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## FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTIC OF SELECTED SMALL TOWNS IN WIELKOPOLSKA REGION INFLUENCING SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

The article presents research conducted in selected small towns in the Wielkopolska Region (Greater Poland): in a town within the sphere of influence of an agglomeration (Pobiedziska), a tourist town (Sieraków), a town located off the main transport routes (Odolanów), a town with an unchanged historical urban layout (Rakoniewice), and a town valuable for national culture (Pyzdry).

**Keywords:** agglomeration, national culture, small towns, tourism, urban planning, Wielkopolska Region (Greater Poland).

It was assumed as a thesis that small towns in Wielkopolska, similarly to towns in Western Europe, will determine the identity of the region and the nature of functional and spatial transformations. Therefore, the main objective of action is to stimulate the economic and social potential of tourism and culture, including assigning new socio-economic functions to existing buildings and areas, among others through the reconstruction, modernization and renewal of neglected and unused urban areas and residential districts in towns. At present, the wave of modernity, which has very rapidly entered small towns and is developing in a dangerous way, poses a serious threat to the proper shaping of the historical and cultural urban layouts of towns.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The settlement units presented in the study were founded between the 13th and 16th centuries. An analysis of the location of the selected towns in the region shows that they are distributed relatively evenly in relation to one another. It can also be

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observed that some of them are situated away from the main transport routes. Such a location of small towns, away from the roads that are most important for the voivodeship, is associated with reduced access to cultural, educational and health-care institutions.

Rail transport, which has a very dense network in the Wielkopolska Region, played a significant role in the development of small towns. In the second half of the 19th century, the emergence of rail transport stimulated the development of these localities due to the establishment of passenger and transshipment stations in their vicinity.

Tourism, sport and recreation are developing in the region. The factors conducive to this phenomenon and influencing the development of recreation in the voivodeship include: the cultural richness of Wielkopolska, elements of cultural heritage that make up the cultural identity of small towns, the most important of which are extensive forest cover and the abundance of lakes. The small towns analysed in the paper – Pobiedziska, Sieraków, Odolanów, Rakoniewice and Pызdry – can be counted among such centres. This has made it possible to identify the role played by these towns depending on the resources they possess (Fig. 1).

### **1.1. Research method**

In preparing the article, the following research methods were used: comparative analysis, the method of physiognomic identification, and graphic analysis of changes in the historical and cultural urban layouts.

In the conducted research, a direct field survey method was adopted. One type of research was an environmental interview carried out among town residents and local decision-makers. The questionnaire survey made it possible to become familiar with the studied locality as well as with the respondents' opinions. The collected information made it possible to identify the differences occurring in the analysed representative towns and to determine the role played by historical and cultural urban layouts.

### **1.2. Geographical and natural characteristics of the analysed towns**

The small towns studied in the Wielkopolska Region were mostly founded between the 13th and 16th centuries as a result of their favourable geographical location (Münch 1946). The system of waterways in the region is highly favourable for tourist navigation, forming the so-called Wielkopolska Loop.

The attractiveness of the area is determined by the considerable diversity of its components, such as landform, forests and surface waters. The most important factors generating regional and supra-regional tourist flows include: historical monuments, sites associated with the history of Poland, especially the beginnings of

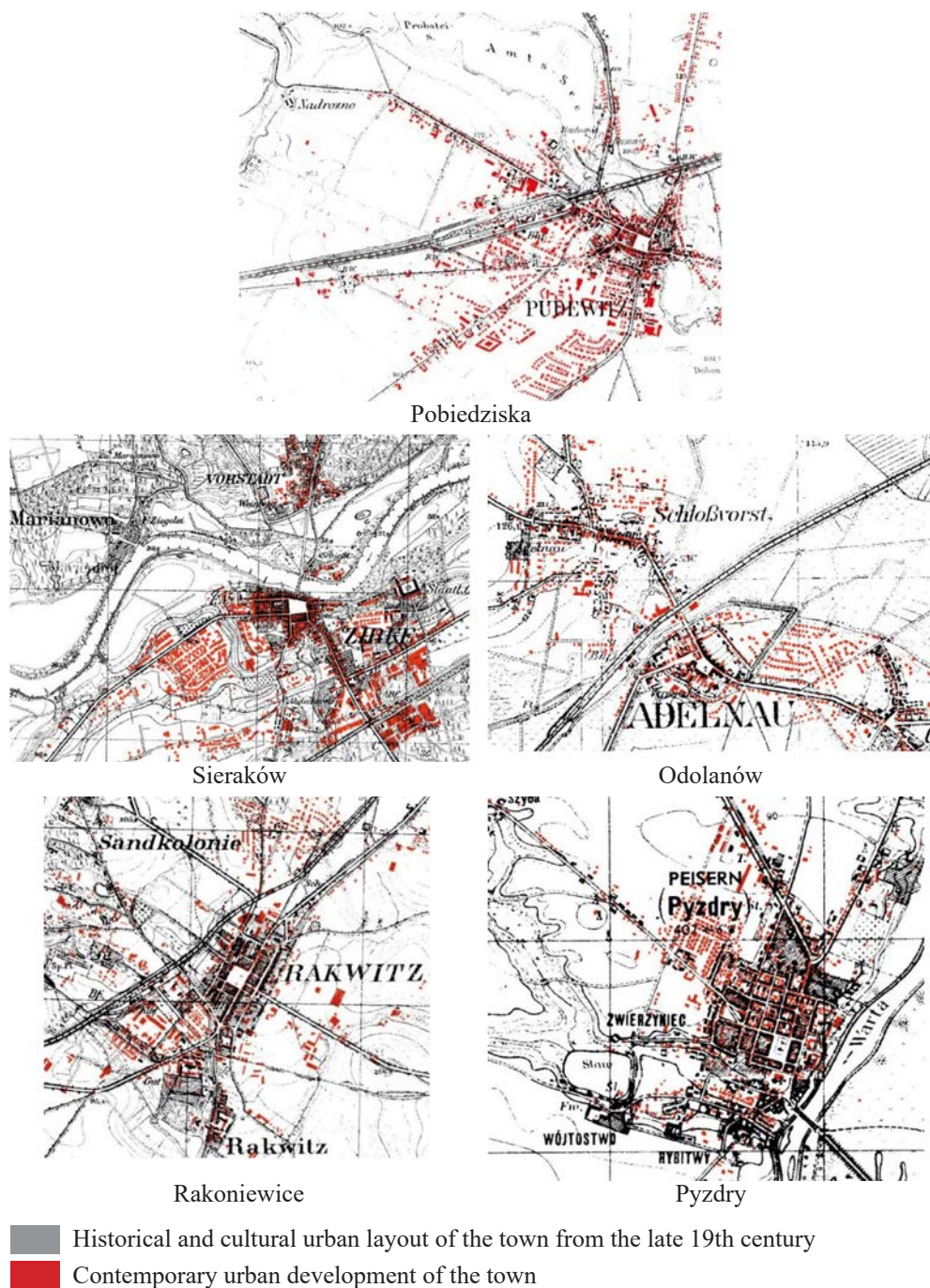


Fig. 1. Historical urban layout of the town against the background of contemporary urban development, compiled by the author on the basis of geoportal.gov.pl, Messtischblätter map

Polish statehood, places concentrating cultural events, historic cultural routes and places of religious worship.

Some of the small towns are located within areas protected by law (national parks, landscape parks, nature reserves, forest complexes). The location of the towns within these areas, in buffer zones, determines their specific functions related to tourism or low-nuisance industry [Table 1.1]

Table 1.1. Environmental conditions

No.	Town	Rivers	Water bodies	Location
	1.	2.	3.	4.
1.	Pobiedziska	–	lakes: Biezdruchowo, Małe, Dobre	Gniezno Lakeland,
2.	Sieraków	Warta – linking Międzychód and Skwierzyna in the west and Wronki in the east,	Lake Jaroszewskie,	Sieraków Landscape Park, Buki nad Jeziorem Lutomskim forest reserve, Noteć Forest,
3.	Odolanów	Barycz – right-bank tributary of the Oder,	–	Milicz Basin,
4.	Rakoniewice	–	–	Poznań Lakeland,
5.	Pyzdry	Warta – linking Ciężen with Konin to the east and Śrem to the west,	–	edge of the Września Plain and the Konin Valley,

### 1.3. Transport conditions

In the area of the present-day Wielkopolska Voivodeship, important roads and trade routes crossed the region, linking Greater Poland with European cities and contributing to the inflow and settlement of a substantial urban population. Some of the centres analysed owed their economic growth to this fact. The location of Pyzdry on an important trade route from Kraków via Kalisz to Poznań, as well as on the then navigable Warta River, led to the rapid development of the town. Owing to such a location, the most important trade routes for the region developed: from Wrocław to Poznań and further to Pomerania, and from Frankfurt an der Oder to Poznań and further eastwards via Pobiedziska towards Toruń. This transport system essentially survived until the partitions of Poland in the 18th century. The division of Wielkopolska between Russia and Prussia and the delineation of new borders led to the disappearance of certain sections of roads and trade routes (Tłoczek 1955), which had previously created favourable conditions for the development of these localities [Table 1.2].

Table 1.2. Location of small towns in relation to the transport network

No.	Town	Road transport		Railway lines
		International and national roads	Voivodeship and county roads	
	1.	2.		3.
1.	Pobiedziska	–	(Poznań – Gniezno), (Kostrzyn – Pobiedziska)	Poznań – Gniezno – Inowrocław – Gdańsk
2.	Sieraków	–	no. 133 to Chrzypsko Wielkie, no. 150 through the Noteć Forest to Wronki, no. 182 from Międzychód to Wronki, the most important and busiest of the voivodeship roads running through the town, no. 198 running along the southern edge of the Noteć Forest to Radgoszcz in the Międzychód commune,	suspended passenger traffic (Międzychód – Wronki),
3.	Odolanów	–	no. 444 (Krotoszyn – Odolanów – Ostrzeszów), no. 445 (Odolanów – Ostrów Wlkp.),	Ostrów Wielkopolski – Grabowno Wielkie,
4.	Rakoniewice	no. 32 (Poznań – Zielona Góra),	no. 312 (Rakoniewice – Wielichowo – Czacz – to national road 5),	Wolsztyn-Grodzisk Wlkp.-Luboń
5.	Pyzdry	–	no. 442 (Września – Pyzdry – Gizałki – Kalisz), no. 466 (Słupca – Ciężen – Pyzdry),	narrow-gauge – not in operation,

#### 1.4. Functional and land-use structure

The western and southern part of the region consists of areas located at a distance from large urban centers and lacking a strong core. However, this peripheral location may become an asset for local development. An example of this is Odolanów, analysed in the paper, which acts as a center concentrating the social and economic life of the area.

The central part of the voivodeship is distinguished by its tourist attractiveness, which also includes cultural and historical attractiveness. The richness of the area lies in its natural environment, whose most valuable resources and assets have been placed under legal protection. These include, among others, the Nadwarciański Landscape Park, within the boundaries of which Pyzdry is located,

protected landscape areas, natural and landscape complexes, as well as Natura 2000 sites. Within the natural structure, the main ecological axis is formed by the Warta River. Sections of the valleys of the Warta and Noteć rivers form the route of the Wielkopolska Loop, together with the towns covered by this study, such as Sieraków, which provide a tourist hinterland and have recreational infrastructure.

Among the factors influencing the development of recreation in the voivodeship are the cultural richness of Wielkopolska and the elements of cultural heritage that build the cultural identity of small towns, the most important of which are extensive forest cover and a large number of open water bodies.

Table 1.3. Main functions of the analysed towns

No.	Town	Industry	Trade/services	Agricultural services	Tourism and recreation
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	Pobiedziska		X		
2.	Sieraków				x
3.	Odolanów	X			
4.	Rakoniewice		X	x	
5.	Pyzdry		X	x	

compiled by the author, based on data from Statistics Poland (GUS)

## 2. POBIEDZISKA – A TOWN WITHIN THE INFLUENCE OF AN AGGLOMERATION

The town belongs to the group of the earliest foundations in Wielkopolska. At that time, a regular town layout was established. The market square in Pobiedziska was formed at the junction of roads that had existed before the town was founded. These were roads leading to Poznań, Gniezno and Kostrzyn (Münch 1946).

At the end of the 17th century, settlers came to the town and its surroundings, building new houses and workshops and cultivating the land. This process of reconstruction and economic stabilisation was interrupted by the Great Northern War. Towards its end, new settlers from Silesia and Germany began to arrive in Pobiedziska, which stimulated the development of the town, in particular trade and crafts (Kwiatek, Lijewski 1998). With the Second Partition of Poland, the town became part of the Kingdom of Prussia.

The interwar period was a time of general impoverishment of the population. Nevertheless, a fire station, a shooting range and a sports field were built in the town and a beach and small marina were arranged on Lake Biezdruchowo. In the

mid-1970s, a noticeable economic revival took place. A town marketplace was established on the northern shore of Lake Małe (Frankiewicz 2007).

In the second half of the 20th century, in the south-western direction, along the exit roads from Pobiedziska and the railway line, the built-up areas were extended and complexes of multi-family and single-family housing developed. The layout of the old part of the town has not undergone major changes to this day. The main composition of the town's historical and cultural urban layout was already shaped in the Middle Ages. The market frontages are formed by 2-3 storey buildings from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, with steep roofs, commercial premises on the ground floors and their ridges aligned with the edges of the market square. The most valuable historical monument in Pobiedziska is the church of St Michael the Archangel, located in the north-eastern corner of the market square, and belonging to the oldest Gothic churches in Wielkopolska. Among the listed monuments is also, among others, the historical urban layout of the town. In total, the register of the Voivodeship Heritage Conservation Office in Poznań includes 9 entries from Pobiedziska (6 buildings, the belfry of the parish church of St Michael the Archangel, the remains of a fortified manor house and the historical urban layout of the town).

The town concentrates primarily service, residential and production functions. Nearly half of the municipality's inhabitants live here. Roughly half of the residents are employed locally, while the other half commute to other localities, mainly to Poznań as the core city of the agglomeration.

A very large group of people participating in the survey reported problems related to the lack of access to services enabling them to spend time outside the home. A significant number of respondents expressed a need for better access to cultural services. Respondents willingly participate in cultural and entertainment events organised in the town. They appreciate the contribution of the municipal authorities to the organisation of such initiatives. They state that these events provide the best opportunity for a walk with the family or meeting friends.

### **3. SIERAKÓW – A TOURIST TOWN**

Located in Międzychód County, the town, owing to its situation between lakes, the Warta River, a Natura 2000 area and the Sieraków National Park, performs a recreational and tourist function. It has a well-developed recreational infrastructure on Lake Jaroszewskie.

The 16th century was one of the most prosperous periods in its history. Its location on a navigable river determined its development. Construction of the Bernardine church and the castle was begun. The town did not suffer destruction during the wars with Sweden, which allowed it to develop correctly in spatial terms. After the Second Partition of Poland, it came under Prussian rule. In 1817 the town was almost completely destroyed by fire and then rebuilt while retaining the pre-fire layout.

The monuments and sites that have permanently shaped the town's physiognomy include the former Bernardine church and the former half-timbered Evangelical church, now in ruins and undergoing irreversible degradation year by year. The provincial register of monuments lists 18 entries, including 16 buildings.

The availability of services for tourists is also of no small importance. The town area is covered by several forms of nature protection, including the Sieraków Landscape Park and Natura 2000 areas. Respondents drew attention to the historic buildings preserved in the urban space. They identified the Opaliński Castle, which has become embedded in the residents' consciousness, as the most important feature identifying the town, as well as the still operating stallion breeding complex, whose buildings were erected in the first half of the 19th century.

Residents indicated urban green areas and the lake with its kayak marina, beach and promenade as the most distinctive features of the town. On the basis of the surveys, it can be concluded that most of them expect services such as a restaurant, watchmaker and fast food bar. Individual responses also mentioned needs such as entertainment in general, a bookshop, car park, cobbler, computer shop, furniture shop, cinema, park and playground. In the town centre, residents clearly feel the lack of developed walking paths and of an orderly layout and design of the market square.

According to respondents, there is also a lack of adequate lighting of streets and squares. Insufficient and inadequate lighting causes the town to empty in the evening. This is particularly evident in summer, when tourists arrive in the town as a tourist and recreational centre.

Residents of Sieraków also commented on their level of satisfaction with the town's architecture and urban planning. Negative opinions focused on the lack of urban planning control, and the absence of a development strategy and land-use plan.

#### **4. ODOLANÓW – A TOWN LOCATED OFF THE MAIN TRANSPORT ROUTES**

The development of the town dates back to the 15th century, when three parts of the urban layout emerged: the town centre and the suburban areas of Zamkowe and Górka. The chartered town was surrounded by defensive walls, which were demolished by the partitioning powers at the beginning of the 19th century. From the mid-18th century, an economic revival took place. Three religious buildings date from this period: the Evangelical church and two Catholic churches. The rapid development of the town was not halted by the Second Partition of Poland in 1793. It was a multicultural town, inhabited by Catholics, Protestants and Jews<sup>3</sup>. The 19th century was a period of prosperity for the town, which had an agricultural and

<sup>3</sup> *Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland*, available online: [http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Słownik\\_geograficzny/Tom\\_VII/380](http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Słownik_geograficzny/Tom_VII/380) [accessed: 10.02.2016]

craft-based character. At that time, the town hall, synagogue<sup>4</sup>, post office building, slaughterhouse and water tower were built (Kwiatek, Lijewski 1998). In 1909 a railway line was routed through the town. War damage after the First World War, changes in the ethnic structure and the resulting impoverishment of the population slowed down the town's development. After the Second World War, the town developed very slowly, retaining mainly an agricultural character. Significant changes occurred with the discovery of natural gas deposits and the construction of a natural gas de-nitrification plant at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s.

The spatial structure of Odolanów makes it possible to distinguish several types of areas characterised by different forms of land use. These include areas of inner-city residential development, single- and multi-family housing, parks and green complexes, as well as agricultural land.

In the town centre, compact inner-city residential development predominates, together with commercial and service facilities clustered around the market square. The residential buildings located there date mainly from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The historic buildings entered in the register of the regional heritage conservator include the existing churches and the historic urban layout. In total these are 4 listed monuments (3 buildings and the urban layout of the town).

The areas on the north-western and north-eastern outskirts of the town are characterised by multi-family and single-family housing. In the western part of the town there are areas of industrial development with a predominance of production and warehouse facilities. In addition to numerous interesting historic buildings, the town also has sports and recreational facilities (a stadium, sports hall and playing fields), which enhance the tourist attractiveness of Odolanów. Open areas complement the urban fabric of the town. There are three parks in the town, including the frequently mentioned Park of Nature, as well as roadside greenery, estate greenery and allotment gardens. An important recreational asset of the town is its location within the range of the protected area Dolina Baryczy (Barycz Valley).

According to the survey findings, most residents have lived and worked in Odolanów since birth. The remaining part of the population is employed in larger neighbouring towns such as Ostrów Wielkopolski and Kalisz. Problems are felt in relation to entertainment and catering services. In the opinion of the majority of residents, there are no places in the town, apart from parks, where they can spend time after work. In the absence of alternatives, they prefer to spend their free time at home in private. Regardless of age, residents generally feel that the town does not offer attractions that would encourage them to go out. A large proportion of respondents are dissatisfied with the architecture and urban layout of the town, which they consider to be ageing, monotonous and chaotic.

Residents are divided in their views on the extent to which the local authorities are involved in improving the town's appearance. Some believe that the authorities

<sup>4</sup> Available online: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/article/odolanow/5,historia/> [accessed: 10.02.2016]

take care of the town by renovating buildings and cleaning the streets. The other half of respondents believe that the local government's interest is too limited and allows historic buildings to deteriorate. According to respondents, cultural events organised in the town do not have any significant impact on the development of Odolanów.

## 5. RAKONIEWICE – A TOWN WITH A LARGELY UNCHANGED URBAN LAYOUT

The buildings in Rakoniewice are very characteristic of small towns in Wielkopolska. Old gable-end houses, wooden and half-timbered, have been preserved, among others in Grodziska, Kościelna, Krystyny, Poczтова and Wolsztyńska streets. The spatial layout of the town consists of a relatively large market square for a small town, measuring 112×120 m, from which the streets radiate. The plans for the arcaded houses around the market square were established at the end of the 17th century. These were wooden arcaded houses with gable or broken roofs covered with shingles. They were distinguished by a high level of carpentry craftsmanship. The appearance of the houses was regulated by ordinances issued by the town owners, who supported the construction of arcades both because of their usefulness in trade and craft development and because of their representative appearance. The buildings were destroyed in fires in 1877 and 1927. At present, only four houses have survived in the northern corner of the market square.

Most of the buildings entered in the records of the Voivodeship Heritage Conservator are located within the historic layout of the town. There are 18 entries from Rakoniewice in the register of the Voivodeship Heritage Conservation Office in Poznań (including 15 buildings, a park, former garden areas and the urban layout of the town).

The vast majority of residential buildings were erected before 1945 and, due to technical neglect and wear, require extensive, comprehensive modernisation and renovation works. The condition of the historic buildings is particularly poor<sup>5</sup>. In recent years, the town has become an area of intensive single- and multi-family residential development. Dwellings are also being created through the adaptation and reuse of various existing buildings, such as a tannery, winery, grist mill and shoe factory. The investments carried out, making use of existing post-industrial facilities, result in a better managed urban space<sup>6</sup>. At the southern edge of the town there is a park with a palace, which constitutes the largest green enclave in the town.

<sup>5</sup> Based on data from the Rakoniewice Town and Municipality Office (UMG Rakoniewice)

<sup>6</sup> *Development Strategy of the Town and Municipality of Rakoniewice for 2016-2021*. Available online: [[http://www.rakoniewice.pl/asp/pl\\_start.asp?typ=14&menu=272&strona=1](http://www.rakoniewice.pl/asp/pl_start.asp?typ=14&menu=272&strona=1)], accessed: [12.09.2016]

The most important sports facility in the town is the sports and entertainment hall, opened for use in 2009 in Nowotomska Street. The facility is used for educational purposes and for organising various types of events – cultural, entertainment and educational – both for the residents of the town and for those of the municipality and the county. The town also has a full-size football pitch, two smaller “Orlik”-type pitches, and an outdoor gym in the park.

The proportion of respondents employed in the town is similar to that of those working outside it. The latter are employed mainly in localities that are well connected by road and rail to Poznań, Wolsztyn and Grodzisk Wielkopolski. Residents attach great importance to the town’s historic fabric, valuing above all the market square and the historic buildings in its vicinity. Respondents repeatedly pointed to the recreational advantages of the park in the southern part of the town as a suitable place for rest. Relatively often they also regarded their own gardens as an equally good place for relaxation, explaining this choice by the lack of attractions in the town and by a greater sense of safety.

Most residents are satisfied with the architectural and urban qualities of Rakoniewice. Opinions were strongly divided when it came to assessing the town’s commitment to caring for aspects related to the shaping of urban space. Respondents who felt that the town’s involvement was insufficient were mainly older people, who often complained about architectural barriers. The vast majority of residents do not engage in matters that determine the appearance of the town. Lack of time was the most frequently cited reason. Residents also often replied that this was not their responsibility.

In the residents’ perception, the cultural and entertainment offer is insufficiently developed. The demand for such services results mainly from demographic factors, in particular an ageing population. This is an adverse factor and leads to a weakening of residents’ identification with their place of residence.

## **6. PYZDRY – A TOWN VALUABLE FOR NATIONAL CULTURE**

In the Middle Ages, it was one of the largest Polish defensive-residential complexes (Olszacki 2010). Kings Casimir the Great and Władysław Jagiello, as well as Casimir Jagiellonian, stayed at the castle on numerous occasions. From that time onwards, the town began to develop very dynamically in economic terms (Kwiatk, Lijewski 1998). During the partitions, by decision of the Congress of Vienna, the town found itself in 1815 within the borders of the Russian Empire, where it remained until the First World War. Thus, Pyzdry was the westernmost town of the empire. In 1918, Pyzdry returned within the borders of the reborn Polish state.

The spatial layout is clear, which is reflected in its orthogonal structure and the division into urban blocks (Zaniewska 1987). Due to the exceptional character of the town center, its multilayered cultural structure, and buildings important for the

history and culture of Pyzdry, the town has been included in the register of monuments of the Wielkopolska voivodeship. In total, 13 sites are listed in the register of the Voivodeship Heritage Conservation Office in Poznań (including 9 buildings, the remains of the castle, 2 fragments of the town walls and the historical urban layout of the town).

The cultural and sports life of the town's residents is supported by the Museum of the Pyzdry Land, the Municipal and Communal Public Library in Pyzdry, and the Center for Culture, Sport and Promotion in Pyzdry. The Museum collects cultural assets, organises exhibitions, and conducts research, educational and publishing activities. Its seat is located in the former Franciscan monastery. The institution organises various exhibitions and workshops<sup>7</sup>. The Municipal and Communal Public Library in Pyzdry also operates in the monastery premises. The Library pursues its objectives by collecting and processing library materials that serve the development of reading and the satisfaction of information, educational and self-education needs. Its public character makes the library a meeting place for the local community<sup>8</sup>. The primary objective of the Center for Culture, Sport and Promotion in Pyzdry is to conduct cultural activities such as organising municipal and national ceremonies, open-air events, competitions, summer and winter holiday activities for children and young people, sporting events, as well as promoting the town<sup>9</sup>. The following facilities are available to residents: the sports and entertainment hall in Pyzdry and a complex of sports pitches.

The growing importance for tourism, since the beginning of the 21st century, of the Wielkopolska Loop and of kayaking trips, which have been attracting increasing interest, led to the construction in 2007 of a boating marina. The implementation of the entire project involved the County Office, the Pyzdry Town and Municipality Office, the Tutaj Warto Foundation and the Marshal's Office in Poznań. The next project planned after the construction of the riverside marina in Pyzdry is the development of a promenade along the Warta River, together with the installation of lighting and benches. In the future, as part of the development of the riverside areas, it is planned to build a pedestrian footbridge across the Warta River at the site of the former wooden bridge, which was destroyed by retreating German troops. The only existing river crossing is located almost half a kilometre from the town center and lies in a busy section of the regional road.

In the perception of residents, the town of Pyzdry is rated positively. The medieval layout of the town, the low-rise housing and the compact development pattern are all evaluated favorably. A characteristic feature of the town's physiognomy and of residents' identity is its location on a high escarpment with the remains of the

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.muzeum\\_pyzdry.republika.pl/](http://www.muzeum_pyzdry.republika.pl/) [accessed: 11.03. 2014]

<sup>8</sup> <http://bibliotekapyzdry.pl/> [accessed: 11.03. 2014]

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pyzdry.pl/272,centrum-kultury-sportu-i-promocji-w-pyzdrach.html> [accessed: 11.03. 2014]

former castle complex. Residents see the recently built kayak marina as a positive example of the local authorities' activity. The disadvantages of the town include its underappreciated and not very well maintained historic monuments and, in the opinion of residents, too little interest on the part of the authorities in this issue. The most frequently mentioned shortcoming is the lack of places for active recreation and small catering services. Most people are willing to take part in events organised in the town. Non-participation is most often due to residents' obligations rather than a lack of interest in social life. In general, initiatives undertaken by the town authorities are met with a positive reception and attract a significant proportion of residents.

The research made it possible to examine the functioning of selected representative small towns. The statements collected during the surveys and the conclusions presented can serve as a basis for design work and for planning concepts for the development of small towns. As shown by the author's research, investment in and development of public spaces in small towns can significantly contribute to increasing their attractiveness.

Investments that are particularly appreciated include marinas on river and lake shores, as well as green areas that encourage activity and recreation. Water bodies located near towns or within their administrative boundaries affect in various ways the attractiveness of the space and the physiognomy of a small town. In localities where a large navigable river flows, it is possible to organise many attractions of a utilitarian and commercial nature for both residents and tourists. The attractive location of Pobiedziska on the Piast Route, the wealth of its geographical environment, the traces of Piast history and the proximity of Poznań have directed the municipality's development towards tourism and recreation. By contrast, the natural and landscape assets of Sieraków mean that the town is perceived as an attractive tourist destination. The tourism development policy pursued by the local authorities has led to a significant increase in the number of visitors. The town has favourable conditions for the development of tourism, resulting above all from its natural setting: proximity to the river, a high proportion of forests and lakes, a varied relief, the existing technical infrastructure and the availability of land for investments related to holiday and second-home development. The recreational asset of the town of Odolanów is its location within the range of the protected Barycz Valley area. This location means that the town performs a tourist service function for part of the visiting population. After the fires of the 19th century, Rakoniewice retained part of its historic wooden arcaded houses with broken gable roofs covered with shingles, once typical of Polish towns. Today they serve as an example of how traditional Polish small-town development used to be shaped. Pызdry performs a tourist and cultural function thanks to its location on the Warta River and its well-preserved urban fabric with many monuments valuable for the culture of Wielkopolska.

An analysis of the development conditions of small towns in Wielkopolska points to the need to invest in urban space with regard to local cultural and natural values.

Given the specific role that the towns studied play in the settlement system, attention is drawn to the need to clarify and make more legible the functional and spatial structure of towns, in order to increase their attractiveness and improve the quality of public spaces.

The main criticism concerned the underestimation of the development of external areas of the town. A detailed analysis of the questionnaires collected during the field surveys showed that the buildings with which residents most strongly identify are public utility buildings that are distinctive elements of the urban space.

The spatial layout of development in the analysed towns is well connected with open areas and supports the development of public and commercial functions. The main element of the urban structure is the street, understood as a historical and cultural urban layout. Streets form the framework of the town's spatial structure. Public and private services are concentrated along them. The diversity and concentration of such services shape the image of the town and determine the investment and tourist attractiveness of the areas located in their immediate vicinity. Less favourably perceived are the parts outside the inner-city development, where new buildings are constructed without regard to regional conditions. In these areas, it is particularly important for the town to implement the modernisation and transformation of development of low aesthetic, historical and compositional value.

On the basis of the analysis of the small towns discussed, it can be observed that elements once linked to the agricultural functions that most towns in Wielkopolska used to perform within the settlement network are disappearing from the landscape of these localities. The old development is vanishing, destroyed both by the passage of time and by fires, which frequently affected the extensive wooden building stock that small towns once possessed. The development of Rakoniewice is an example of this process.

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## FUNKCJONALNE CECHY WYBRANYCH MAŁYCH MIAST WPŁYWAJĄCE NA KSZTAŁTOWANIE ROZWOJU PRZESTRZENNEGO

### Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono badania prowadzone w wybranych reprezentatywnych małych miastach Wielkopolski. Do badań jako próby wybrano pięć miast o określonych determinantach jakie pełnią ze względu na swoje położenie. Jako determinanty wybrano charakterystyczne miasta, które spełniają poniższe warunki: miasto w płynie aglomeracji (Pobiedziska), miasto turystyczne (Sieraków), położone na uboczu głównych dróg komunikacyjnych (Odolanów), miasto o niezmienionych historycznych układach urbanistycznych (Rakoniewice) oraz jako piąte miasto cenne dla kultury narodowej (Pyzdry). Jako tezę przyjęto, że Wielkopolskie małe miasta na podobieństwo miast zachodniej Europy będą decydować o tożsamości regionu i charakterze przemian funkcjonalno-przestrzennych.

Dlatego zasadniczym celem działania jest ożywienie gospodarcze i społeczne potencjału turystycznego i kulturalnego, w tym nadanie istniejącym obiektom i terenom nowych funkcji społeczno-gospodarczych, m.in. poprzez odbudowę, modernizację i odnowę zaniedbanych i nie użytkowanych obszarów miast i dzielnic mieszkaniowych w miastach. Współcześnie fala nowoczesności, która bardzo szybko wtargnęła do małych miast i niebezpiecznie się rozwija, stwarza duże niebezpieczeństwo dla prawidłowego kształtowania historyczno-kulturowych układów urbanistycznych miast.

**Słowo kluczowe:** aglomeracja, turystyka, Wielkopolska, kultura narodowa, małe miasta, układy urbanistyczne