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## THE PROBLEMS OF SMALL TOWNS IN UKRAINE AND POLAND

### PROBLEMY MAŁYCH MIAST NA UKRAINIE I W POLSCE

#### Abstract

The development of particular towns is a factor that determines the economical, social and spatial development of the country. Therefore we turn our attention to it with a critical eye. On 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the government in Poland accepted a bill connected with the Country Town Policy 2023, that is addressed to towns. Its main point is to strengthen towns in their sustainable development, betterment of standards of living and workplace creation. The socio-economical transformation that occurred in Poland in 1989 has caused a lot of changes in the country. In Ukraine it happened in 1991 and it appears that due to various reasons, its transformation seems to be a much longer process and the process has not finished yet. This article focuses on the development of small towns in Ukraine and Poland, which, in currently difficult times, find themselves in a hard and unstable socio-economic situation. This article analyzes the economic, demographic and spatial aspects of small towns in Ukraine and Poland.

**Keywords:** urban-type settlement (UTS), small urban settlement, creative economy, decentralization, united territorial communities

#### Streszczenie

Rozwój jednostek miejskich jest czynnikiem, który determinuje rozwój gospodarczy, społeczny i przestrzenny każdego kraju. Dlatego rozwojowi miast poświęca się wiele uwagi. 20 października 2015 r. w Polsce przyjęto uchwałę Rady Ministrów dotyczącą Krajowej Polityki Miejskiej 2023, która adresowana jest do miast. Głównym jej celem jest wzmocnienie miast do zrównoważonego rozwoju, poprawy jakości życia oraz tworzenia miejsc pracy. Transformacja społeczno-gospodarcza, która miała miejsce w Polsce w roku 1989, spowodowała wiele zmian w kraju. Na Ukrainie zmiana nastąpiła w roku 1991, ale, jak się wydaje, z różnych przyczyn przejście Ukrainy na ustrój demokratyczny jest procesem o wiele dłuższym. Proces ten jeszcze się nie zakończył. Artykuł koncentruje się na zagadnieniach rozwoju małych miast na terenie Ukrainy i Polski, które w obecnych czasach znajdują się w trudnej, niestabilnej sytuacji społeczno-ekonomicznej. Poddano analizie aspekty demograficzne, gospodarcze i przestrzenne małych miast na terenie Ukrainy oraz Polski.

**Słowa kluczowe:** osada miejska (UTS), małe miasto, gospodarka kreatywna, decentralizacja, zjednoczone wspólnoty terytorialne

## 1. Small towns in Ukraine

**Formulation of the problem.** The relevance of the research topic is due to a need for the sustainable development of small towns in the difficult conditions of socio-political instability, aggravation of social problems and the strengthening of economic factors for a successful solution. Small towns, along with urban-type settlements, make up the vast majority of urban settlements in Ukraine (93.5%), with 32.9% of the urban population.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The works of V.O. Timokhin [12] and A.V. Goblyk [3] are devoted to the problems of cities' and towns' territorial organization, to the discovery of self-organization as an opportunity for their harmonious development. The processes of revitalization and revalorization of cities/towns as manifestations of self-organization were researched in the works of N.A. Leshchenko [7], M. Orlenko, Yu. Ivashko [10]; demographic aspects of sustainable urban development – in the works of A.Yu. Dmytrenko [5], I.I. Ustinova [14]. The methodological principles of small towns' socio-economic development have been studied by A.V. Hurenko [4], N.V. Zhukov [6]; the urban development practices of small towns have been generalized by V.M. Liakh [8]; the prospects for the development of Ukrainian cities in a post-industrial society were investigated by I.V. Starodub [11], land problems in small towns – by O.V. Malynovska [9] and others. Strategies for increasing the competitiveness of small towns based on branding were investigated by L.V. Borodych, V.V. Shulyk [1], P. Courtney [2], I. Frankel [15] and others.

**The main material.** According to the normative documents [16], small towns in Ukraine are urban dwellings with a population of less than 50 thousand people. Today, they account for 373 towns, which is 80.9% of the total number of cities and towns. The average population in a small town is 17124 people (Table 1). In addition, urban-type settlements (UTS) which number 833, are also included in the category of urban settlements in Ukraine, (885 people). The average UTS population is much smaller – 4287 people. Unlike large cities, small towns have narrow-profile areas of development. Many small towns and urban-type settlements are the administrative centers of the districts, and according to the new arrangements, some of them are the centres of the united territorial communities. The lives of over twenty two million people are connected with small urban settlements in Ukraine. Such settlements play an important role in the formation of the settlement network.

Many of the small industrial urban settlements are located near mining enterprises. In the north-eastern part of the Donetsk region and in the south-eastern part of the Luhansk region, such small towns and urban-type settlements are the basis of the settlement network. They are also situated in the Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia regions. The second common type of small industrial urban settlement are the settlements at agricultural processing enterprises (often a sugar factory).

Small urban settlements involved in transport are often located near major railway nodes (Debaltsevo, Romodan, Zdolbuniv).

It is possible to identify the following main types of small urban settlements according to their functional specialization: industrial, transport, resort and recreational, satellite

settlements (near large cities) and settlements without a specific specialization, which are the service centres for neighboring villages.

Most small urban settlements specializing in resorts and recreation are located in Crimea (Alupka, Saky, Haspra) and in the Carpathians (Morshyn, Vorokhta) near the corresponding natural (sea, mountains) or medical resources (sources of mineral water, healing mud, etc.).

Satellite settlements (Irpın, Vyshneve) are located near the most significant cities (Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipro) and serve as a kind of “sleeping area”. The vast majority of their inhabitants work in the city centre.

The most widespread type of small urban settlement, which is characteristic of all regions of Ukraine (except Donbass), are settlements without a specific specialization, which are the service centres of the surrounding villages (Orzhytsia, Khorol, Zhashkiv).

The tendency of recent years, conditioned by the need to respond to the military aggression of Russia, is the revival of another functional specialization of small urban settlements – defensive. The increase in the size of the Armed Forces and the creation of new military units has led to a rather significant construction of housing for servicemen and their families as well as the development of social infrastructure.

Table 1. The small towns and urban type settlements of Ukraine region in 2018 [17, 18]

No.	Regions of Ukraine	Small towns			Urban type settlements (UTS)		Small towns and UTS	
		Number	Share of total cities / towns, %	Average population	Number	Average population	Share of the total urban population, %	Share of the total population, %
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Autonomous Republic of Crimea (with Sevastopol)*	12	66.7	20081	56	4781	32.2	21.8
2	Vinnitsia region	17	94.4	17 635	29	4643	53.9	27.6
3	Volyn region	8	72.7	12 754	22	4676	37.7	19.7
4	Dnipropetrovsk region	14	70.0	24 582	46	4534	20.4	17.1
5	Donetsk region	39	75.0	18 910	128	3141	29.9	27.1
6	Zhytomyr region	8	66.7	14 808	43	3378	36.3	21.4
7	Transcarpathian region	9	81.8	16 053	18	6535	56.3	20.8
8	Zaporizhzhia region	10	71.4	18 411	22	4960	22.0	17.0
9	Ivano-Frankivsk region	12	80.0	11 411	24	4437	40.2	17.7
10	Kyiv region (with Kyiv)	22	81.5	20 971	30	6658	16.4	14.1
11	Kirovohrad region	10	83.3	16 610	27	4738	48.8	30.7
12	Luhansk region	28	75.7	17 783	108	3111	44.2	38.5



Tab. 1 (cont.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	Lviv region	39	88.6	11 507	34	3986	37.9	23.1
14	Mykolaiv region	7	77.8	20 234	17	5071	29.2	20.0
15	Odessa region	16	84.2	18 463	33	4754	28.4	19.0
16	Poltava region	13	81.3	17 019	20	4765	36.0	22.4
17	Rivne region	10	90.9	22 157	16	5168	55.2	26.2
18	Sumy region	12	80.0	20 822	20	3842	43.3	29.9
19	Ternopil region	17	94.4	10 760	17	4185	53.7	24.1
20	Kharkiv region	15	88.2	21 459	61	5766	30.9	25.0
21	Kherson region	8	88.9	22 807	31	5404	54.6	33.4
22	Kmelnytskyi region	11	84.6	24 354	24	3602	49.0	27.8
23	Cherkasy region	13	81.3	15 493	14	4185	37.7	21.3
24	Chernivtsi region	10	90.9	7658	8	6023	32.0	13.8
25	Chernihiv region	13	81.3	10 907	29	3655	37.4	24.3
	Ukraine*	373	80.9	17 124	883	4287	32.9	22.7

\* data on the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are given as of 01.01.2014 [18]

Small urban settlements have a number of advantages over other urban settlements:

- ▶ the inhabitants of these settlements enjoy close proximity to nature;
- ▶ the favorable environmental conditions of most of them;
- ▶ the rhythm of life is less tense than in large cities;
- ▶ a shorter commute to work;
- ▶ the convenient location of social infrastructure objects (within pedestrian accessibility).

However, the demographic and functional characteristics of towns are determined by certain negative features that affect the process of their development. These include:

- ▶ attitudes towards small towns as peripheries by central and regional authorities;
- ▶ probability of high unemployment;
- ▶ low wages;
- ▶ excessive demographic sensitivity of the town system;
- ▶ increased influence of the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside, who use the infrastructure and production potential of the town, which affects its arrangement and its financial and economic situation.

In Ukraine, state support for small towns is very limited. In 2015, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the State Target Program for Supporting the Socio-Economic Development of Small Towns for 2011–2015 expired. During the first stage of its implementation (2011–2015) it had been envisaged to develop and adopt normative legal acts on the socio-economic development of small towns and improve territorial administration. In practice, the only step taken was in 2012, when a decision was made on certain issues regarding the monitoring of the socio-economic development of small towns, but this was not enacted.



Researchers in the field of economics, investigating the transformation of rural settlements in the post-industrial era, have come to the conclusion that there are deep interconnections between small towns and rural settlements, and therefore there is an urgent problem in developing new approaches to support the socio-economic development of small towns, which also takes into account the enhancement of the “town – village” interconnection [13]. The analysis of the European regional policy revealed the introduction of comprehensive support for small towns as a necessary condition for the preservation of rural settlements. The small towns of European countries act as “hubs” and “drivers”, which extend to the economic development of rural settlements [2].

One of the modern approaches to planning a small town development strategy, proposed by a number of studies [1, 2, 15], is based on the understanding of cultural and natural resources as a combination of economic assets and cultural capital of the town that can make a direct and indirect contribution to the economy. The boom of “creative” or thematic cities in Europe and the United States in the 1990s is an example of how the socio-economic problems of urban regeneration can be addressed through cultural strategies.

The main aspect that connects the culture and economy of the town, is their local identity in the age of globalization. Cultural policy and promotion of the city’s brand and its image in this case, is not a political aspect. It is a means to defend individuality and local specificity against the backdrop of the dominant globalization processes in urbanization.

According to the UNCTAD study [13], cultural heritage (traditional culture, crafts, festivals, monuments of architecture, history, culture and archeology, etc.) is one of the basic groups of creative economical development. Development and export in the field of cultural content have the following advantages for the national economical development:

- ▶ creation of towns with high added value at the expense of the use of cultural resources;
- ▶ creation of new jobs in the service sector;
- ▶ creation of conditions for increasing awareness of the town or its brand of territory;
- ▶ development of specialized tourism (tourism events, extreme tourism, etc.).

As can be seen in Table 1, the small urban settlements of the Poltava region are quite typical for Ukraine; as places, by their role in the settlement system and also by population. Therefore, by their example, it is advisable to consider certain characteristic town planning features of this type of settlement.

The peculiarities of the socio-economic situation at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (first of all, the lack of funds) led to the fact that the town planning documentation in most of the small urban settlements was not updated in time. Their urban development was guided by master plans developed in Soviet times, which did not correspond to modern realities. A mass update of town planning documentation for small towns and urban-type settlements began in the early 2010s and has continued until today. By 2021 it is planned to fully provide all settlements (including rural settlements) with town planning documentation developed using geographic information systems (GIS).

Specialists of the Poltava National Technical Yuri Kondratyuk University also took part in the elaboration of master plans for small urban settlements (in particular, Bilyki and Orzhytsia of the Poltava region). This made it possible to identify town planning problems, which are also characteristic of other small urban settlements.

The basis of the small urban settlements' economies are manufacturing enterprises. However, their placement often does not meet the current sanitary standards. Not only residential development, but also the public centre area (Fig. 1) falls within the sanitary-protective zone of the enterprise. In the urban-type settlement of Bilyky, the main problem was the placement of a pig farm, where, in separate periods, up to 120,000 pigs were kept in close proximity to the public centre. In the development of the master plan, the capacity limitations of the enterprise were set – not more than 2500 pigs. Now the company no longer conducts business. However the closure of such enterprises is far from always the basis of significant socio-economic problems for small urban settlements. Indeed, due to the use of advanced technologies, these enterprises do not require a large number of employees and often have a legal address outside of their actual location, where they pay taxes.

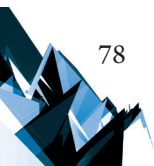
Another problem is the central location of the cemeteries in the settlement, which developed historically (Figs. 1, 2). As a rule, the development of new master plans for settlements is expected to close such cemeteries. In their sanitary zones, there are restrictions on the new construction of residential buildings, educational institutions, health care, etc. for twenty to twenty five years following the most recent burial. A new cemetery is expected to be built on the periphery of the settlement.

It should be noted that the problems with the observance of sanitary protection zones from industrial and communal areas are not typical for all small urban settlements. First and foremost, they are relevant for urban-type settlements (UTS) and those towns that have recently moved from the category of UTS to the category of town. In small towns with a larger population, these problems were generally solved in the Soviet period.

As a rule, when developing a new master plan for small urban settlements, its territory expands, mainly due to agricultural land or forest funds. This is due to the efforts of the territorial community to control more land resources. When developing the master plan of the urban-type settlement of Orzhytsia (Orzhytsia district, Poltava region) the area was increased from 589.26 hectares to 1060.05 hectares. From this area, 87 hectares are occupied by forests, 10.2 hectares by rivers and other natural reservoirs and 355.05 hectares by agricultural lands. The same trend is observed in cities/towns in general. Thus, according to [19, p. 124], built-up areas (residential, public, industrial, communal, etc.) in Ukrainian cities/towns occupy only 35.3% of their total area, while agricultural lands occupy 33.1%, forests and other forest-cover areas – 20.6%, land of water resources – 4.2%, land of other purposes – 6.8%.

The public centres of most small urban settlements (with the exception of several regions in Western Ukraine) were formed in the Soviet period and have all the necessary sets of administrative buildings and facilities for service and trade (Fig. 3). As a rule, new master plans provide for the addition of existing service facilities, trade arrangements (especially so-called small architectural forms – kiosks, trade pavilions, etc.), as well as streamlining the street and road networks and improvement of the territory.

The improvement of the central parts of Ukraine's small urban settlements has recently been influenced by two reforms: decommunisation, wherein monuments to Lenin and other communist figures were dismantled, as well as fiscal decentralization, which resulted in much larger local budgets.



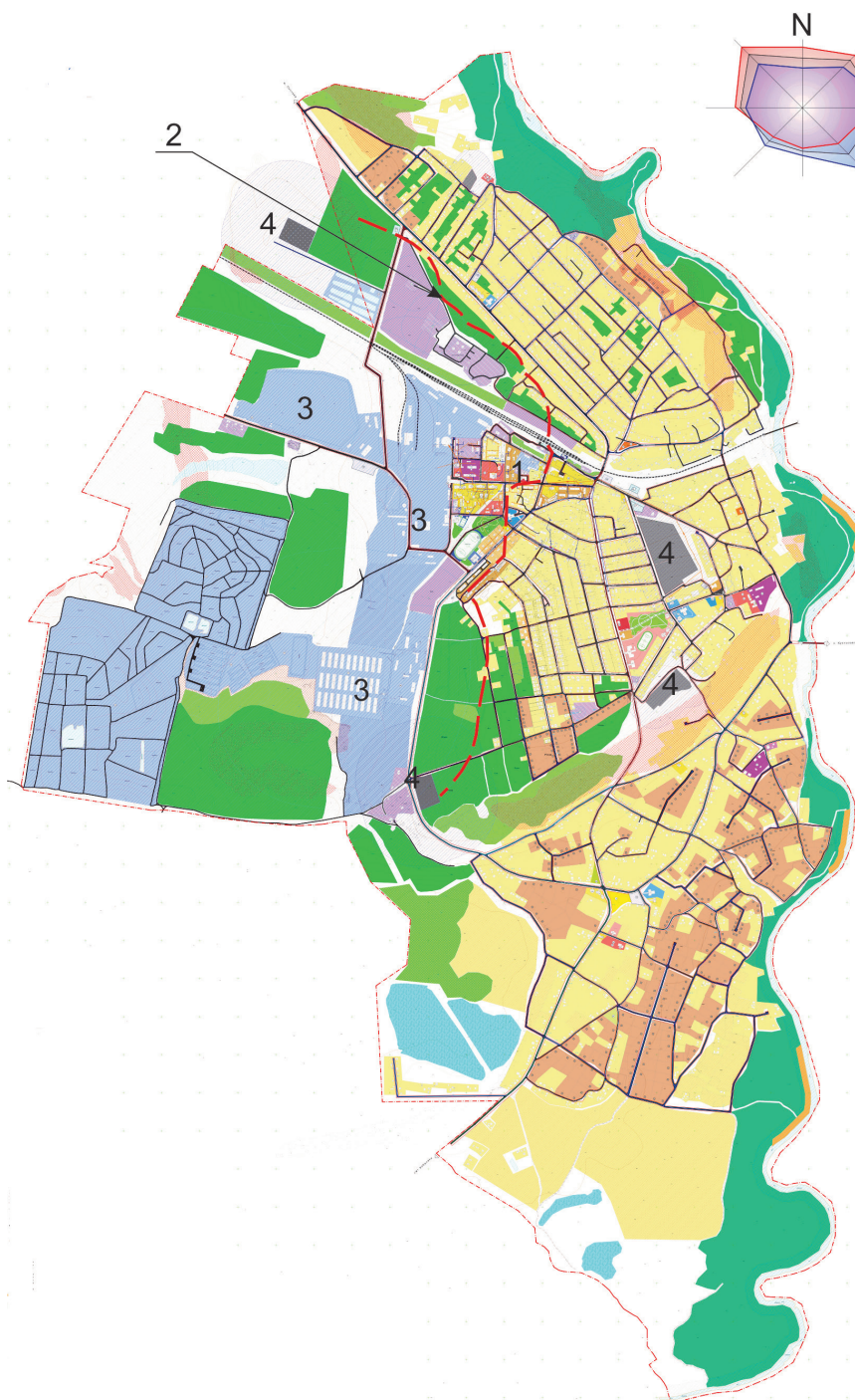


Fig. 1. The master plan scheme of the urban type settlement Bilyky, Kobeliaky district, Poltava region, Ukraine (PoltNTU, Chief Architect of the project A. Dmytrenko, 2016): 1 – public centre; 2 – boundary of the sanitary protective zone; 3 – production areas; 4 – cemeteries (existing and projected)



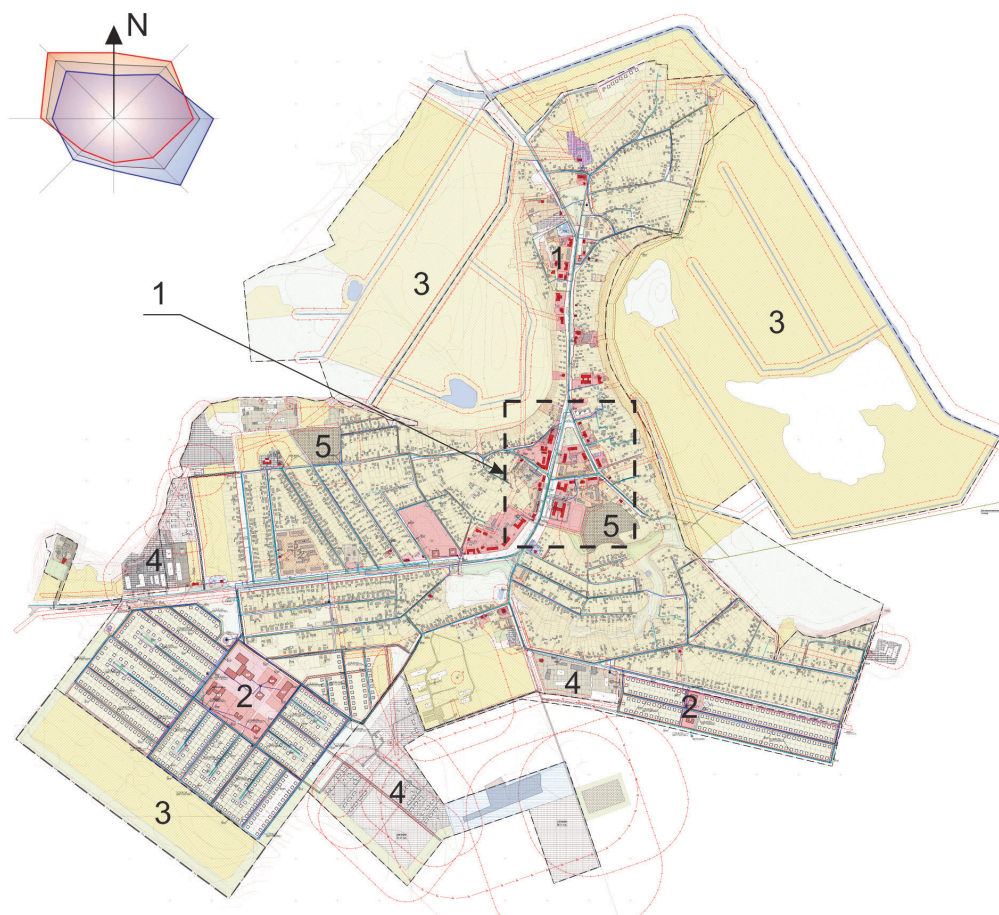


Fig. 2. Master plan scheme of the urban-type settlement Orzhytsia, Orzhytsia district, Poltava region, Ukraine (PoltNTU, Chief Architect of the project A. Dmytrenko, 2017): 1 – public centre of the settlement; 2 – public sub-centres; 3 – agricultural lands; 4 – production areas; 5 – cemeteries (currently in use)

After Ukraine gained independence in 1991, monuments to Lenin were dismantled only in its western regions. In the rest of the territory, the monument to Lenin (or other figures of the communist regime) was the central element of the public centre ensemble in all district administrative centers until 2014–2015 as well as the vast majority of urban settlements in general. The wave of “Lenin falling”, which swept the country in 2014–2015, posed a problem, if not for reconstruction, then at least for the improvement of the central areas of the cities/towns (including small ones).

At the same time, the decentralization reform that started in Ukraine in 2014, already led to a significant increase in local budgets in 2016. For local authorities, the improvement of the central part of the settlement (along with road repairs) has become one of the most effective ways to demonstrate to voters their desire and ability to take care of community interests. Therefore, since 2016, with massive reconstruction and major repairs of communal educational, cultural, and health care facilities in many small urban settlements,

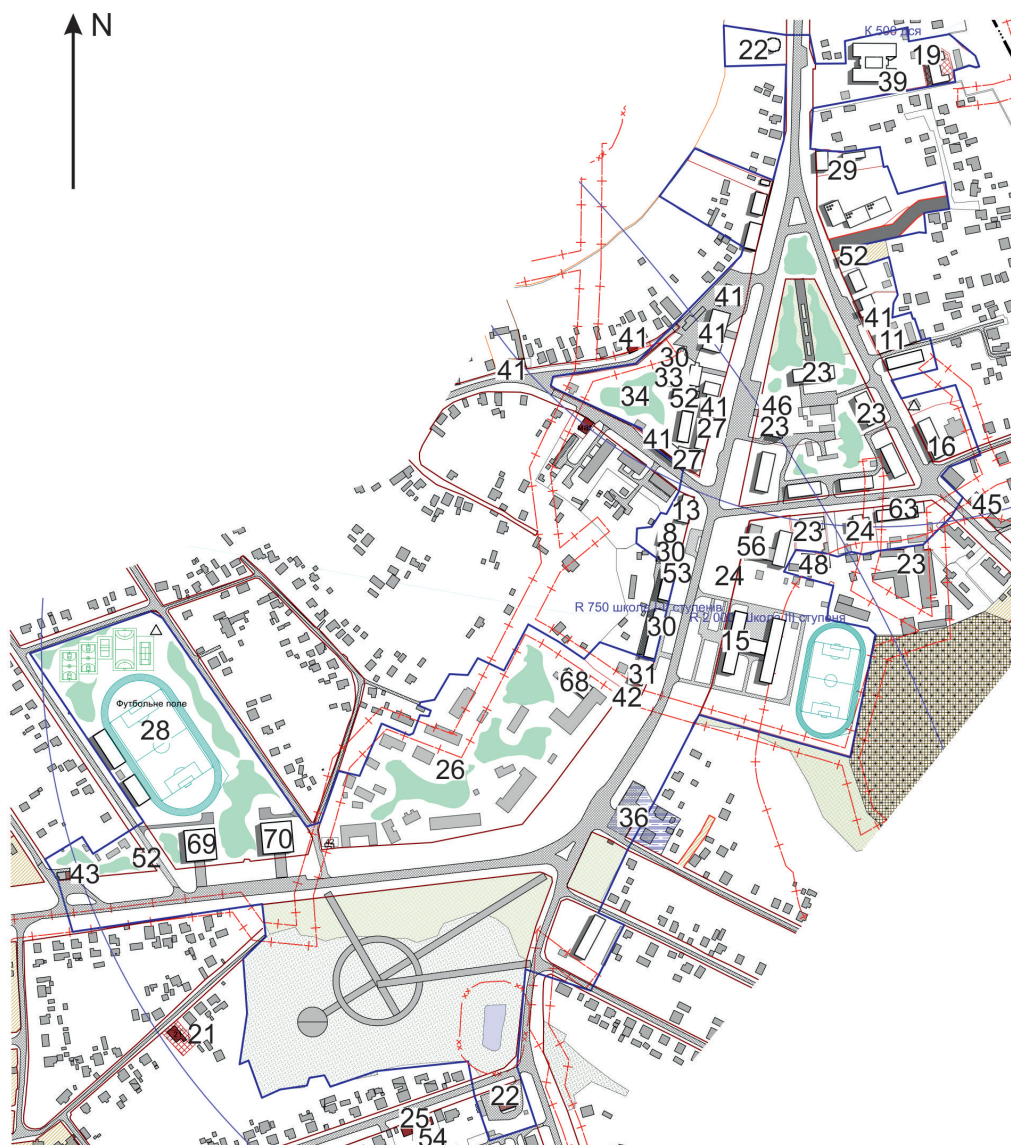


Fig. 3. Scheme of the Orzhytsia settlement public center (PoltNTU, Chief Architect of the project A. Dmytrenko, 2017): 8 – Executive Committee of the Orzhytsia settlement Council; 11 – public prosecutor's office; 12 – court; 13 – district department of the Pension Fund of Ukraine; 15 – school; 16 – editorial office of the district newspaper 'Orzhytski Visti'; 19 – library, historical Museum; 21 – prayer house; 22 – orthodox church; 23 – Orzhytsia district Council; 24 – fire department; 25 – veterinary hospital; 26 – central district hospital; 27 – pharmacy; 28 – stadium; 29 – branch of the State Treasury Service; 30 – bank branch; 31 – insurance company office; 33 – district Consumer Union office; 34 – market; 36 – bus station; 39 – kindergarten; 41 – shop; 42 – shopping pavilion; 46 – game library; 48 – municipal utility company office; 52 – office building; 63 – district Police Department; 68 – polyclinic (project); 69 – sports hall (project); 70 – indoor swimming pool

major repairs or reconstruction of the central part have already been fulfilled or at least planned. In this case, as a rule, there is no other construction placed on the site of the demolished monument. Instead, the replacement of paving, landscaping, street benches and lanterns was carried out.

**Conclusion.** Today, most small towns in Ukraine are characterized by low levels of socio-economic development and business activity, but they have significant touristic and recreational, cultural-historical and natural potential. Promotion of tourism development in small cities should be considered as a tool for raising the level of employment of the population, reducing labor migration, strengthening business activity, improving the financial performance of enterprises and forming a positive tourist image.

A quantitative ratio analysis of small towns in the urban settlement system of Ukraine was carried out; their place, role, advantages and unfavorable features were determined in comparison with large cities. Modern approaches to town strategy planning are presented. By the example of small urban settlements Bilyky and Orzhytsia, typical town planning problems were identified from this category of Ukraine's cities.

## 2. Small towns in Poland

For a Town Policy to be effective it is necessary to have knowledge of town development processes in order to monitor it. Having the right town policy is a very complicated process; we need to know a lot about towns, their development and functionality.

The subject of small towns in Poland has been studied for a long time and it has been dealt with by the greatest Urban planners, architects and authorities. The issues of continuously occurring change and transformation, were investigated by Adamczewska-Wejchert [20], Baginski [21], Bartowicz [22], Zaniewska [33] and Gzell [23, 24].

From the general number of 184 average-sized towns, up to 51.6% were located in five provinces: śląskie (21), wielkopolskie (18), dolnośląskie (17) and łódzkie (15). In the most urban province, śląskie, almost every third town was located (30.8 %). Small towns are presented in a much larger number in the structure of Polish settlement units [30]. According to him, a town status and so-called "town privileges" is given to 893 settlement units. Small towns, i.e. of around twenty thousand residents, make up the largest group at 673 units. The number of medium-sized towns, (twenty to eighty thousand residents) is 180, whilst the number of cities, (more than eighty thousand residents), is only forty [37, p. 32; 11].

Small towns are shrinking. The shrinking of town populations is one of the most important social, economic and spatial phenomena occurring nowadays.

The greatest influence on the process of shrinking towns in Poland are determinants which are inseparably connected with economic transformation, the restructuring of industry, as well as related demographic aspects. The problem of shrinking towns [38] is visible in urban centers where population loss, falling employment rates and negative natural growth are being observed (the balance of migration and transformation of the urban economy structure are not insignificant).



The socio-economic transformation that occurred in Poland in 1989, caused a return to the market economy. One of the main factors influencing urban development was the fact that the control over town spaces was given to local authorities. They represented the interest of local communities in a new political situation.

The socio-economic transformation restored the importance of right to property and freedom of choice. That led, in a great part, to the development of private enterprise in Poland, resulting in an increase of the number of small and medium-sized companies.

The political and economic occurrences observed after the transformation, contributed to the existence of “new” phenomena: increased land-use, dynamic change of urban landscape and architecture as well as an increase in the number of functions within urban areas.

To develop dynamically; municipalities, cities, counties, or voivodeships need an influx of development factors: financial capital, technology, work force and information [27, 28]. Gaining them through marketing became the aim [39]. In his book ‘Territorial Marketing’, Markowski states that the essence of territorial marketing lies in motive recognition, creating the migration of individuals, owners, managers of firms and supervisory authorities and creating an interesting offer for them, based on the assets of a particular town [27, p. 53].

To fulfill this aim, groups of strategists take actions. They prepare, realize and coordinate marketing activities in a particular town in order to “increase the attractiveness of settlement units”.

The tools and means of planners’ activities are about recognizing the benefits which can be offered to particular groups of interest: investors, entrepreneurs, tourists and new residents. In practice, the steps will favour new investments, new funds, new workplaces, a new work force, etc. [8].

In order to realise these aims, Markowski believes it is necessary for us to familiarize ourselves with the new needs and desires of all social groups, most of all residents of towns, to adjust the organization and conditions of service held by public institutions [27, p. 61].

Gradually, towns will start competing with each other and the differentiation of their economic development will become more visible. The competitiveness of cities depended, in a great way, on their inherited resources, different potential and local authorities’ policy.

First and foremost, the large metropolises of Poland; Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, Wroclaw and Trójiasto, became the most competitive due to their potential to attract new investment and people.

Regions play a great role in town development. Through their ambience, they can have a favourable influence on a particular enterprise [31]. However, the key feature that influences the localization of an enterprise is “availability of communication infrastructure”, which is intrinsically linked with the availability of recipients and suppliers, or skilled personnel. The investment localization is often linked with the entrepreneurs’ place of residence (The town of Nowy Sącz may serve as an example) [40]. The Von Boventner School of Localization, that expands the theories of Christaller and Losch, underlines the role of places with high centralization.

Another localization feature connected with investments is the presence of firms of the same field in the same area. (The town of Oswiecim may be an example.) The town of





Fig. 4. Oswiecim – map, [online] <https://www.google.com/maps/place/O%C5%9Bwi%C4%99cim/@50.0514635,19.1990327,14z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x471694e04f384c31:0x1e1c6b2131976ebd!8m2!3d50.0343982!4d19.2097782> (access: 11.07.2019)

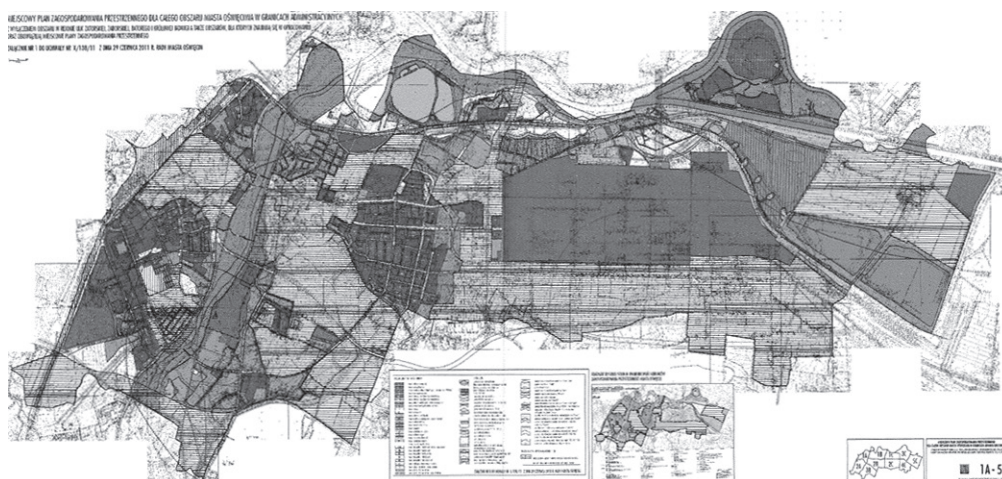


Fig. 5. Development Strategy, Town of Oswiecim, local zoning plan, appendix no 1 Strategia Rozwoju Miasta Oświęcim, Plan miejscowy zał. Nr 1, [online] [http://web.um.oswiecim.pl/strategia-uwagi/strategia\\_rozwoju\\_miasta\\_oswiecim\\_na\\_lata\\_2014-2020.pdf](http://web.um.oswiecim.pl/strategia-uwagi/strategia_rozwoju_miasta_oswiecim_na_lata_2014-2020.pdf) (access: 16.07.2016)

Oswiecim is an industrial town, attractive for the development of investment activities due to its location close to the important economic regions of: Górnośląski Okręg Przemysłowy, the Krakow agglomeration and the town of Bielsko-Biala. Economic activity varies; the dominant business is the chemical industry, the mechanical sector, electro-engineering and the production of construction materials. For years, the chemical industry attracted both people and entrepreneurs. We can easily say that the number of residents of Oswiecim has always been strictly connected with it. The census held in Oswiecim in 1946 declared 6708 residents. The largest number of residents occurred in 1992, which boasted a population of 44,874. By

2002 the number had decreased to 41,785 and at the end of 2016 it numbered about thirty seven thousand residents [41].

Through its different processes, the socio-economic transformation of 1989 in Poland affected the chemical industry, particularly the Chemical Factory in Oswiecim, later known as Chemical Company Dwory. A lot of vacant areas and empty production halls appeared, which caused the shrinking of workplaces and an increase in unemployment. As an answer to this problem, the city reacted by creating the City Zone of Economic Activity and Oswiecim's Enterprise Incubator, that were to help create new workplaces and develop local enterprise. As part of Krakow Technology Park, the Special Economic Zone helped gain new investors. Through all the activities directed towards entrepreneurs and investors, the interest in the town has grown. This is visible today, i.e. in the area of the Town Zone of Economic Activity (MSAG), that occupies the land of the former Chemical Factory (Synthos company) [41].

A good investment atmosphere is always visible in the growth of town income, and consequently influences the quality of public services as well as the economic growth of the town and the region.

The low birth rate is worrying. Towns of this size in Poland are becoming abandoned by young people who cannot see any prospective for their personal development. People of a certain age tend to stay there due to economic and health reasons, but most of all due to a feeling of being rooted in the place, "feeling at home, being amongst ones' own people". They do not want to change their place of living. Since 2001: a negative population growth has been observed in the town of Oswiecim (except for the year 2007), with a negative migration balance in the years of 2001–2012. The number of residents in neighbouring towns has been increasing [34].

"The dominant group of age composition in Oswiecim is formed by people within working age, but the relative share of the post-working age population has been growing. The non-working age population per hundred people has been increasing successively over last three years relative to the working age population: from 60.7% in 2009, 61% in 2010, 62.1% in 2011 to 63.3% in 2012. In particular there is a clear and steady increase in the number of post-working age residents, which should be seen as an unfavourable demographic trend" [34, p. 49].

Stopping the outflow of residents from a town can be achieved through creating workplaces, and attractive conditions for living and rest. Investing in social infrastructure, culture, sport and entertainment, may be key for achieving the goal of making towns more attractive [10].

Towns should become places where we want to live and return to. The overriding objective of town management is to strive for a high quality of life [6] for the residents, an increase in prosperity expressed the large spectrum of their diverse needs. Sustainable urban development, sustainable urban design, urban construction and sustainable urban transport will be reflected in its social dimension [26].

### 3. Summary

The town development policy, both in Poland and Ukraine, should be based on the paradigm of sustainable development. The process of town shrinking visible in Poland and Ukraine can be seen as negative. The problem should be recognized as dependent on a variety of conditions that lead to multi-aspect consequences. The most crucial determinants are connected with economical transformation and industry structures. Towns are characterized by similar processes, both in Poland and Ukraine, such as: negative birth rate, a decrease in the number of workplaces, aging of societies and the worsening quality of the town environment.

The process of shrinking cities, which is visible in many Polish cities, can undoubtedly be considered as negative. One of the most important challenges for urban planning in 21st-century Poland is to counteract this phenomenon. In a small number of urban centers, the authorities have already taken some steps to reduce the negative effects of the process. The crucial objective is demographic growth in towns, which can be achieved through a variety of tasks at different levels [30].

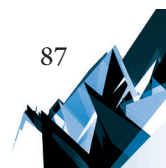
Recommendations:

- ▶ Town involvement in interdisciplinary projects, innovation, systems of incentives, relief related to Special Economic Zones, aims to increase employment by achieving demographic growth in cities;
- ▶ Activities held at all levels by the authorities and management strategies with regard to achieving long-term effects particularly focused on the demographic changes of towns;
- ▶ Adaptation of towns to new needs, innovation and space development;
- ▶ Taking care of the quality of urban spaces and their use through cultural and recreational activities [32];
- ▶ Education.

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