to construct a new typology. This article will briefly present the existing typology proposed by Węclawowicz (2003). This typology applies to all cities. The author of the typology based the concept of typology on the social and economic functions performed by the city in the regional or national context. At the same time, the author points out that the most compact typological concepts were limited to distinguishing pre-industrial, industrial, socialist, and global cities. He expanded this concept to 8 types (Węclawowicz, (2003):

- artisanal-commercial (feudal),
- commercial (early capitalist),
- colonial, industrial,
- early capitalist,
- socialist,
- late-capitalist,
- post-industrial,
- globalised cities.

This is an interesting look at the types of cities from which a timeline emerges. Well, particular types are set in specific historical epochs and have separate forms of dominant society, principles of social division, and cultural divisions. What distinguishes them is also the decisive socio-economic function (from craft production through the service of the empire in the colonial city, the control function in socialist cities, to the production of information and knowledge in glo-

balised cities) and the role of the state in shaping the city (from tax control in commercial cities, through full control in socialist cities to the regulatory function in post-industrial cities and negotiation in relations with corporations – in globalised cities) (Węclawowicz, 2003).

This typology can be applied to small towns, although, in this case, it refers more to cities around the world (or continent) than cities located in Poland. In Poland, there are no colonial cities with clear features, although some components of such a settlement unit may be noticeable in Borne Sulinowo – a town located in the Pomeranian Lake District in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, which in the second half of the twentieth century was a military garrison of the Red Army. However, in the case of small towns, it is not the time factor that seems to be the leading one, decisive for the character of the city. To a much greater extent, small towns have been shaped by the economy, a certain sector of the economy, more precisely, the type of economic activity of the inhabitants, the branch of industry, or the type of services. Taking into account the leading activity of a small town, i.e. a type of economic activity typical for a given city, employing the largest amounts of workforce, having the most typical spatial elements, and constituting the specific character of a small city – for this article, an attempt was made to systematise the types of small towns. It assumes the existence of cities whose types refer to sectors and branches of the economy. Due to the existence of 3 sectors of the economy: agriculture, industry, and services – the first sector will not be taken into account in the typology. The reason for such rejection is the essence of the city as a creation not related to agriculture, which is an attribute of rural settlement units. Broadly understood agriculture, including forestry, horticulture, pastoralism, meat breeding, crop production, and fishing – will therefore be the basis for separating types of villages, not cities. To shape the basis of the typology of small towns (in Polish conditions and not only), branches of the second and third sectors (industry and services) will be taken into account as typically urban activities present to a large extent in the city space. Thus, a distinction can be made between small towns:

1. industrial in several variants of the implementation of such a function:
 - processing industry – having in the functional and spatial structure mainly factories, industrial plants producing goods from agricultural products, processing raw materials. In this type of small town, the dominance of industrial functions is visible, for example, in the urban space, the impact on the natural environment, and the employment structure of the city's inhabitants and surrounding towns. Examples of such small towns are Świdnik – a center of the aviation electromechanical industry, Dzierżoniów – belonging to the subzone of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone, Police – a well-known centre of the chemical industry and has an industrial park, Czeladź – a city with many factories in post-mining areas (including the “Buderus” Heating Equipment Factory, Przedsiębiorstwo Elektrotechniki Górniczej and others), Starachowice – with

- a developed metallurgical and electromechanical industry (truck factory “Man”),
- energy production – with a clear dominant feature of power plants in urban space, in the employment structure of residents, and the impact on the natural environment of the surrounding area. Small towns of this type include Łaziska Górne – with the “Łaziska” thermal power plant, Bogatynia – with the “Turów” power plant, Kozienice – with the largest plant – the “Kozienice” power plant,
 - mining and metallurgical centres – having a significant percentage of the area designated for mines, steelworks, storage areas, and railway infrastructure in the urban space. Example of this type of small town is Rydułtowy – where most of the inhabitants work in one hard coal mine, “Rydułtowy-Anna”, Olkusz – a well-known zinc and lead ore mining centre, Knurów – with rich deposits of coking coal extracted in the “Knurów-Szczygłowice” mine,
 - centres of field industry, machinery (Sokółka), and production of, for example, boards and furniture (Grajewo, Wieruszów, Bielsk Podlaski), windows (Bytów, Sokółka), yachts (Olecko, Augustów), and even the headquarters of European brand companies such as Fakro and Blachotrapez in Nowy Sącz, Wielton in Wieluń or Drewbud, Unibud and Suem-pol in BielskPodlaski, etc.
2. tourist city – with a strongly developed tourist function manifested by the existence of an extensive accommodation and nutrition base, a large capacity of hotel facilities, the presence of tourist attractions and (or) natural values, with significant tourist traffic and the percentage of tourists per capita; such towns like Zakopane, Sopot, Giżycko, Sandomierz, Wisła, Szklarska Poręba or Władysławowo,
 3. spa city – with a distinct part of the spa parks in the urban space, with numerous sanatorium treatment facilities, and a large share of the year-round tourist traffic of patients. Examples illustrating this of small towns can be Ciechocinek, Busko Zdrój, Kołobrzeg, or even Rabka Zdrój,
 4. transport, storage, logistics, and transshipment hubs – located at the intersection of important road and rail communication routes or having access to a sea or air port with significant passenger or freight traffic on a national or international scale. Cities of this type are characterised by a transit location, they focus on serving travelers, redirecting communication streams, and servicing logistics centers. In geographical space, this is expressed by the presence of transshipment stations, large-area car parks, motels, vehicle service and repair stations, interchange railway stations, airports, or seaports. Examples of cities belonging to this type can be Świnoujście (sea water transport), Goleniów (air and road transport), Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (air and rail transport), Wieluń (road junction of national importance), Terespol-

Małaszewicze, Hrubieszów, Kołbaskowo, Przemyśl-Medyka, Kuźnica, etc. border transfer stations,

5. border city (including divided cities – Gubin, Zgorzelec, Cieszyn) – located peripherally concerning the central city, near the state border, often divided into two parts developing within separate states. Examples of such places can be Cieszyn (on the Polish-Czech border), Zgorzelec (near the border with Germany (Bartosiewicz & Marszał, 2011)),
6. commercial and administrative city – in a significant part of cases, small towns constituting the seat of local and regional administrative authorities (e.g. district towns) are a service and commercial center for the entire region. The rank of this function can be assigned to the scale of the city's impact on the surrounding area, on the commune, county, neighbouring counties, and finally, the voivodship. The scale of impact, which is greater than the region, is impossible to achieve by small towns because commercial and service functions are gradually taken over by larger cities – capitals of voivodeships. Examples of cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants, which mainly perform the function of an administrative and commercial centre with developed service facilities, can be Marki – which is a commercial base in the north-eastern part of Warsaw due to the existence of large-format shopping centres; Krosno – as a city that was once the capital of the voivodeship and now a commercial centre of regional and subregional importance in the historical land of the Sanok Land,
7. “bedroom” city – in the case of a relatively large percentage of residential space in relation to the area of the entire small town with simultaneous proximity to a large or large urban centre, whose resources are used by the inhabitants of this town, usually with well-developed communication to the main city within the agglomeration expressed by high frequency and passenger traffic between a small and large city. A small town – a bedroom performs mainly a residential function because other functions have been more or less taken over by a nearby big city. Examples of this type of city can be Wejherowo near Gdynia, Kobyłka near Warsaw, Aleksandrów Łódzki, Aleksandrów Kujawski,
8. city with mixed functions – where it is difficult to indicate the dominant function in the functional and spatial structure of the city, without a clear dominant, with intertwining functions. An example of a city of this type is Tuszyń, Sucha Beskidzka, Puck, or, for example, Konstancin-Jeziorna.

Tadeusz Popławski described small towns in an agricultural region through the prism of the main function of a small rural metropolis of the area, which is a synthesis of many functions, including administrative, commercial, service, as well as acting as a key town fulfilling, for example, a dominant function, which we would now define as identity or constituting the city's brand: spa, pilgrimage, tourist, school and, more broadly, educational, as well as, for example, the function of a centre for the region ethnographic, e.g. Myszyniec for Kurpie, or Kości-

erzyna and Kartuzy for Kashubians, etc. (Popławski, 1992). Another typology of cities that also applies to small towns is the division developed by Judd (1999) into 3 types of cities to which tourists go. Cities that generate tourist traffic and which were created with tourists in mind were distinguished. Their space is created and controlled, covering a significant part of the city within administrative boundaries (Judd, 1999). A well-known world example of this type of city is Las Vegas; however, in relation to small settlement units in the Polish could include, for example, Łeba, located in the Baltic zone. Investments in Łeba largely depend on business entities closely related to the handling of tourist traffic. Each district of Łeba, starting from the Rąbka district located on the outskirts of the Słowiński National Park and ending with the eastern edges of the city in the vicinity of the Power Park Łeba go-kart track or ending with the south-eastern outskirts of the village of Nowęcín adjacent to Łeba – has a clear tourist function, as evidenced by the existence of a relatively large number of facilities providing accommodation and food services, the intensity of tourist traffic in the season and the lack of other functions, which would be able to develop at least as much as the tourist function and dominate individual quarters of the city.

The second type of city generating tourist traffic is urban centres with a formed cultural identity and a rich historical past (Judd, 1999). Among the great metropolises, the city of Rome fits perfectly into this category; in the case of small towns, representatives of this type of city may be, for example, Sandomierz or Kazimierz Dolny. The urban fabric of these settlement units is largely filled with monuments, objects valuable in terms of architecture, castles and palaces, old tenement houses located around the market square in the downtown part, sacral and administrative buildings (e.g. historic town halls), sometimes ruins, objects of significant artistic value such as monuments, fountains, etc.

The third type of cities to which tourists go are cities with certain districts evolving in terms of tourism but remaining in contrast with other districts in which the tourist function (almost) does not exist (Judd, 1999). Atlanta is cited as an example; concerning small towns, one could mention cities belonging to this group, such as Malbork or Kłodzko. The tourist space of these urban centres has an island character and occupies certain areas of the city, not necessarily coinciding with downtown districts. In the case of Malbork – the tourist function is concentrated in the vicinity of the Teutonic castle, and in the case of Kłodzko – in the vicinity of the fortress fortifications.

Current problems of small towns

As part of the report prepared for the Congress of Small and Medium-sized Cities, which took place in Wałbrzych in April 2019, situational factors of small towns were specified, which included demographic, financial, personnel, and economic potential (Związek Miast Polskich, 2019). In demographic terms, a

clear situational dichotomy has been noted, consisting on the one hand in the acquisition of residents by suburban areas who move out of the central cities of agglomerations; on the other hand, the loss of population, especially younger people, in areas located outside urban agglomerations. This translates directly into the own income of both groups of small towns – in the first group, they are growing, which results from the property tax and shares in PIT. In the second group, own income is decreasing while the scale of challenges is increasing. In the group of financial factors, the report indicates significant underfunding of education, in particular in small towns from 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, as well as in urban-rural communes with a population of over 10,000 inhabitants (Związek Miast Polskich, 2019). It should be noted that this situation significantly reduces the development opportunities of small towns. Among the personnel factors, the poor quality of management and implementation of development policy was highlighted. In the group of factors related to economic potential, the report draws attention to the rare identification of own potential by diagnosticians developing development strategies and the difficulties in activating such potential without external help (Związek Miast Polskich, 2019). As part of the consultations during the Congress, the main problems and challenges facing small towns were specified, including deterioration of the financial condition of small towns, deterioration of the old buildings of these cities, loss of many traditional city-forming functions shaped in the period of the People's Republic of Poland, lack of tools for integrated planning of spatial and socio-economic development, lack of transport policy, ageing of the population and the resulting depopulation, the collapse of many local industries at the end of the twentieth-century (Związek Miast Polskich, 2019).

Polish Economic Institute prepared a report in December 2020 devoted to the verification of development scenarios of small towns in perspective until 2035 (Dębowska et al., 2020). The main assumption was to estimate how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the development and future of small towns. Among the key figures presented in the report illustrating the stigma that the coronavirus pandemic has left on the functioning of small settlement units with city rights, the report indicates that 74% of cities emphasise the deterioration of the financial situation, 55% show a deterioration in the situation on the local employment market, 44% of cities observed a deterioration in the living situation of residents, 37% of cities plan to increase debt in the next calendar year, 31% of cities express a desire to intensify their efforts to obtaining external aid funds, 54% of cities do not plan actions aimed at improving their attractiveness for business (Dębowska et al., 2020). These figures prove how the quality of functioning of small towns has decreased in the short time of the pandemic (from the first cases in March 2020 to the completion of work on the report and its publication in December 2020) and how strong the real impact of the pandemic was on the overall economic, social and administrative activity. At the same time, the report forecasts that the most likely events in small towns will include closer

cooperation between the government, elites, and residents to more effectively use internal potentials and external opportunities for dynamic development.

The report of the Polish Economic Institute distinguishes 3 groups of small towns selected based on their socio-economic situation. These include cities in need of a development impulse (called M1), to which 54 urban centres were included in Polish conditions; cities of missed opportunities (M2, in Poland their number is 88 cities); and cities of the good life (M3, 63 representatives of this group). The group of M1 cities includes, among others, Rajgród, Wschowa, Szprotawa, Wyszogród, Łęczna, Ryki, Tłuszcz, Dąbrowa Białostocka, Krasnobród. The M2 group includes such cities as Knyszyn, Władysławowo, Serock, Łapy, Łańcut, Skoczów, Mszana Dolna, Brwinów, Konstancin-Jeziorna, Kartuzy, Czaplonek, Łask, Stary Sącz. The group of small M3 towns consists of, for example, Gołdap, Mszczonów, Chęciny, Ustka, Grójec, Międzyrzec Podlaski, Hrubieszów, Grabów nad Prosną, Międzyzdroje, Strzegom, Wadowice, Siemiatycze. According to the results of the research presented in the report, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the financial situation in M2 cities the most (Dębkowska et al., 2020). The question of the deterioration of the situation described as “definitely deteriorated” was answered by 19% for M2 cities, compared to 7% for M1 cities and 5% for M3 cities. Also, responses stating no change caused by the pandemic were the least in the M2 group (13%, compared to 18% in the M3 group and 32% in the M1 group). Similarly, the M2 group of cities recorded the highest response values, stating a deterioration in the living situation of residents and the activities of cities that stimulate local entrepreneurship. Thus, the cities of missed opportunities – according to the cited report – have been most severely affected by the pandemic in financial terms. It is worth taking a closer look at the group of M2 cities. According to data from the Central Statistical Office, M2 cities are characterised by a fairly good economic situation, which is reflected in relatively high average income per capita. However, the level of city spending per capita and the high level of employees per 1000 inhabitants are high in this group. Weaker scores in the M2 group are shown by indicators such as the housing situation (measured by the number of dwellings per 1000 inhabitants) and the percentage of children cared for in a crèche. Cities of this group poorly assessed their innovativeness; quite a big problem of these urban centres is the phenomenon of depopulation (Brzostowski et al., 2019).

Tourist function of cities

The current problems of small towns include efforts aimed at creating the image of a city attractive to tourists. Nowadays, tourism has become one of the most important sectors of the economy, contributing to the economic growth of countries, regions, and towns. Its impact on employment, transport, culture, the production sector, and other components of broadly understood economic and

social conditions is large enough to speak of a visible in some areas (including small towns) growing competitiveness and shaping the tourist function. Small towns should compete with each other based on elements of the city's identity, based on the uniqueness of the culture or physical characteristics of the city that are difficult to imitate by rivals (Glińska, 2010) (e.g. climatic, landscape, spa, natural values, etc.). It seems that a frequent problem of small towns is the lack of appropriate actions and direction which would develop the unused tourist potential of a given town. There are many small cities that, despite having valuable tourist values, appropriate tourist development, and transport accessibility conducive to the development of tourism, still do not record increased tourist traffic, register a low occupancy rate of hotel facilities, and have low indicators of brand recognition – which is the city – in the eyes of tourists. An important role in bringing about such a state of affairs is played by territorial marketing, activities aimed at building a brand, activities aimed at promoting the city and appearing in the minds of consumers – potential tourists.

A separate problem faced by small towns is spatial planning. In southern Poland, in the foothills, the phenomenon of frequent dispersion of buildings in small towns is visible. This state is related to the development of tourism, the search for new areas for construction, and the striving to make the location of new hotels, catering, or recreational facilities more attractive outside compact buildings, which results in interference in the landscape and leads to unfavorable urbanisation processes (Pawlak, 2009). The landscape values of the foothills consist largely of hilly areas, forest complexes, valleys with watercourses, and open spaces of meadows and fields. Often, however, there is interference in this landscape through the expansion of holiday resorts, whose main goal is to gain a competitive advantage resulting from the original location and access to panoramas and viewpoints. The multitude of such objects is not only a disturbance of the natural landscape and a decrease in its natural value but also a threat to the environment due to anthropopressure. It seems that this situation is a consequence of improper assumptions of tourist development plans and building permits throughout the city within administrative boundaries without a clearly defined building boundary. Analysing urban issues in more depth, one can notice quite often the interference of forms and spatial cubatures of intra-urban development, which does not fit into traditional frontages. This is expressed in the aggressive size of the buildings, making subsequent blocks similar to those already erected in residential districts, which introduces a climate of monotony and uniformity (Pawlak, 2009). The interference of incompatible spatial forms in historically shaped buildings leads to landscape disturbances and deprives the housing estate of harmony and the small town of identity (Pawlak, 2009). In addition, the occupation of suburban areas with large-scale and large-scale shopping and entertainment centres, observed in recent years after the political and political change of 1989, destroys law and order, introduces disharmony in the structure of construction, and disperses commercial functions traditionally cen-

tralised around the market square or the downtown part of the town. Commercial facilities with a large area are often erected near the main communication routes on the outskirts of cities, require large-format parking lots, generate relatively high car traffic, and contribute to the mixing of functions performed by the city or its specific quarters. Nowadays, the entrance to the city is more and more often noticed by the traveler not after the appearance of buildings, initially low, allotment, further higher and interspersed with clusters of blocks and public buildings, but through the suddenly appearing large commercial and warehouse facilities, warehouses, distribution centres, trade fair and congress centres, etc.

Quite an important problem faced by small towns is the revalorisation and revitalisation of the urban tissue. Revalorisation, understood as a renovation aimed at restoring value – is a process that requires significant financial outlays. The revitalisation, understood as the socio-economic revival of urban quarters, significantly affects the improvement of city residents' living standards by creating new jobs, counteracting social pathologies, improving the city's image and aesthetics of space, and introducing new functions to the town. An example is the revitalisation of nearly 7,000 inhabitants of Polanica Zdrój, and more precisely, the spa park of this town. The changes in the image are brought about by economic recovery, an influx of investments, and an increase in tourist traffic. Unfortunately, the problem of many small Polish towns is the shortage of financial resources or lack thereof, which contributes to the lack of revitalisation activities.

Small towns are characterised by a specific location in space because on the one hand, they are often strongly economically connected with large cities, particularly when they are located in relative proximity to a large urban centre or the capital of the region, and on the other hand – they are themselves the development centre of their surroundings, being a centre of economic and social connections on a micro-scale. A development opportunity for small towns can be seen in the development of the policy of supporting agriculture conducted by district offices. The expression of such a policy should be, among others, a policy of subsidies for the development of rural institutions, regulations of local taxes, attracting investments in the field of agribusiness, creating conditions for the development of rural tourism, agritourism, tourism in natural areas, creating marketing facilities linking the market with the rural economy, assistance addressed to rural cultural institutions nurturing local traditions and crafts (Popławski, 2001).

The tasks facing small towns are undoubtedly ambitious and multifaceted. It follows, therefore, that the development of cities is conditioned by many factors, such as the lack of an appropriate level of organisation and implementation through tasks, which significantly affects the development situation. Spatial, social, and economic development of urbanised areas following the policy of sustainable development is a guarantee of the broadly understood development of the country, contributes to the improvement of the quality of social life, deter-

mines the development of the economy, cements favourable trends and creates a better vision of the future. Human resources are an important aspect of the development of small towns. Their size affects the population potential and translates into organisational capabilities and workforce resources and determines specific social situations, problems and expectations of the population of urban areas.

Depopulation of small towns

One of the serious problems of small towns is their depopulation. Population changes involving more than a 2% decrease in the number of citizens can be treated as shrinking cities (Kantor-Pietraga et al., 2012). Some towns recorded a percentage loss of urban population in the years 1988-2009 at the level of 10% (e.g. Lesko in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship), at the level of 15% (e.g. Duszniki Zdrój in the Kłodzko Valley), and even 28% (e.g. Toszek near Gliwice, in the Silesian Voivodeship) (Kantor-Pietraga et al., 2012). The phenomenon of depopulation can be considered in terms of various aspects: historical, geographical, economic, labour market, and social. The trajectory of urban shrinkage is varied, often associated with the superior function performed by a small town. The model of shrinkage of industrial cities is widespread and is associated with the liquidation or restructuring of industry. Depopulation equally affects cities with economic problems, such as a decline in city revenues caused by unemployment and the outflow of creative individuals (Kantor-Pietraga et al., 2012). Also, towns with a developed tourist and spa function are affected by a decrease in population, which is caused by an increase in land prices, an increase in prices in the commercial offer as a result of the influx of tourists, a general increase in the prices of broadly understood life and maintenance. The depopulation of small towns is still largely related to the outflow of young residents to large urban centres, developed agglomerations, to economically growing industrial districts. As a rule, small towns located near a large city of capital rank or at least a supra-regional centre record an increase in the number of inhabitants (Szymytkie & Sikrorski, 2020).

Conclusions

The analysis of literature dedicated to the developmental challenges of small cities, coupled with the examination of specific city cases and their limitations, has enabled the authors of this article to formulate a typology for small cities. This typology categorises and arranges small urban settlements (with populations of up to 50,000 inhabitants) based on the functions they fulfil. Given the complexity of this phenomenon, it is worth emphasising that the typology could be further expanded to more comprehensively reflect the actual functions of small cities.

In the contemporary world, new functions emerge for small cities, while existing functions undergo evolution due to political, economic, and social transformations in urban spaces. Additionally, the multifunctionality of cities undergoes constant changes. To ensure that scientific research captures the most accurate and up-to-date realities, it must be frequently updated and refreshed.

The analysis of the functions of small cities and their developmental challenges is of paramount importance in today's research landscape. The outcomes of such research have a direct impact on urban planning, sociology, spatial planning, and urban economics and contribute to a better understanding of the spatial dimension of small cities. This understanding is essential for the betterment of communities and entrepreneurs, ultimately fostering an improved urban environment. Accurately identified issues in small cities help rectify developmental errors and contribute to shaping a more prosperous path of development.

The contribution of the authors

Tadeusz Popławski – 50%

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ZARZĄDZANIE TYPMI FUNKCJI POLSKICH MAŁYCH MIAST W KONTEKŚCIE ICH WYZWAŃ ROZWOJOWYCH

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie tła dylematów i problemów rozwojowych małych miast. Ujęto sytuację ilościową małych miast w Polsce, rozeznanie ich typów funkcjonalnych, rozpoznanie barier rozwojowych. Małe miasta stanowią ważne, policentryczne ośrodki rozwojowe, będąc pomostem między wielkimi aglomeracjami a terenami wiejskimi. W tym kontekście ważne jest rozwiązywanie ich problemów i wyzwań rozwojowych. Podstawowym celem artykułu badawczego jest próba opracowania typologii małych miast w oparciu o ich cechy funkcjonalne. Aby uzyskać głębszy wgląd w ustalone typologie miast, w metodologii badania wykorzystano połączenie analizy studiów przypadku, przeglądu literatury i analizy wyników wcześniejszych badań. Te podejścia badawcze łącznie umożliwiły identyfikację i klasyfikację nowych kategorii funkcjonalnych małych miast.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: małe miasta, typy miast, problemy rozwojowe, zarządzanie