

TOWN

Small and medium sized towns in their functional territorial context

Applied Research 2013/1/23

Case Study Report | Mazovia (Poland)
Version 15/07/2013

This report presents the interim results of an Applied Research Project conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

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Text

Table of contents

1	National context	5
1.1	Definition of SMSTs in national context	5
1.2	Literature review of studies of national/regional settlement systems and SMSTs.....	7
1.3	Territorial aspects of local government system	11
2	Territorial identification of SMSTs in Mazovia Voivodeship.....	15
2.1	Verification of the morphological/geomatic identification of SMSTs and administrative identification of SMSTs	17
2.2	Functional analysis of settlement systems: identification of SMSTs and related urban regions	17
2.3	Identification of SMSTs' territorial arrangements and positioning the centres of microregions	23
2.3.1	Territorial arrangements	23
2.3.2	Position of the microregional centres in the urban hierarchy	25
2.3.3	Selection of case studies in Mazovia Region	30
3	Territorial performance of selected SMSTs in Mazovia region	33
3.1	Garwolin.....	38
3.1.1	Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in the settlement system.....	41
3.1.2	Socio-economic and demographic performance	44
3.2	Łosice46	
3.2.1	Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in settlement systems46	
3.2.2	Socio-economic and demographic performance	50
3.3	Szydłowiec.....	54
3.3.1	Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in national/sub-national settlement system	54
3.3.2	Socio-economic and demographic performance	57
4	Policy dimension of SMSTs	61
4.1	Impact of EU, national and regional policies on SMSTs.....	61
4.2	Local development policies and practices of SMSTs	63
4.2.1	Garwolin	63
4.2.2	Łosice	66
4.2.3	Szydłowiec	67
4.3	Policy recommendations	71
5	References	74

1 National context

1.1 Definition of SMSTs in national context

The 'city' in Poland is defined as "a settlement unit, predominantly built-up and serving non-agricultural functions, that has been granted civic rights (through a special municipal law) or city status by specific regulations" (Central Statistical Office, CSO). According to this definition, the size of a unit (area and population) does not determine its status, but rather the awarding of city status to it. Nevertheless, municipal laws are highly correlated with the size of the entity, although there are also towns with very small populations. For instance, in 2010, the smallest town in Poland, Wyśmierzyce (Mazovia Voivodeship), had a population of 911 inhabitants, while the largest village (in terms of population), Kozy (Silesian Voivodeship), had 12,194 inhabitants in the same year.

Among the conditions governing the granting of city status are, *inter alia*: functional and spatial characteristics of a settlement, the appropriate technical infrastructure, a sufficient number of supra-local institutions that perform the functions of a town, a sufficient number of people, among whom 2/3 should work in sectors other than agriculture. However, there are no real quantitative criteria to support decision-making in granting city status.

The small- and medium-sized towns are usually treated separately, which means that they belong to separate categories of settlement. Nevertheless, there is no official definition that would allow us to single out these settlement units. The term 'small- and medium-sized town' is used most commonly with regard to the size of the entity (defined by the number of inhabitants) or with regard to the functions performed (usually mainly administrative). Moreover, small towns are often analysed together with the surrounding rural areas and considered centres of local development. According to J. Bański (2006), certain small towns perform economic functions (e.g. in terms of structure of employment) which are more characteristic for villages than for towns. In other words, small towns (with no more than 10,000 inhabitants) constitute an integral part of rural areas (Hunek 2005) – or more precisely, together with their rural surroundings, they constitute local areas for socio-economic development (Heffner 2005).

Scientific attempts to define small towns in Poland refer to population criteria in the majority of cases. Nevertheless, settlement units with less than 20,000 (Kielczewska-Zaleska 1969) or less than 10,000 inhabitants (depending on the author; in terms of size of population there is no clear definition of a small town in Polish literature) are usually classified as small towns¹. However, there are examples to be found in Polish scientific literature, where the population threshold for small towns is 5,000 inhabitants (Szymańska 1992), 10,000 (Sokołowski 1999, Jażdżewska 2007), 20,000 (Jerczyński 1977, Bisaga 2004, Kwiatek-Sołtys 2004) or even 50,000 (Bagiński 1998). These small towns are often the capitals of the smallest administrative unit – the commune/municipality (Polish: *gmina*). An overview on existing Polish definitions of small- and medium-sized towns is presented in Table 1.

It should be also added that considering the uneven density and urbanisation rate in different voivodeships (Polish: *województwo*) in Poland, the population threshold for small towns ought to be flexible, to some extent. In other words, the population threshold in less populated and less urbanized regions could be set at a lower level (Budner 1996) in order to respond properly to the internal regional preconditions of each region.

¹ M. Kielczewska-Zaleska (1957) claimed that settlement units considered as small towns should not be the seats of the county.

From a sociological perspective, the size of the town is not necessarily tied to the number of inhabitants. Thus, the small town does not address all the needs and desires of the contemporary citizen (Ziółkowski 1965).

In addition, medium-sized towns also have diverse interpretations. In Poland, it is generally accepted that these entities have less than 100,000 residents. In numerous cases, medium-sized towns are the centre of second-tier administrative units – counties (Polish: *powiat*) - and some of them are defined as growth poles. According to the Central Statistical Office, in 2011 there were 908 cities in Poland (Fig. 1), including:

- 39 cities with over 100,000 residents;
- 181 cities with 20,000 to 100,000 residents;
- 180 cities with 10,000 to 20,000 residents;
- 508 towns with less than 10,000 residents.

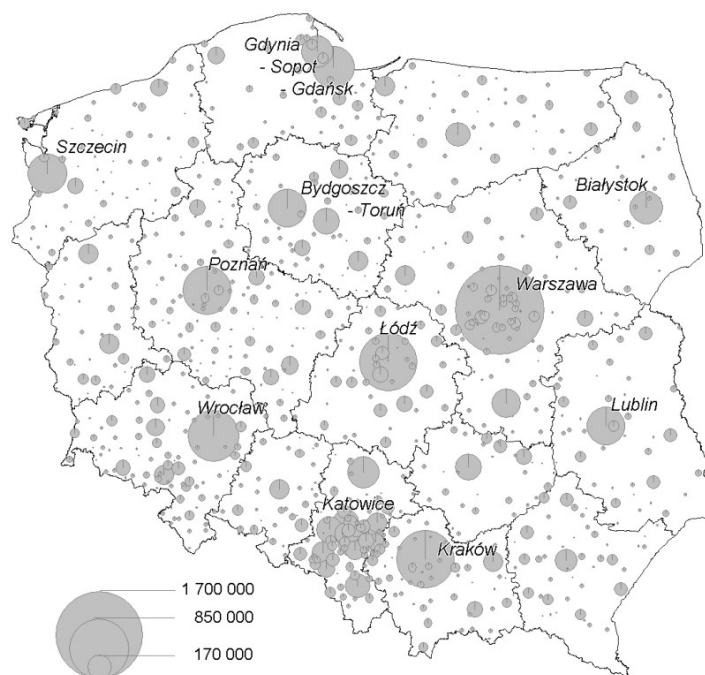


Fig. 1. Distribution of towns by number of inhabitants (2010)

Source: Czapiewski, Janc 2011.

Tab. 1. Overview of different definitions of small and medium-sized towns in Poland

	Definition	Criteria	Threshold(s)
Statistical definitions (Central Statistical Office)	settlement unit with functional infrastructure and serving non-agricultural functions, that has been granted civic rights (through a special municipal law) or granted city status by specific regulations	population	Small towns < 20,000 Medium-sized towns 20,000 - 100,000
Political (administrative) definitions	settlement unit, predominantly built-up and serving non-agricultural functions, that has been granted civic rights (through a special municipal law) or granted city status by specific regulations	City status granted (following certain criteria, such as: functional and spatial characteristics of settlement, the appropriate technical infrastructure, sufficient number of supra-local institutions that perform the functions of a town, sufficient number of people, out of which 2/3 should work in sectors other than agriculture) + population criterion	Small towns < 20,000 Medium-sized towns 20,000 - 100,000
Definition(s) in national studies	settlement unit, predominantly built-up and serving non-agricultural functions, that has been granted civic rights (through a special municipal law) or granted city status by specific regulations	Population	Small towns < 5,000 or 10,000 or 20,000, also depending on the region studied; Medium-sized towns < 100,000

Source: own elaboration.

1.2 Literature review of studies of national/regional settlement systems and SMSTs

Issues concerning the settlement system and small and medium-sized towns in Poland are investigated primarily by spatial planners, urban planners and geographers. The literature on this subject is very rich, but the vast majority of monographs and articles are written in Polish.

Studies of the settlement system in Poland began soon after the period of partitions, in the first decades of the 20th century. The researchers analyzed the structure of the settlement, forms and types of settlements (see: Kiełczewska-Zaleska 1969). After World War II, the discussion on the settlement structure in Poland took on both theoretical and practical dimensions, being the result of a dynamic process of urbanisation and industrialisation that swept the country. Theoretical concepts for the development of settlements were accompanied by further work on national spatial development plans (Dziewoński 1956, 1983, Korcelli 1974, Maik 1988). Researchers focused on issues

related to the economic and functional settlement structure, mainly using quantitative methods (Dziewoński 1971).

After the collapse of the socialist system, discussions on the new challenges facing the country's spatial development began. The attention of researchers was focused on a system of cities, especially on the development of urban and metropolitan areas (*Koncepcja Polityki...* 2001, *Koncepcja Przestrzennego...* 2011). Generally, the studies are interdisciplinary and cover a very wide range of topics - from the urban climate and its impact on human health to the valorisation of urban property or the urban physiography. Additionally, these studies also refer to the European dimension (ESPON, Central Europe, FP6 and FP7).

Modern studies of towns are more associated with the humanist and radical currents. Research topics are very broad and urban studies are divided into various sub-disciplines. Increasingly, researchers turn their attention to the social dimension of their studies (Jędrzejczyk 2004, Węclawowicz 2007). The diversity of research approaches seeks to identify different ways of describing and interpreting the processes that shape the urban space. Representative studies include topics like: new features and the role of the settlement system (Korcelli-Olejniczak 2007), the transformation of the administrative and functional structure of post-socialist cities (Hasse, Vaishar, Węclawowicz 2011), the availability of communications and urban commuting (Komornicki at al. 2010), the development of new housing (Stępnik 2012), as well as contemporary processes of filtering and gentrification which impact the socio-spatial structures (Górczyńska 2012).

Concerning the approaches and different themes typically analysed with regard to small and medium-sized towns in Poland, two different periods of investigation can be distinguished, in which different issues were given particular attention (Szymańska, Grzelak-Kostulska 2005²):

- until World War II: mainly monographic works dedicated to the history of urban settlement and its evolution, localisation and morphological structure of small towns,
- immediately after II World War: continuation of previous research with a focus on localisation issues and the question of how to activate small towns on a socio-economic level (together with the identification of an existing base for development and diagnosis of chances for development based on internal strengths and features of the towns' milieu); connections between towns and their surrounding areas (daily mobility of population) and migration issues; the functional structure of small towns (based on the theory of the economic base); analyses of the main functions of towns and their structures as well as land use structures.

The questions of economic performance and position as well as the spatial structures of small and medium-sized towns were discussed in different publications dedicated to specific regions: Śląskie (Szajnowska-Wysocka, Zuzńska-Żyśko 1999, 2004, Zuzńska-Żyśko 2003, 2005, 2007), Opolskie (Rajman 1977, Rajchel 2002, Śmigielska, Słodczyk 2003) and Dolnośląskie (e.g. Obrębański 1990, Brol 1991, Łoboda 1992, 1993, Masztalski 2005), but also in Pomorze (Jażewicz 2001a, 2001b, Rydz, Jażewicz 1999, 2001), Wielkopolska (Chojnicki, Czyż 1989, Budner 1996, Świdurska 2004), Małopolska (Kwiatk-Sołtys A., 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2004) and Łódzkie (Bartosiewicz 2007, Młynarczyk-Jasińska 2007). A separate group of publications is constituted by monographs about selected cities, combining qualitative and quantitative research on their history, economy, culture,

² These authors provided an accurate review of existing Polish literature about small towns since the beginning of the XXth century.

demography, etc. Studies of this type are mainly analytical and cognitive (e.g. Kwiatek-Sołtys 1996, Zuzńska-Żyśko 2001, Młynarska-Kaletynowa 2002, Kaczmarek, Allman 2002, Łaguna 2003, Barański 2005).

Recent research concerning small towns also cover the topic of demographic changes and migration patterns (Lewiński 1988, Kurowska-Stoppel 1987, Makowska 1989, Kwiatek-Sołtys 1996b, 2000b, Jażewicz 2001, Rajchel 2002, Zuzńska-Żyśko 2003) as well as the quality of life in small towns (e.g. Nytko-Wołoszczuk 2005, Gierańczyk 2007, Zborowski, Winiarczyk-Raźniak 2007). What is more, studies about the current position of small towns in national and/or regional urban systems (Bagiński 1994, 1998, Dams-Lepiarz 2004) as well as about the changing role of small towns (Jażdżewska 2007) were undertaken. In the majority of this research, small towns are analysed as the local centres in rural areas; however, small towns in Poland were also studied from the perspective of their localisation within metropolitan areas (Heffner, Marszał 2007).

In addition, topics connected to small and medium-sized towns often constitute a part of publications that are greater in scope (Harańczyk 1998, Rydz 2006; Heffner, Marszał 2011), or scientific articles. In these publications, the following aspects, among others, are examined: the role of small towns in rural areas (e.g. Heffner 2003, Lamprecht 2004), the functional relationships of small and medium towns with major agglomerations (Bański, Czapiewski 2011), the functional structure of small towns³ (e.g. Kulczyńska 2007, Suchta, Jasiński 2007), their economic base (Pałka 2007), the development of local governance in small towns (Heffner, Marszał 2012), the development of economic functions (Czapiewski 2006). In general, studies have revealed the weak links between small towns; the over-dependence on the largest cities, especially in the context of the labour market, services and education; demographic problems (aging and migration outflow), the processes of revitalization and improvement of infrastructure; and the phenomenon of increasing the role of SMTs as centres of local development.

Selected examples of literature:

Bagiński E., 1998, *Małe miasta w strukturze osiedleńczej Polski [Small towns in the settlement structure of Poland]*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej, Wrocław.

Bański J., 2006, *Geografia polskiej wsi [Geography of Polish countryside]*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa.

Bański J., Czapiewski K., Mazur M., 2012, *Policentryczność rozwoju Mazowsza [Polycentricity in development of Mazovia region]*, Mazowsze Studia Regionalne, 10, Mazowieckie Biuro Planowania Regionalnego w Warszawie, Warszawa, p.71-88.

Budner W., 1996, *System osadniczy, badanie dynamiki miast [Settlement system, research on towns' Dynamics]*, Akademia Ekonomiczna w Poznaniu, Poznań.

Czapiewski K., 2006, *Małe miasta w przestrzeni rolniczej i nierolniczej - analiza porównawcza sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej [Small towns in rural and non-rural space – comparative analysis of socio- economic performance]*, [in]: E. Rydz (ed.), *Rola małych miast w rozwoju obszarów wiejskich*, Studia Obszarów Wiejskich 11, PTG, IGiPZ PAN, Warszawa.

³ The analysis of the functional structure of small towns is usually based on the number/share of persons employed in the three or four main economic sectors (agriculture, industry, and services, sometimes divided into market and public services).

Dziewoński K., 1956, *Geografia osadnictwa i zaludnienia, dorobek, podstawy teoretyczne i problemy badawcze [Settlement and population geography, scientific achievements, theoretical and research problems]*, Przegląd Geograficzny, 28, 4, p.721-764.

Dziewoński K., 1971, *Baza ekonomiczna i struktura funkcjonalna miast (The economic base and the functional structure of the towns)*, PWN, Warszawa.

Dziewoński K., 1983, *Settlement systems: theoretical assumptions and research problems*, Geographia Polonica, 47, p.7-21.

Heffner K., 2005, *Czynniki rozwoju obszarów wiejskich – rola małych miast [Factors for development of rural areas – the role of small towns]*, [in] A. Rosner (Ed) *Uwarunkowania i kierunki przemian społeczno-gospodarczych na obszarach wiejskich*, IRWiR PAN, Warszawa, p.299-329.

Heffner K., Marszał T., 2007, *Małe miasta w obszarach metropolitalnych [Small towns in metropolitan areas]*, Biuletyn KPZK, z. 232, PAN, Warszawa.

Heffner K., Marszał T. (eds), 2011, *Rewitalizacja, gentryfikacja i problemy rozwoju małych miast [Revitalization, gentrification and development problems of small towns]* Studia KPZK PAN, z. 136, Warszawa.

Heffner K., Marszał T. (eds), 2012, *Przestrzeń publiczna małych miast [Public space of the small towns]*, Studia KPZK PAN, z. 144, Warszawa.

Jążdżewska I., 2007, *Rola małych miast w miejskiej sieci osadniczej Polski [The role of small towns in the urban settlement system in Poland]*, [in] E. Rydz (ed) *Podstawy i perspektywy rozwoju małych miast*, Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku, Słupsk, p.31-46.

Kiełczewska-Zaleska M., 1957, *Problemy geograficzno-gospodarcze małych miast w Polsce w świetle dokonanych opracowań [Geographic and economic problems of small towns in Poland in the light of existing research]*, [in] Studia geograficzne nad aktywizacją małych miast, Prace Geograficzne, nr 9, Warszawa, p.37-60.

Koncepcja polityki przestrzennego zagospodarowania kraju (The Concept of the Spatial Development Policy), 2001, Monitor Polski, 26, Warszawa, p. 503-595.

Koncepcja Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju 2030 (National Spatial Development Concept, 2030), 2011, MRR, Warszawa.

Rydz E. (ed), 2006, *Rola małych miast w rozwoju obszarów wiejskich [The role of small towns in rural development]*, Studia Obszarów Wiejskich, IGiPZ PAN, PTG, Warszawa.

Szymańska D., Grzelak-Kostulska E., 2005, *Problematyka małych miast w Polsce w świetle literatury [Small towns in Poland in the light of literature]*, [in:] K. Heffner, T. Marszał (eds), *Problemy rozwoju małych miast w wymiarze lokalnym i regionalnym*, Biuletyn KPZK, z. 220, Warszawa, p.21-36.

1.3 Territorial aspects of local government system

The present territorial division of Poland was established in 1999 (Fig. 2). According to this administrative division, Poland is divided into 16 voivodeships, 380 counties, of which 66 are urban and 314 are rural, and 2479 communes, of which 306 are urban, 602 urban-rural, and 1571 rural.

The province (NUTS2) is a unit of administrative division of a higher level, and the essential territorial division for the governmental administration. Since 1999 it has also been a unit of territorial self-government. Administrative authority at the provincial level is shared between a government-appointed governor (*wojewoda*), an elected regional assembly (*sejmik wojewódzki*), and an executive (*zarząd województwa*) chosen by that assembly.

Competences and powers at the provincial level are shared between the governor, the assembly and the executive. The governor is appointed by the Prime Minister and is the regional representative of the central government. The governor acts as the head of central government institutions at the regional level (e.g. police and inspectorates), manages the central government's property in the region, oversees the functioning of local government, coordinates actions in the field of public safety and environmental protection etc. The regional assembly passes laws, including the regional development strategies and budget. The executive, headed by the marshal (*marszałek województwa*), drafts the budget and development strategies, implements the resolutions of the regional assembly, manages property belonging to the province, and deals with regional policy, including management of European Union funding.

The county (LAU1⁴) is a unit of administrative division and a constituent part of the province. Each county encompasses between several and more than ten neighbouring communes (pl. *gmina*). There are also separate urban units, which are treated as counties and called urban counties. Thus, an urban county is a town treated as a county itself. This status, after the new, three-level territorial breakdown of the country was introduced in 1999, was assigned to:

- towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants,
- most of the former seats of provinces (before the administrative reform of 1999 there had been 49 voivodeships in Poland),
- some towns in large urban agglomerations.

Competence and power at the county level is vested in an elected council (*rada powiatu*), while local executive power is vested in the *starosta*, an official elected by that council. However, in city counties these institutions do not exist separately – their powers and functions are exercised by the city council (*rada miasta*), the directly-elected mayor (*burmistrz* or *prezydent*), and the town hall (*urząd miasta*).

The county authorities have decision-making powers and competences in certain areas such as: education at the high-school level, health care, public transport, land surveying, issuing work permits to foreigners, and vehicle registration.

⁴ NUTS 3 do not exist in Poland as a separate administrative unit.

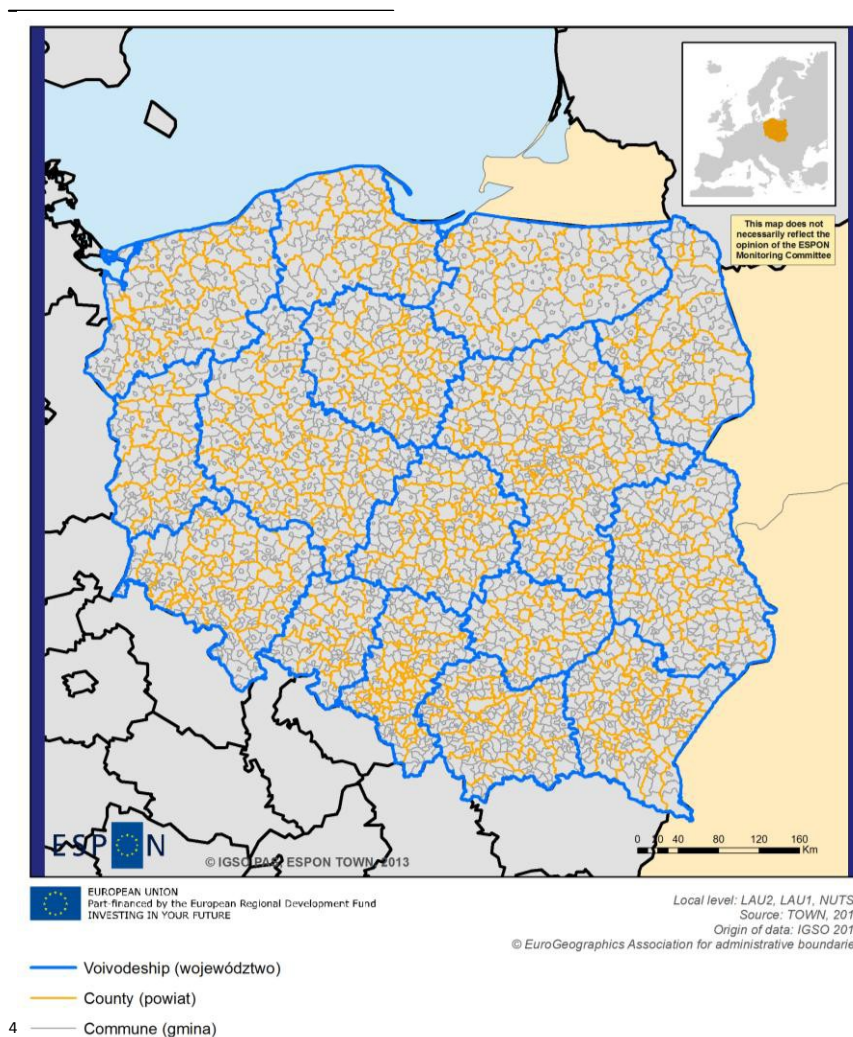


Fig. 2. Administrative division of Poland Source: own elaboration.

The municipality (LAU2) constitutes the basic unit of territorial self-government, and municipalities are classified as rural, urban-rural or urban. The scope of a commune’s jurisdiction includes all public matters of local significance (see overview in Table 3). The respective tasks are classified into self-commissioned – resulting from the law, and contracted – assigned by the state authorities. The municipalities dispose their own budget based on three main sources: their own revenues (Tab. 4), general subsidies, and targeted allocations from the state budget (for the implementation of commissioned tasks from the national government and other tasks derived from laws).

Tab. 3. Overview of political and fiscal competences of local government units in Poland

	Description
Competences	The scope of competence of a commune includes all public matter of local significance. The respective tasks are classified into self-commissioned – resulting from law (spatial harmony, real estate management, environmental protection and nature conservation of natural areas, water management, waste treatment and management of the sewage system, country roads, public streets, traffic systems, supply of electric and thermal energy and gas, public transport, health care, etc.), and contracted – assigned by the state authorities. Commissioned tasks cover the remaining public tasks resulting from legitimate needs of the state, commissioned by the central government to be performed by self-governing units. The tasks are handed over on the basis of statutory bylaws, charters and regulations, or by way of agreement between the self-government units and the central government.
Fiscal autonomy	The revenue of communes covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • own revenues (established by and collected under separate tax laws, mainly the tax on real estate, revenues from fees and commune surcharge over the income tax from individual persons and legal entities), • general subsidies (for educational purposes and subsidies for roads) • grants from the state budget (targeted allocations for commissioned tasks). <p>The revenue of communes may also come from foreign sources, making them non-refundable, as well as funds from the EU budget and other measures set out in separate regulations.</p>
Horizontal coordination	Horizontal cooperation is possible, both with other public authorities (e.g. through associations of communes or informal horizontal cooperation) or with the private sector (public-private partnership).
Vertical coordination	With regard to local planning, the master plans should correspond to the documents elaborated on a higher level (regional/national).

Source: own elaboration

The legislative and controlling body of the commune is the elected municipal council (*rada gminy*), or in a town – the town assembly (*rada miasta*). Executive power is held by the mayor of the municipality (*wójt* in rural gminas, *burmistrz* in urban and urban-rural gminas, or *prezydent* in towns). A *gmina* may create auxiliary units (pl. *sołectwo*) consisting of one or more villages.

Among the main responsibilities of communes, the following issues should be listed: ensuring spatial harmony, real estate management, environmental protection and conservation of natural areas, water management, management of the sewage system, country roads, public streets, traffic systems, supply of electric and thermal energy and gas, public transport, health care, etc. Commissioned tasks cover the remaining public tasks resulting from the legitimate needs of the state, assigned by the central government to be performed by self-government units. The tasks are handed over on the basis of statutory bylaws, charters and regulations; or, by way of agreements between the self-government units and the central government.

Tab. 4. Own revenues of self-government units.

Own revenues	Details
Revenues from the following taxes, determined and collected on the basis of separate laws	Taxes on real estate, agriculture, forestry, transportation, business activities of individual persons, paid in the form of the tax card, on inheritances and donations
Revenues from fees	Stamp duty, development, paid by businesses on the basis of the Law of February 4, 1994 - Law on geology and mining (Official Gazette No. 27 position 96 of 1996, No. 106 position 496 of 1997, No. 80 pos. 491 and No. 88 pos. 554); local, paid on the basis of the Law of January 12, 1991 on local taxes and fees (Official Gazette No. 9 position 31, No. 101 pos. 444, of 1992, No. 21 pos.86, of 1994, No. 123 pos.600, of 1996, No. 91 pos. 409, No. 149 pos. 704, of 1997, No. 5 pos, 24); others, collected on the basis of separate regulations
Commune surcharge over the income tax from individual persons	
Commune surcharge over the income tax from legal entities	
Revenues from property belonging to the commune	
Others	

Source: own elaboration on the basis of the Act on revenues of self-government units (13.11.2003)

2 Territorial identification of SMSTs in Mazovia Voivodeship

On the regional level, in 2010, there were 85 towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship (Tab. 5). Considering their size structure, there were three big cities (Warsaw, Radom, Płock) and the next 21 might be classified as medium-sized towns (where the population ranges from 20,000 to 100,000). Among the small towns (number of inhabitants lower than 20,000), the smallest units (less than 5,000 inhabitants) were numerous and constituted approx. 40% of the entire group.

With regard to the small towns in Mazovia, it should be mentioned that the 28 centers within the current limits of the region lost their city rights in 1870 as punishment for having taken part in the January Uprising, directed against the policy of conquest employed by the Russian Empire. This change of status caused many of these centers to collapse, with some of them never regaining their civic rights (15 towns). Nevertheless, to this day, they are characterised by the distinctly urban morphology of the buildings (e.g. Solec on the Vistula River, Czersk, Maciejowice).

Tab 5. Towns in Mazovia Voivodeship by population (2010)

Number of inhabitants	Number of towns	Number of inhabitants	Area (km ²)
> 100,000	3	2 068 955	717
50–100,000	4	240 431	94
20–50,000	17	542 718	365
10–20,000	22	349 473	478
5–10,000	14	104 190	180
< 5,000	25	80 005	323

Source: own elaboration on the basis of data issued from the Central Statistical Office.

Certain medium-sized towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship (e.g. Legionowo, Pruszków, Piaseczno, Otwock) are located in close proximity to the capital city of Warsaw (compare Fig. 3). This crucial location might be considered as an asset that triggers their dynamic development both in terms of their population and its growth, and socio-economic strengths. As a consequence, these towns witness positive in-migration flows, experience dynamic construction of new housing estates, and are offered important investments (in the sphere of production and services) as well as opportunities for the development of their transport system and social infrastructure (Bański *et al.* 2011).

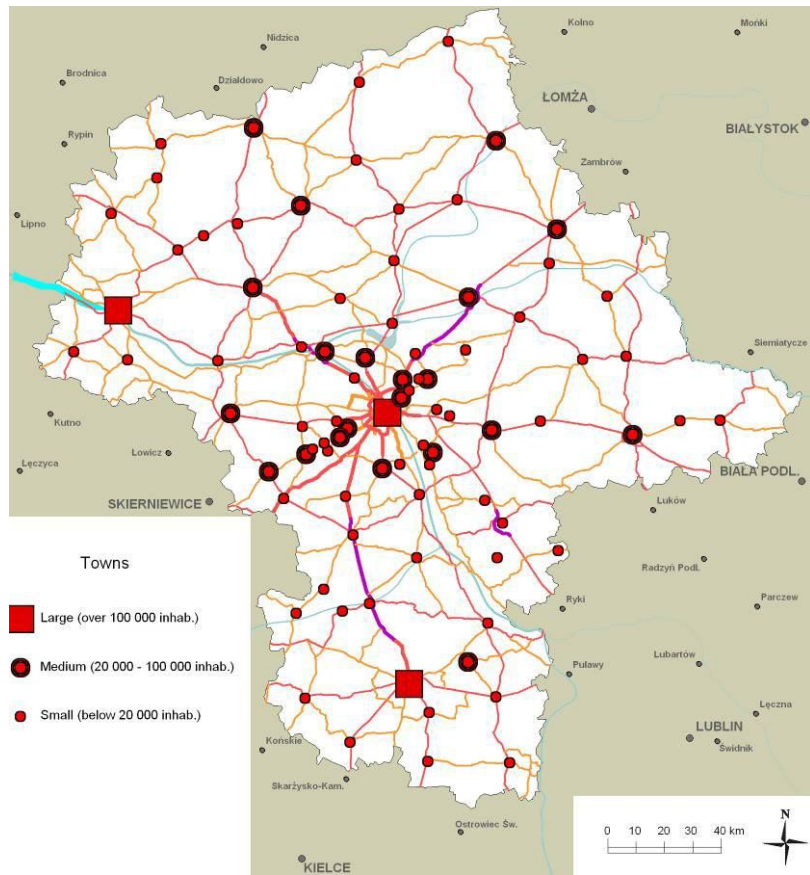


Fig. 3. Towns and transport system in Mazovia Voivodeship

Source: Bański *et al.* 2011.

2.1 Verification of the morphological/geomatic identification of SMSTs and administrative identification of SMSTs

The analysis of the small and medium-sized towns in question was composed of two consecutive stages: identification of towns in terms of their morphological structure, and assessment of their functional position. 59 modifications of polygons were made, mostly connected with the elimination of certain grids (Tab. 6).

Tab. 6. Verification of morphological identification of small and medium-sized towns in Central Poland.

No.	Error type	Number of occurrences
1	The polygon should include other contiguous grid cells	14
2	The polygon should <u>not</u> include some grid cells	20
3	The polygon should be joined with other polygon(s) of the same or different class	18
4	The polygon should be split in different polygons	5
5	Wrong classification	0
6	Other	2
Overall number of modifications		59

Source: own elaboration.

2.2 Functional analysis of settlement systems: identification of SMSTs and related urban regions

The aims of the functional analysis were:

- the identification of large cities and SMSTs through functional analysis;
- the identification of large cities' and SMSTs' urban regions (local labour area, daily urban system), using core-hinterland analysis;
- the distinction between the lower and upper tiers of the urban hierarchy, i.e. between SMSTs and large cities, using functional analysis of relations between urban centres;
- the analysis of the intensity and directionality of flows among identified SMSTs and their urban regions.

The first objective of the functional analysis was the identification of job centres. According to the methodology adopted in the ESPON TOWN project, the job centres were selected from municipalities using two criteria (1) size: threshold value of minimum 1,000 jobs (minimal number of jobs); (2) functionality: job centre is the main commuting destination from at least one other LAU2.

In order to indicate the number of jobs, data concerning the size of the economically active employed population and number of outgoing and incoming job commuters were needed. However, Polish statistics lack data about the number of economically active employed individuals. The available data concern only the number of persons employed in entities with more than 9 employees, and do not provide any information about self-employment or about small family enterprises (with less than 9 employees).

In 2011, in the framework of the research project "Development Trends of Mazovia" ("Trendy Rozwojowe Mazowsza"), and specifically the „Socio-demographic preconditions for the development of Mazovia” module, conducted in the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, an attempt

was made to estimate the number of persons employed in the communes (LAU2) in the Mazovia Voivodeship (the author of this concept was R. Wiśniewski) in 2009 (Śleszyński *et al.* 2012). This dataset is a unique estimation of the number of jobs at the local level (LAU2) in Poland. This estimation is considered likely to be highly accurate, and is in line with other socio-economic features that were investigated within the “Development Trends of Mazovia” project.

The estimation was primarily based on the size of the population in the working age by commune. This age group constitutes approximately 98% of all persons employed. Subsequently, the data was corrected using the following characteristics:

- value of the coefficient of professional activity of persons in the working age in 2009 (the value for the whole voivodeship was approx. 75.0%); however, professional activity varies according to the functional type of commune; thus, different values of the coefficient were registered for 1) Warsaw; 2) the biggest cities in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area (WMA) with a population in the working age of over 20,000, and for the subregional poles in Mazovia (Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce); 3) the remaining communes in the Mazovia Voivodeship. In the end, the following values of the coefficient were adopted: Warsaw – 76.0%, selected cities in the WMA and subregional poles – 70.5%, remaining communes – 69.5%.
- share of unemployed persons within the population in the working age in 2009 (official statistics from the Central Statistical Office by commune);
- magnitude of commuting flows in 2006 (Central Statistical Office, CSO); this data concerns employees who live in other communes than their place of work (including interregional flows); these data are also an estimation based on the information collected within the tax system of inland revenue, issued from tax returns; at the same time, these data does not embrace persons who commute to work through contracts to perform a specified task, mandatory contracts (order-agreement), or self-employment;
- estimated magnitude of commuting flows (between communes) in the entities which employ from 1 to 9 persons. While it is difficult to estimate the number of persons employed through order-agreement (mandatory contracts) and on contracts to perform specified task, the number of self-employed (owners of enterprises) commuters is slightly easier to estimate. To this end, the number of entities led by physical persons was used (CSO) and corrected using the share of commuters in the total number of employed persons in each statistical unit (on the basis of data from the CSO); the assumption was made that the share of self-employed persons commuting to work in their micro-enterprises is similar to that of the commuters represented by employed persons.

The above-mentioned estimations were included in further analyses. The estimation did not cover the whole area of Central Poland (PL1 – NUTS1) but concerned only the Mazovia Voivodeship. Nevertheless, the Mazovia Voivodeship covers 66% of the area of Central Poland, and is inhabited by 67% of the inhabitants of this region.

There are 314 (LAU2) communes in the Mazovia Voivodeship. The first criterion adopted in the ESPON TOWN project concerning a minimum of 1,000 jobs was fulfilled in 299 communes, which constitutes 95% of all communes in the area (type B, Fig. 3). The explanation for such high share is twofold. Firstly, in Poland, communes combine over a dozen, or even tens of villages. The average rural commune has a couple of thousand inhabitants and an average area of more than 100 km².

Secondly, agriculture remains by far one of the most important functions in the Mazovia Voivodeship. At the same time, agriculture is characterized in this region by a considerable level of fragmentation (the average area of an agricultural holding is 8.5 ha) and a low level of productivity (large number of farmers, mainly family members, whereas the share of persons employed outside the family is 0.8%). As a consequence, in numerous communes, the major part of the jobs remains within the agricultural sector. For this reason, in the case of Poland, it is strongly recommended to increase the value of the first criterion to 3,000 jobs – this condition is fulfilled in 110 communes, which constitutes 35% of all communes in the area (type A, Fig. 3). This remark should be treated as substantial but complementary because the first criterion does not have a direct impact on the analyses performed, as the second adopted criterion is significantly more selective.

According to the second criterion, a job centre was defined as the main commuting destination from at least one another LAU2. In order to prepare this analysis, the matrix of commuting flows, based on data gathered by the CSO in 2006, was used. As was previously mentioned, these data were collected from tax returns and do not cover persons who commute to work on the basis of contracts to perform specified tasks, mandatory contracts (order-agreement), or self-employment. The matrix contains information about at least 10 persons commuting between a pair of two communes.

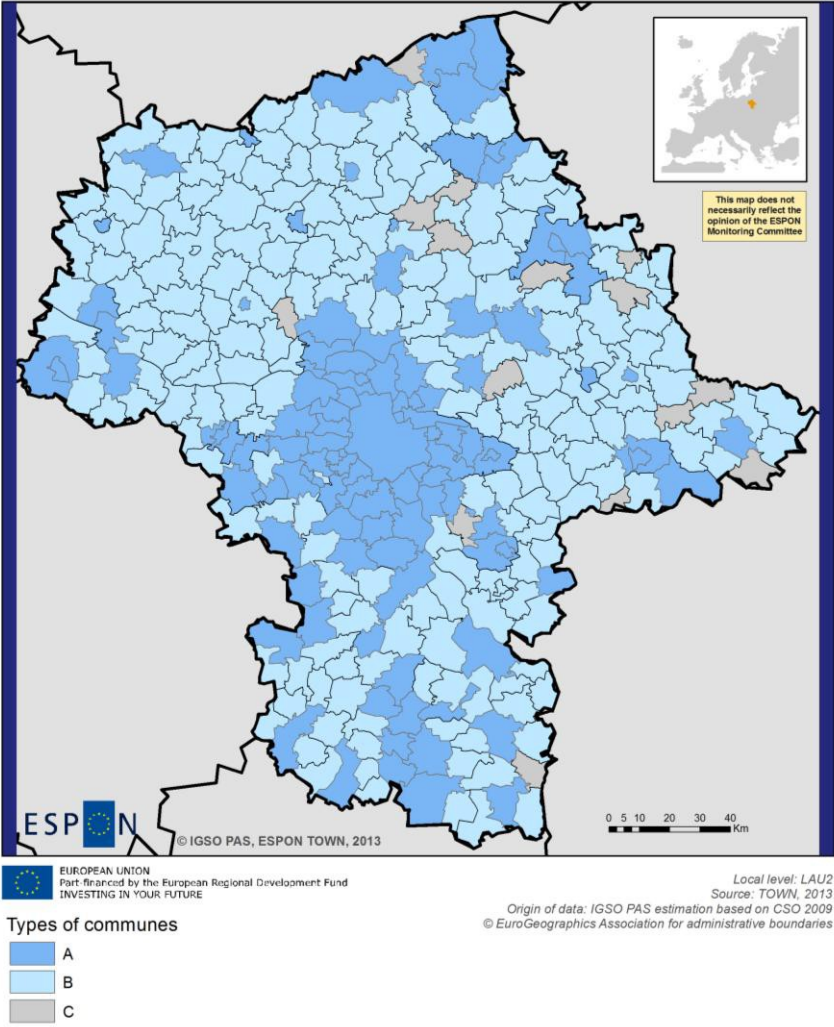


Fig. 3. Job centres in Mazovia Voivodeship

Source: own elaboration.

Out of the 314 communes in the Mazovia Voivodeship, 37 constituted the main commuting destination for at least one other commune, wherein three of these communes were located outside the Mazovia Voivodeship. Two out of the 37 communes (rural communes: Gostynin and Ostrów Mazowiecka) were excluded completely from further analyses because they constitute a rural part of urban-rural communes, but formally are separate administrative units. All 35 communes selected in the Mazovia Voivodeship fulfilled the first criterion: job threshold of 1,000 (and 3,000).

The next step of the analysis was to identify microregions. Bearing in mind that not every job centre is strong enough to become an urban centre and to form its own microregion, the delineation of microregions was based on two conditions: minimum population size and territorial integrity. Among the 35 previously selected communes (which fulfilled the two other criteria for being a job centre), a very clear boundary was observed between the six smallest units and the other communes in the group. This boundary corresponded to 20,000 inhabitants⁵. Among these six communes, three were located outside the Mazovia Voivodeship, and the remaining three were: Kosów Lacki, Białobrzegi and Łyse. After careful consideration, these six communes were excluded from the final list of urban centres, and their areas were reclassified in accordance with the following rule: if the largest flow from LAU2 is not directed to one of the identified urban centres, the LAU2 is linked to a job centre indirectly.

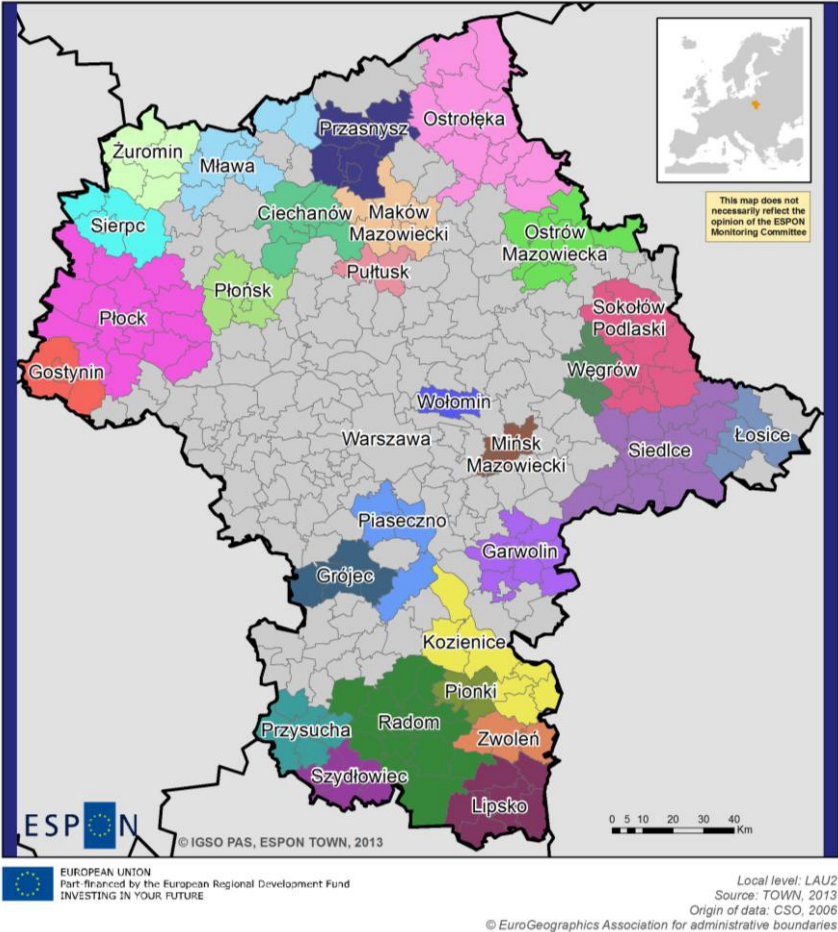


Fig. 4. Microregions in Mazovia Voivodeship

Source: own elaboration.

⁵ The number of jobs in the selected microregions always reached more than 8,000 which could be regarded as an additional criterion and adopted in future studies.

As a result, 29 urban centres were distinguished and their microregions delineated within the Mazovia Voivodeship (Fig. 4). The final stage of the analysis included essential corrections of microregions' territory based on expert knowledge of local preconditions and differentiation. The aim of this revision was to consolidate existing areas into spatially continuous territories that would correspond to the final delineation of the microregions. A change of territorial attachment was needed only in the case of nine communes (which constitute only 3% of all units analysed in the voivodeship). These nine communes were isolated and did not have any direct connection with the microregion to which they belonged (according to previous statistical analyses). The differences between the original and revised destinations of commuting flows in these nine communes did not surpass 20% in most cases; therefore, the introduced correction was rather slight but considered highly recommended (Fig. 5).

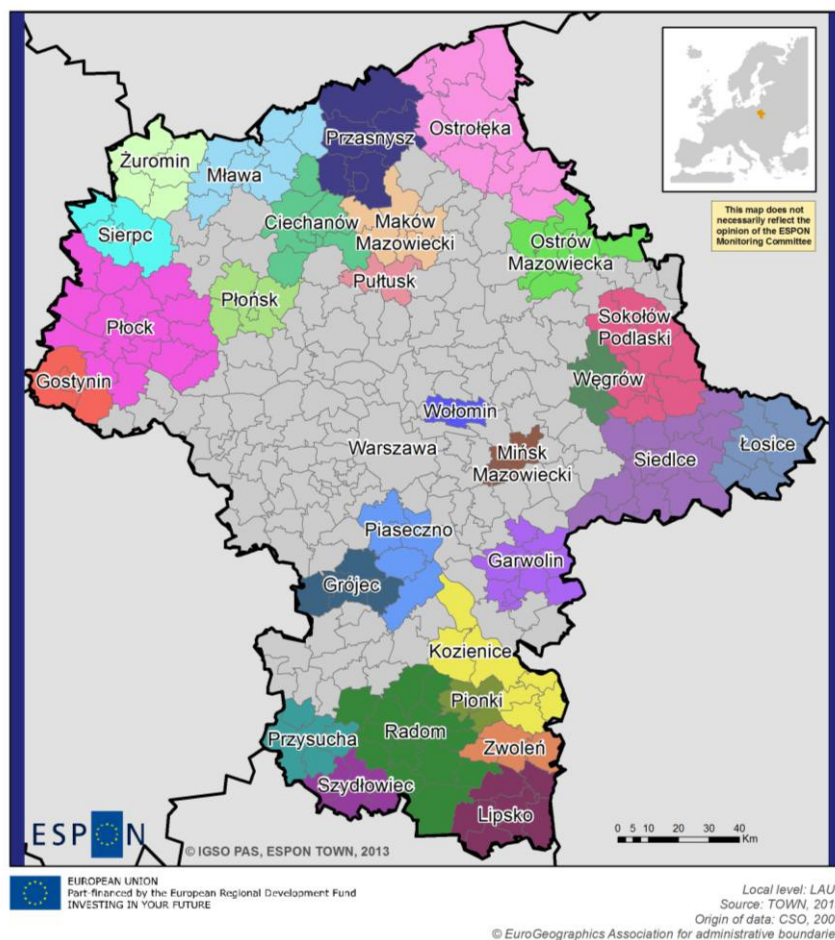


Fig. 5. Microregions in Mazovia Voivodeship (revised)

Source: own elaboration

As an effect, 29 urban centres and their microregions were distinguished. All the microregions are spatially cohesive with the single exception of the Warsaw microregion. Warsaw's zone of influence has a discontinuous character, and apart from one cohesive area surrounding the capital city, there are also two other areas which are not directly linked to the main zone. Despite this discontinuity, this picture is correct and a relevant interpretation may be provided. First of all, there are important urban poles (urban counties) located between Warsaw and these areas. These poles have created their own zones of influence which are, however, not sufficiently strong to cover these remaining territories. The communes located in these two enclaves (in the north and in the south), which are under the strong influence of Warsaw, can be viewed as internal/intraregional peripheries of

development.

In Table 7 below, basic data concerning urban centres and microregions such as size of population, number of jobs, and number of communes within each microregion are presented. In general, three types of microregions can be distinguished in terms of size. The microregions created around an urban county contain approx. 5-6 communes; those created around subregional poles (Radom, Płock, Siedlce, Ostrołęka) - over a dozen, and the microregion of Warsaw is composed of 138 communes (44% of all the communes in the Mazovia Voivodeship). On average, 60% of the jobs in each microregion are concentrated in its urban centre. There are three microregions that do not follow this regularity (Pułtusk, Wołomin and Pionki), but this might be explained by their specific morphology – they are composed of only two communes. It would be crucial to reconsider, in the future, if it is relevant to classify these kinds of cases as independent urban centres being the centres of their respective microregions. On the other hand, it should also be underlined that there are several microregions (e.g. Maków Mazowiecki, Lipsko and Garwolin) where the share of jobs in the urban centre does not surpass 40%. In light of the results presented in Table 5, the threshold of 3,000 jobs for an urban centre in the Polish case study is pertinent and fully justified, as the smallest urban centres in the group (Maków Mazowiecki and Przysucha) represent more than 4,000 jobs (compare with Fig. 4).

Tab. 7. Urban centres and their microregions in Mazovia Voivodeship.

Name	Urban centre (commune)				Microregion			
	Population	Share of pop.*	Number of jobs	Share of jobs*	Population	Number of jobs	No. of LAU2 units	Concentration of jobs to pop.
Węgrów	12 816	52%	5 789	60%	24 520	9599	3	1,15
Zwoleń	15 380	58%	5 930	61%	26 685	9781	3	1,05
Pułtusk	23 978	86%	9 301	86%	27 928	10812	2	1,00
Pionki	19 702	66%	7 231	72%	29 718	10058	2	1,08
Przysucha	12 487	39%	4 939	47%	31 634	10414	5	1,20
Maków Mazowiecki	10 262	32%	4 192	37%	31 751	11215	6	1,16
Łosice	11 106	34%	5 043	42%	32 581	12092	6	1,22
Szydłowiec	19 510	56%	7 003	63%	34 831	11044	4	1,13
Lipsko	11 669	32%	5 219	38%	36 207	13564	6	1,19
Gostynin	19 282	53%	7 883	58%	36 595	13697	3	1,09
Żuromin	14 759	40%	5 646	45%	36 727	12664	5	1,11
Sierpc	18 775	45%	7 869	51%	41 523	15458	5	1,13
Grójec	24 944	56%	10 850	60%	44 835	18224	4	1,07
Płońsk	22 560	47%	10 101	54%	48 102	18786	5	1,15
Przasnysz	17 439	35%	7 869	42%	50 127	18712	6	1,21
Ostrów Mazowiecka	22 963	44%	9 968	50%	51 718	19848	6	1,13
Sokołów Podlaski	18 786	33%	9 913	45%	56 610	22080	9	1,35
Wołomin	51 385	90%	22 337	93%	57 392	24086	2	1,04
Mińsk Mazowiecki	39 499	67%	16 332	69%	58 685	23636	3	1,03
Kozienice	30 760	48%	13 927	56%	64 328	24662	7	1,18
Mława	30 930	46%	13 801	53%	66 805	26153	9	1,14
Garwolin	17 060	25%	9 444	36%	69 323	26258	9	1,46
Ciechanów	45 275	60%	21 107	68%	75 249	31070	7	1,13
Ostrołęka	53 443	40%	25 144	47%	132 377	53252	11	1,17
Piaseczno	73 450	53%	34 697	58%	137 530	59708	5	1,09
Siedlce	76 480	51%	38 911	60%	149 697	64931	13	1,17
Płock	124 318	53%	60 801	61%	236 546	99633	16	1,16
Radom	220 602	63%	93 717	68%	351 531	137089	14	1,09
Warszawa	1 708 491	53%	1 013 409	63%	3 244 049	1611843	138	1,19

* in relation to microregion

Source: own elaboration.

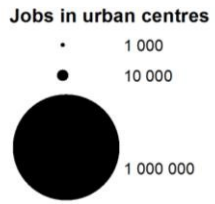
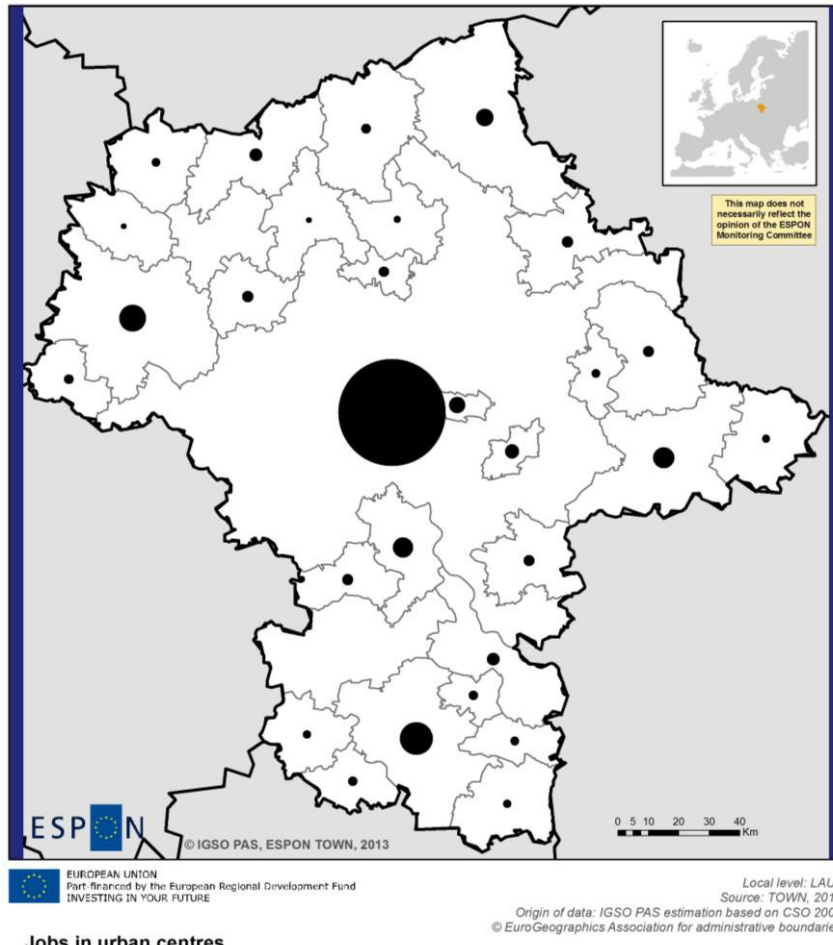


Fig. 4. Population in job centres in each microregion

Source: own elaboration.

2.3 Identification of SMSTs' territorial arrangements and positioning the centres of microregions

In the second phase of the functional analysis, the objective was to identify SMSTs' territorial arrangements as well as to distinguish between the lower and upper tiers of the urban hierarchy (small and medium-sized towns and large cities). The former encompassed three types of arrangements: autonomous, networked and agglomerated.

2.3.1 Territorial arrangements

The analysis was based on the outcomes of the first phase of the study, where a set of urban centres and microregions was delineated. In the case of the Mazovia Voivodeship, 29 microregional centres were identified. Then, the significance of the commuting flows between microregional centres was assessed (the five highest outgoing flows in each microregional centre were taken into consideration). In 29 microregions, the results of this analysis revealed that the majority of microregions generated one or two significant flows: half of the microregions corresponded to the ideal type, with one significant flow (Table 8), whereas 27.6% generated two significant flows. In total, 50 significant flows from urban centres were taken into account in the further part of the analysis. The specificity of these commuting flows was then visualised on Fig. 4. A strong domination of outgoing flows from the microregional centres to the capital city was confirmed.

Tab. 8. Significant flows in microregional centres.

Number of significant flows				
	1	2	3	4
Microregional centres	Ciechanów	Łosice	Gostynin	Warszawa
	Garwolin	Ostrów Maz.	Pionki	
	Kozienice	Przysucha	Sierpc	
	Grójec	Sokołów Podl.	Żuromin	
	Lipsko	Szydłowiec	Płock	
	Maków Maz.	Zwoleń		
	Mińsk Maz.	Ostrołęka		
	Mława	Siedlce		
	Piaseczno			
	Płońsk			
	Przasnysz			
	Pułtusk			
	Węgrów			
	Wołomin			
	Radom			
Total number	15	8	5	1

Source: own elaboration.

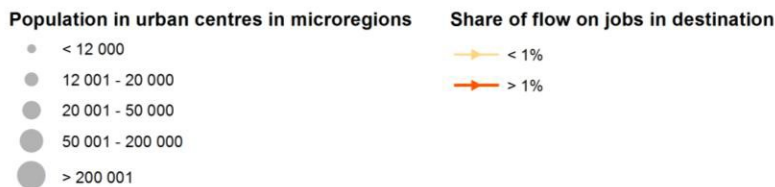
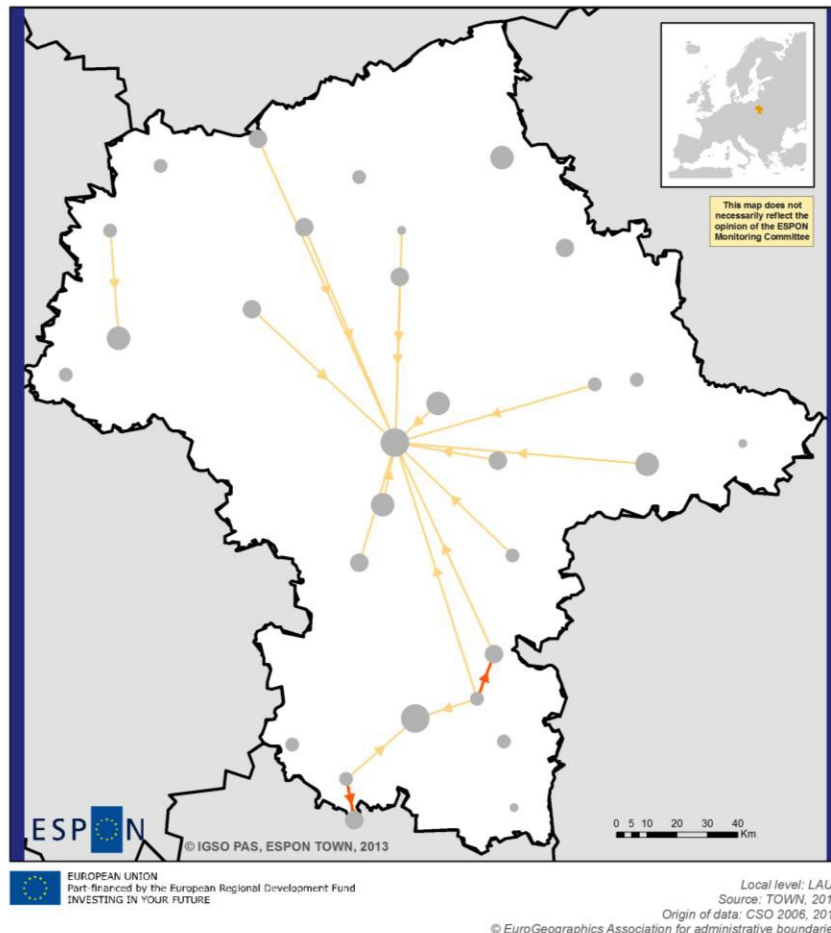


Fig. 4. Significant commuting flows between microregional centres in Mazovia Voivodeship.

Source: own elaboration.

Based on the significant flows distinguished in the previous phase of the functional analysis, a typology of territorial arrangements was elaborated. This typology was based on two assumptions concerning the commuting flows between the microregions: (1) the share of outgoing commuting flows in relation to the economically active population and (2) the share of the outgoing flows in relation to the number of jobs in the urban centre of destination.

In the case of Poland, the threshold of significance for outgoing flows with respect to the size of the economically active population was pegged at 2.5%, instead of the 5% that was initially suggested for this analysis. As was explained in the previous part of this chapter, the data concerning commuting flows in Poland do not cover all the groups of commuters, and therefore do not represent the whole scope of commuting patterns between communes⁶. For this reason, the threshold had to be lowered

⁶ These data are an estimation based on information collected within the tax system of inland revenue, issued from tax returns; at the same time, the data do not embrace persons who commute to work on a contractual basis to perform a specified task, mandatory contracts (order-agreement) or self-employment.

to capture the flows which probably would be higher if all commuters were included in the statistics. Out of the 50 significant flows distinguished previously and considered in this part of the study, 21 fulfilled the 2.5% criterion.

The second criterion used to prepare the typology was connected to the share of outgoing flows in the number of jobs in the centre of destination. The threshold for the Polish case study was 1%; in that way, all the flows with a share lower than 1% were classified as playing an unimportant role for the job market in the destination centre. Out of the 50 significant flows considered in this part, 15 fulfilled the 1% criterion, but only 2 fulfilled both criteria.

The combination of both criteria was used to prepare a typology of territorial arrangements (Tab. 9). Out of a group of 29 microregional centres, 59% were classified as agglomerated, 34% as autonomous and 7% as networked (Tab. 10).

Tab. 9. Typology grid.

Type	Criteria 1	Criteria 2
Autonomous	< 2.5%	
Agglomerated	≥ 2.5%	< 1.0%
Networked	≥ 2.5%	≥ 1.0%

Source: Own elaboration

Tab. 10. Typology of microregional centres in Mazovia Voivodeship.

Type		
agglomerated	autonomous	networked
Ciechanów	Gostynin	Pionki
Garwolin	Lipsko	Szydłowiec
Grójec	Łosice	
Kozienice	Ostrołęka	
Maków Mazowiecki	Ostrów Mazowiecka	
Mińsk Mazowiecki	Przasnysz	
Mława	Przysucha	
Piaseczno	Sokołów Podlaski	
Płock	Zwoleń	
Płońsk	Żuromin	
Pułtusk		
Radom		
Siedlce		
Sierpc		
Warszawa		
Węgrów		
Wołomin		

Source: own elaboration.

2.3.2 Position of the microregional centres in the urban hierarchy

In the previous step of the functional analysis, 29 urban centres were distinguished using the criteria given (number of jobs > 3,000 and commuting flows). Adopting the criteria of population size (the number of inhabitants in the small and medium-sized towns ranges from 5,000 to 50,000) and the

morphological criteria (issued from the polygon analysis and distinguished between very small towns, small towns, and urban clusters), 7 urban centres were classified as large cities, whereas the remaining 22 were deemed to be small or medium-sized towns (Tab. 11).

Tab. 11. Classification of microregional centres according to their position in the urban hierarchy

Microregion Center	Type	Position in urban hierarchy
Piaseczno	agglomerated	.C
Płock	agglomerated	.C
Radom	agglomerated	.C
Siedlce	agglomerated	.C
Warszawa	agglomerated	.C
Wołomin	agglomerated	.C
Ostrołęka	autonomous	.C
Ciechanów	agglomerated	∩MST
Garwolin	agglomerated	∩MST
Grójec	agglomerated	∩MST
Kozienice	agglomerated	∩MST
Maków Mazowiecki	agglomerated	∩MST
Mińsk Mazowiecki	agglomerated	∩MST
Mława	agglomerated	∩MST
Płońsk	agglomerated	∩MST
Pułtusk	agglomerated	∩MST
Sierpc	agglomerated	∩MST
Węgrów	agglomerated	∩MST
Lipsko	autonomous	∩MST
Łosice	autonomous	∩MST
Przasnysz	autonomous	∩MST
Przysucha	autonomous	∩MST
Sokołów Podlaski	autonomous	∩MST
Zwoleń	autonomous	∩MST
Żuromin	autonomous	∩MST
Gostynin	autonomous	∩MST
Ostrów Mazowiecka	autonomous	∩MST
Pionki	networked	∩MST
Szydłowiec	networked	∩MST

Source: own elaboration.

However, the typology of towns, based mainly on the population criterion, did not take into account the position of each urban centre in the regional settlement system. To this end, two criteria were considered: number of significant flows for which the urban centre is a destination (outgoing flows from other urban centres were considered), and population size. Firstly, the total amount of flows from “source” urban centres to each “destination” urban centre was calculated (value A). As there are urban centres with more than one significant outgoing flow and its value is being split into more urban centres, the flows were recounted using the proportional share of flows. To be more precise, in the case where the “source” urban centre had only one significant flow to a “destination” urban centre, this flow received a value of 1. In the cases where the “source” urban centre possessed 2 or more significant flows, its value for each “destination” urban centre was calculated as a proportion of 1 (respectively: 0.5 0.33 0.25, etc. in relation to the total number of significant flows distinguished in the previous phase of analysis).

In the case of the Mazovia Region, 19 out of 29 urban centres were not a destination for other urban centres in the region⁷, and only one urban centre was a destination for more than three other urban centres (Tab. 12, value A). Having added the proportional share of outgoing flows to each urban centre (value B), two urban centres were distinguished as having between 1 and 3 incoming flows.

Tab. 12. Significant flows for which the urban centre is a destination: sum and proportional share

Value A	No. of urban centres
>3	1
3	2
2	1
1	6
0	19
Value B	No. of urban centres
>3	1
1,1-3	2
0,51-1,0	1
<= 0,5	6
0	19

Source: own elaboration.

In order to assess the position of urban centres in the regional settlement system, the two above-mentioned criteria were used: size of population and position of each urban centre, defined on the basis of incoming flows. According to the instructions given in the project, large cities (LC) should fulfil two criteria: more than 50,000 inhabitants, and a number of incoming flows (proportional share counted) greater than 2. As the commuting flows in the Polish case study did not encompass all the commuters (see previous sections of the report), certain important flows might have been underestimated⁸. For this reason, it was recommended to change the threshold of calculated flows from 2 to 1 in the case of large cities (Tab. 13). In that way, three urban centres fulfil two criteria and are classified as large cities (Warsaw, Radom and Siedlce). However, there is another large city (in terms of population) which is also an important regional centre in Mazovia – Płock (together with Radom). In addition, according to the results of the functional analysis, the microregion of Płock contains 16 communes and becomes, in turn, the second largest microregion in Mazovia (after the Warsaw microregion). This is why, despite the fact that the number of incoming flows to Płock is lower than 1, this city should be also classified as large city (LC).

⁷ Only the data about significant flows were used for this analysis.

⁸ In the same way, the threshold of significance for outgoing flows in the size of the economically active population used for the general typology of urban centres was decreased from 5% to 2.5%.

Table. 13. Types of microregional urban centres

Microregion Centre	Population in microregion urban centre in 2011	Value A (no. of flows of which urban centre is a destination)	Value B (sum of shared flows)	Type
Warszawa	1 708 491	27	20,15	LC
Radom	220 602	3	1,33	LC
Płock	124 318	2	0,66	LC
Siedlce	76 480	3	1,5	LC
Piaseczno	73 450	1	0,25	AGLO-LC
Ostrołęka	53 443	0	0	AUTO
Wołomin	51 385	0	0	AGLO-LC
Ciechanów	45 275	0	0	AGLO-LC
Mińsk Mazowiecki	39 499	0	0	AGLO-LC
Mława	30 930	1	0,33	AGLO-LC
Kozienice	30 760	1	0,33	AGLO-LC
Grójec	24 944	0	0	AGLO-LC
Pułtusk	23 978	0	0	AGLO-LC
Ostrów Mazowiecka	22 963	1	0,5	AUTO
Płońsk	22 560	0	0	AGLO-LC
Pionki	19 702	0	0	NETW-SMST-S
Szydłowiec	19 510	0	0	NETW-SMST-S
Gostynin	19 282	1	0,33	AUTO
Sokołów Podlaski	18 786	0	0	AUTO
Sierpc	18 775	1	0,33	AGLO-LC
Przasnysz	17 439	0	0	AUTO
Garwolin	17 060	0	0	AGLO-LC
Zwoleń	15 380	0	0	AUTO
Żuromin	14 759	0	0	AUTO
Węgrów	12 816	0	0	AGLO-LC
Przysucha	12 487	0	0	AUTO
Lipsko	11 669	0	0	AUTO
Łosice	11 106	0	0	AUTO
Maków Mazowiecki	10 262	0	0	AGLO-LC

Source: own elaboration.

In the group of urban centres with a population greater than 50,000, there are also three other towns: Piaseczno, Ostrołęka and Wołomin. In the case of Piaseczno and Wołomin, these urban centres are located in the proximity of Warsaw and their development, as well as commuting flows, are highly influenced by the capital city. A fair number of their inhabitants commute to Warsaw daily to work, but also for educational purposes (secondary and tertiary education). It can therefore be speculated that their large population is mainly a result of their attractive location close to the biggest job market in the region. Nevertheless, considering the settlement system in Mazovia, their position is less important (which is also confirmed by the insignificant number of flows). Ostrołęka, on the flip side, may be considered as a large city in terms of population but, at the same time, does not receive any important incoming flows. However, Ostrołęka is indicated in the official documents currently in preparation (Draft version of the *Strategy for the Mazovia Voivodeship's development until 2030*⁹, 2012) as one of the important sub-regional centres in the Mazovia Region. For this

⁹ Projekt Strategii Rozwoju Województwa Mazowieckiego do 2030 roku

reason, Ostrołęka should be classified as a specific type of large urban centre which has important impact on the neighbouring communes (the microregion of Ostrołęka is composed of 11 communes), but a smaller impact on the other urban centres.

Out of 22 other urban centres with a population lower than 50,000, four different categories can be listed (Fig. 5): agglomerated to large cities (11), autonomous (9) and networked with SMST (2). Among the agglomerated urban centres, the majority is agglomerated to Warsaw. Only in three cases are the urban centres agglomerated to regional centres (Sierpc to Płock), or constitute the centre in an agglomerated system (Radom, Płock). There are only two examples of networked urban centres: Pionki and Szydłowiec. They are both networked with other SMSTs (Pionki-Kozienice, Szydłowiec-Skarżysko-Kamienna¹⁰).

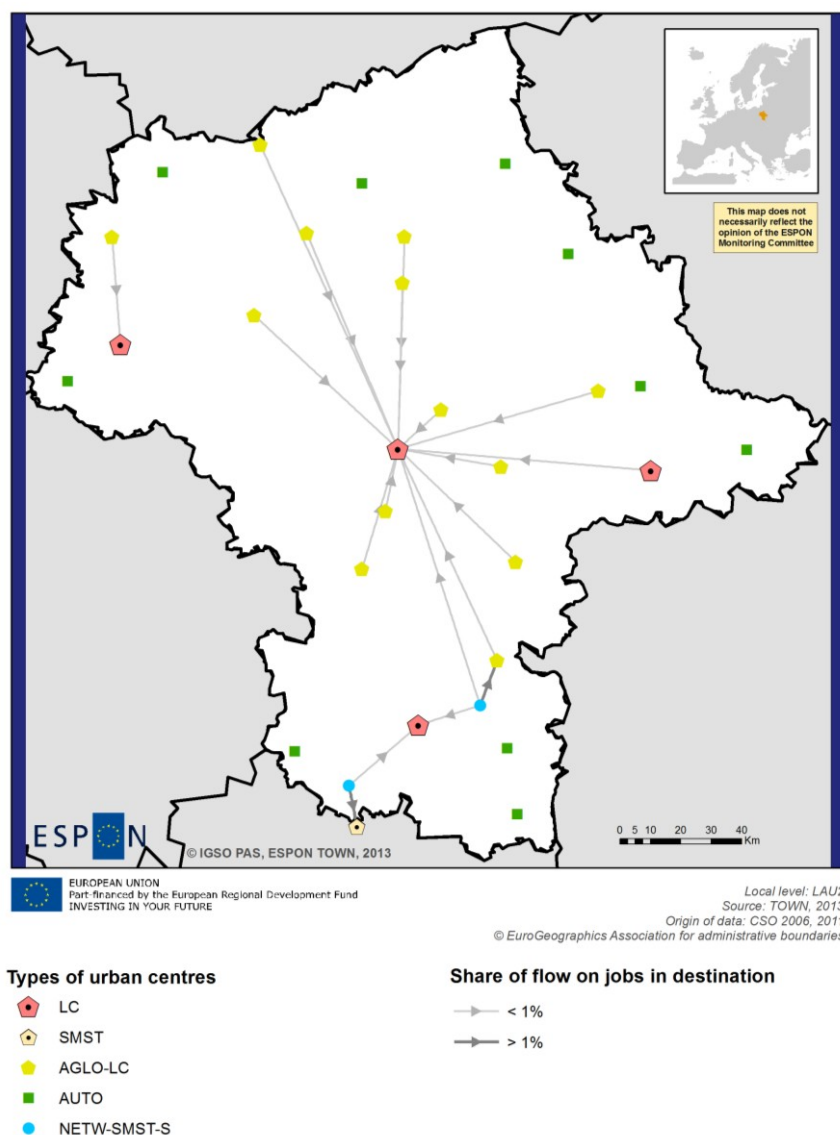


Fig. 5. Significant commuting flows between different types of SMSTs' territorial arrangements in Mazovia Voivodeship.

Source: own elaboration.

¹⁰ Skarżysko-Kamienna is located in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship and has a population of approx. 48,000.

The basic information concerning the four distinguished types of territorial arrangements of urban centres and their microregions is gathered in the below Tables 14 and 15.

Tab. 14. Characteristics of types of urban centres.

Urban centres	No	Pop 2002	Pop 2011	Jobs (2009)	Employed persons (2009)
LC	4	2 123 917	2 129 891	1 206 838	1 456 807
AGLO-LC	13	371 242	401 694	179 747	155 519
NETW-SMST-S	2	39 888	39 212	14 234	8 895
AUTO	10	196 992	197 314	87 554	80 523

Source: own elaboration.

Tab. 15. Characteristics of microregions according to types of urban centres.

Microregions	No	Pop 2002	Pop 2011	Jobs (2009)	Employed persons (2009)
LC	4	3 852 255	3 981 823	1 913 500	2 039 147
AGLO-LC	13	711 781	747 971	299 671	260 882
NETW-SMST-S	2	65 581	64 549	21 102	14 278
AUTO	10	494 401	491 261	186 106	176 256

Source: own elaboration.

2.3.3 Selection of case studies in Mazovia Region

With regard to the outcomes of the functional analysis, three small towns (and urban centres according to the adopted nomenclature) were selected for further in-depth case-study analysis: Garwolin, Łosice and Szydłowiec (Fig. 5). The three towns represent, respectively, three types of territorial arrangements: autonomous, agglomerated and networked.

2.3.3.1. Garwolin – agglomerated territorial arrangement

Out of the small and medium-sized towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship classified as “agglomerated”, Garwolin was selected for further in-depth analysis. Garwolin, seat of Garwolin county, is located around 60km southeast of Warsaw and is inhabited by more than 17 thousand people (2011). Using the functional criteria, Garwolin may be classified as a town in proximity to the metropolitan area, but lying beyond the sphere of direct influence of this area. Despite the fact that more than one third of all commuters from the town pick the capital city as their destination, Garwolin still plays a very important role for the surrounding areas as the main destination for daily commuting for the neighbouring communes (around 3,400 “in-commuters” and 1,300 “out-commuters”). The town also fulfils the role of a local centre for the surrounding areas, which are characterised by the dominance of the agricultural function.

According to the morphological typology, Garwolin represents a small town with medium density, in proximity to a high-density urban cluster and close to other small towns with medium or high density

(typology 1-1; typology 2-5; typology 3-5; typology 4-8; typology 2b-5,5; typology 3b-5,5; typology 4b-8,5).

2.3.3.2. Łosice – autonomous territorial arrangement (isolated rural town)

Łosice is located peripherally in the eastern part of the Mazovia region, close to the Poland-Belarus border, with around 7,200 inhabitants (2009). The town is surrounded by rural territories whose primary function is agriculture (agricultural land represents more than 70% of the total area of Łosice County). As such, Łosice plays an important role as a local agriculture service center.

Due to the low level of development of transport infrastructure, the town is isolated and poorly accessible. For this reason, Łosice concentrates most of the local entities and businesses within the city limits and plays a dominant role as an employment center for the inhabitants from of the surrounding villages. Some residents of the town commute to work in Warsaw on a weekly basis, or to Siedlce on a daily basis.

According to the morphological typology, Łosice represents a small town with a high population density, located in a peripheral area, with other small towns with high population density in the vicinity (typology 1-1; typology 2-6; typology 3-6; typology 4-11; typology 2b-5,5; typology 3b-5,5; typology 4b-11).

2.3.3.3. Szydłowiec – networked territorial arrangement

According to the typology, only four towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship were classified as networked. The first of them, Pionki, has a very small zone of influence (microregion), which is constituted by only two communes. Next, Gostynin and Ostrów Mazowiecka are networked only with their rural vicinity – the rural communes of Gostynin and Ostrów Mazowiecka. For this reason, Szydłowiec was chosen as a subject for detailed analysis in the project. The Szydłowiec microregion is composed of 4 communes (total population 34,800 inhabitants). Szydłowiec itself has important commuting flows to Skarżysko-Kamienna (Świętokrzyskie Region) and to Radom. Moreover, a relatively large number of inhabitants commute to Warsaw and to the surrounding rural communes (Orońsko and Jastrząb). Szydłowiec also fulfils the functional criteria deriving from the ESPON typology, as it is a “town that is experiencing de-industrialisation and de-emphasising its manufacturing role”.

Szydłowiec is a town of 12,300 inhabitants (2011), located in central Poland (southern part of the Mazovia region). It is the seat of Szydłowiecki County. Szydłowiec is surrounded by rural areas – the main functions of the communes located in the vicinity of Szydłowiec are agriculture, small entrepreneurship, and recreation. It should also be highlighted that Szydłowiec is located in the zone between the direct influence of Radom (222,000 inhab.) and Skarżysko-Kamienna (49,000 inhab.). In the past, Szydłowiec and its surroundings were known for the presence of heavy industry, but currently the majority of the factories have closed their doors and Szydłowiecki County registers one of the highest unemployment rates in Poland. For this reason, many inhabitants have to commute to other towns to work.

According to the morphological typology, Szydłowiec represents a small town with a high population density, close to two medium-sized towns and to high density urban clusters (typology 1-1; typology 2-6; typology 3-6; typology 4-11; typology 2b-5,5; typology 3b-5,5; typology 4b-11).

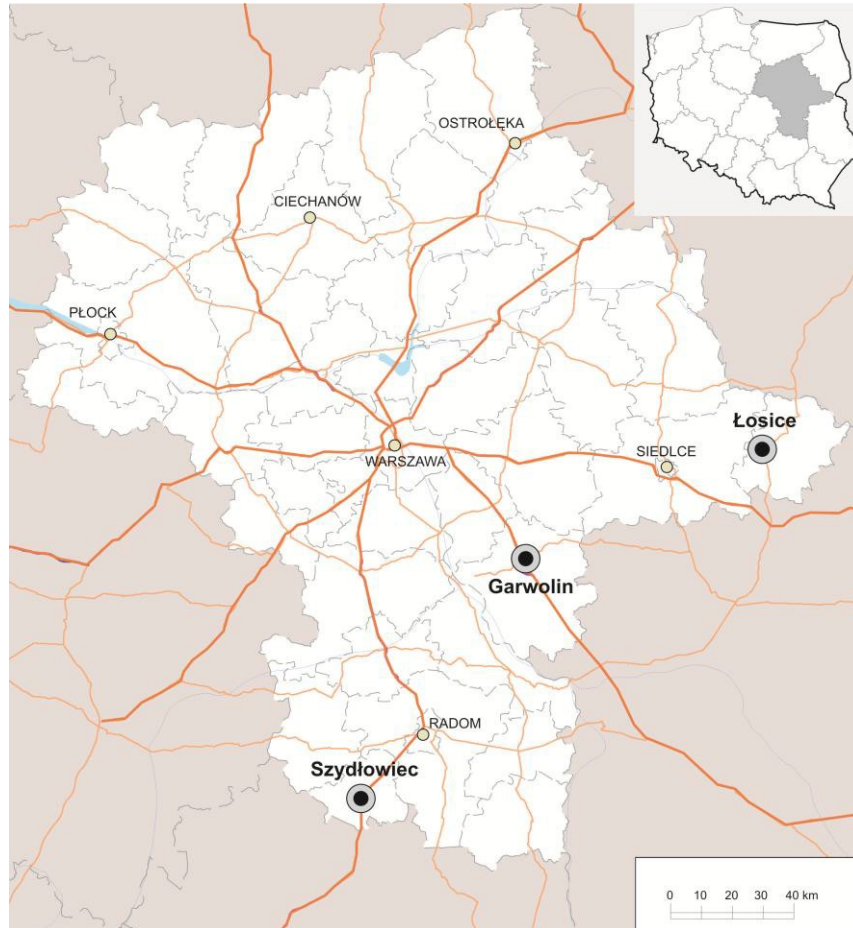


Fig. 5. Location of the case studies in Poland.

Source: own elaboration.

3 Territorial performance of selected SMSTs in Mazovia region

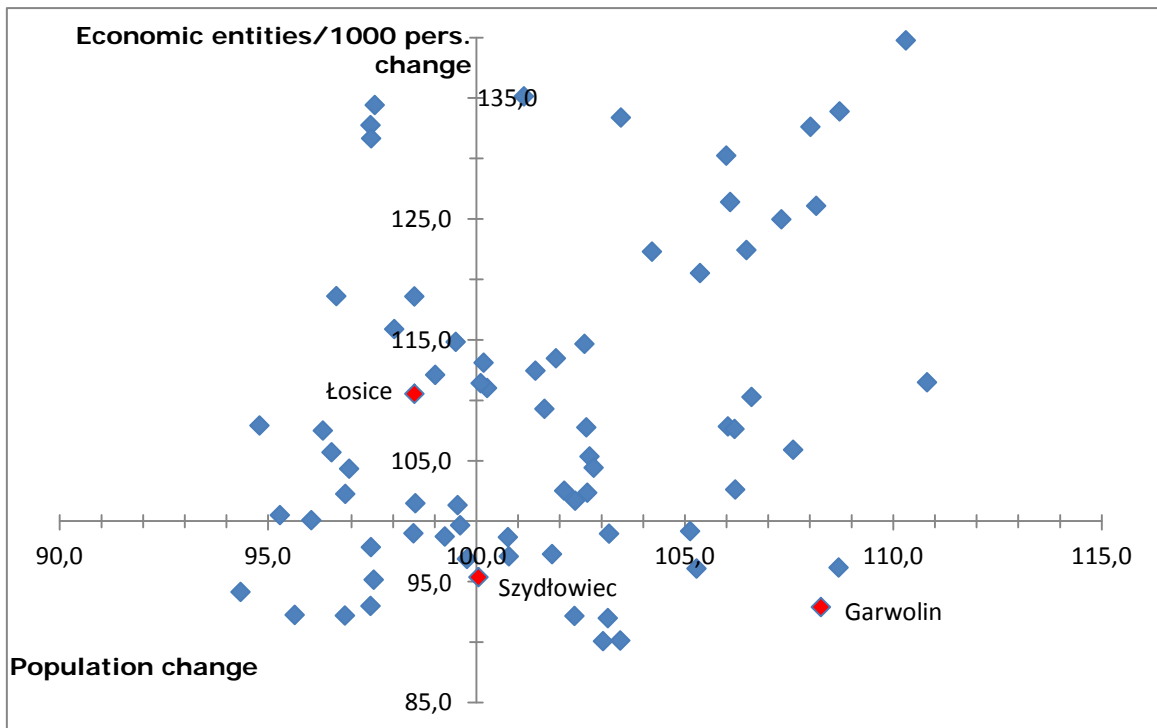
The three selected case study towns differ not only in terms of territorial arrangement but also in terms of their position within the Mazovia region. In order to present the relative situation of the three case studies (Garwolin, Łosice and Szydłowiec) two sets of data were used: (1) population change between 2002 and 2011 (2002=100) and (2) change in the number of economic entities registered per 1000 persons between 2001 and 2011 (2001=100). The results of this analysis are presented in the following graphics (Fig. 6, 7, 8).

Fig. 6. Case studies with respect to all communes in Mazovia region.



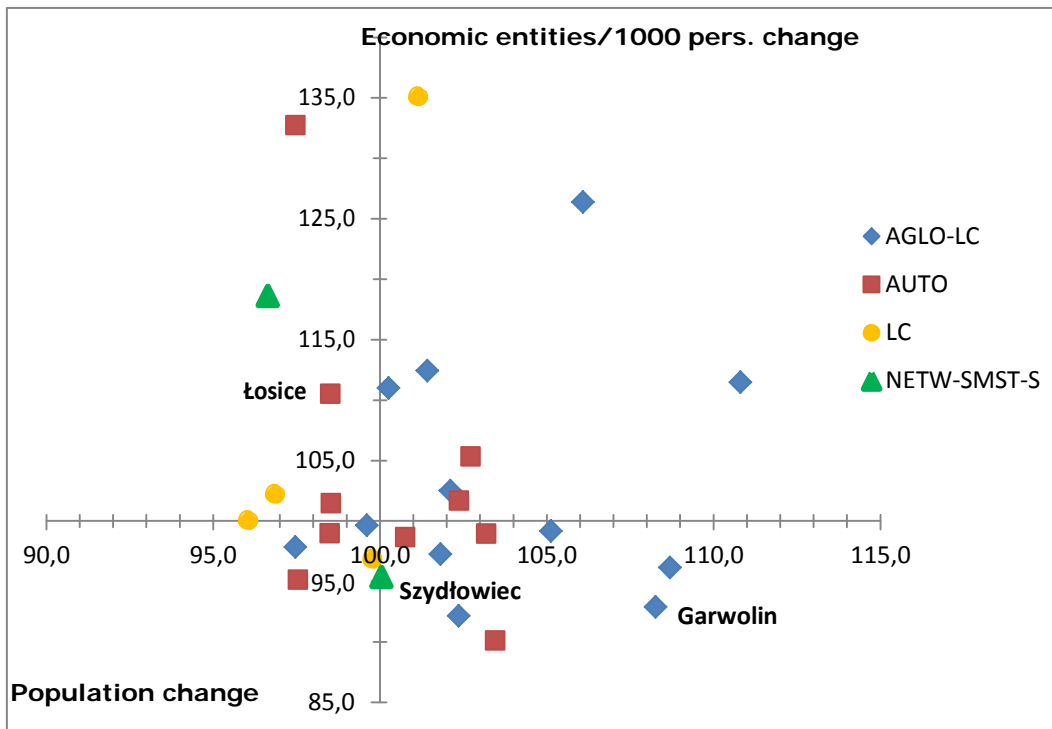
Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

Fig. 7. Case studies with respect to all urban and urban-rural communes in Mazovia region.



Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

Fig. 8. Case studies with respect to urban centres in Mazovia region according to type.



Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

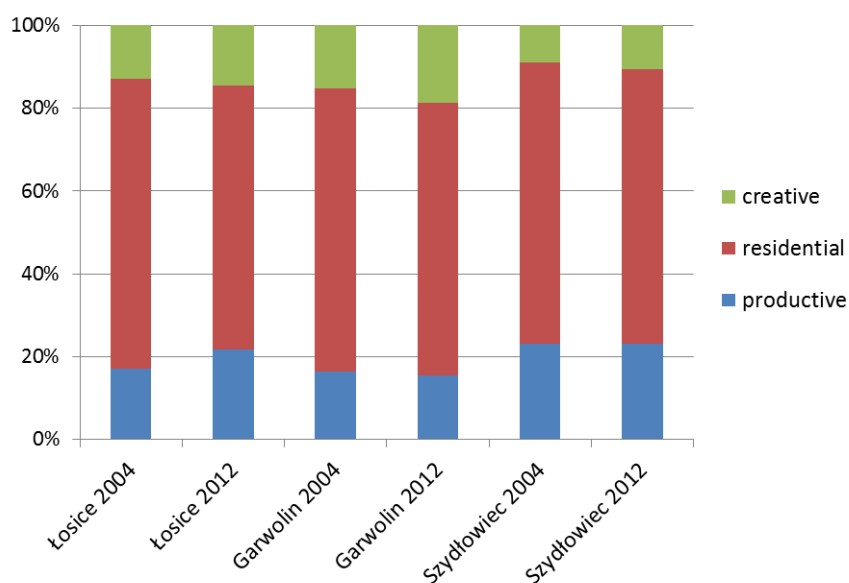
An analysis of the three graphs allows us to highlight several distinctive characteristics of the position of the three towns in relation to all communes in Mazovia region, to urban and urban-rural communes in the Mazovia region as well as to the urban centres in particular (distinguishing their typology). Within the scope of the communes in general, entities that have registered an increase in population in the past decade have predominated, and have additionally exhibited a proportional rise in the number of businesses in operation. By and large, these are entities located in the vicinity of Warsaw. This divide with respect to more distant centres can be explained by two mechanisms. The first of these is the “pull” of the nearby big-city market, which draws in both small manufacturers and large investments, as well as the well-qualified work force, accessible transportation systems and a well-developed infrastructure. The second is the “push” of certain investments outside of the administrative borders of the towns to the suburban areas. The high values on this measure in the zones in question are also a result of a high concentration of large manufacturing and service-providing firms in Warsaw, which directly stimulates the development of the local production- and service-related infrastructure. These towns constitute an attractive destination for migration (both from Warsaw and other locations), which brings about a rapid rise in population. Most of these towns are located in close proximity to Warsaw, and as such, they do not qualify as urban centres. As a result, there is relative disparity among the urban centres in terms of the two characteristics under analysis, and this carries over to the entire population of Mazovia’s communes. Eight urban centres are characterised by both population growth and number of businesses – for the most part, these are towns categorised as “agglomerated” (particularly Piaseczno and Wołomin). These centres undergo the development processes described above. Another 8 urban centres experience population growth, but a slight decrease in the number of businesses in operation. Once again, these are mostly agglomerated centres. Due to the greater distance that separates them from Warsaw, their location

is not quite as favourable for business as the previous group. Examples in this category include Garwolin, which was taken as a case study for this research. Five urban centres simultaneously witnessed a slight decrease in population and an increase in the number of businesses – these are mostly of the autonomous kind. Due to their normally peripheral location, these centres register negative migration, as the influx of population from the surrounding rural areas cannot keep up with the exodus of young people to larger urban centres. On the other hand, due to the distance that separates them from other large population clusters, these entities constitute a natural location for business activity, hence the increase in the number of companies that are based there. An example of the towns in this group is Łosice, which was thoroughly analysed for the purpose of the study. The final group is made up of 7 centres that are characterised by a decrease in both businesses and number of inhabitants. In reality, however, these differences are so minuscule that these centres should more accurately be considered a stable position. It is also difficult to draw up a general description of this category, as the cities in it belong to a number of different sub-categories. Among them is Szydłowiec, closely examined in the study.

To summarise the general socio-demographic situation of small and medium-sized towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship, it should be noted that the initial phase of the period of transformation brought dynamic changes to the structure of employment in the area. Industrial jobs in particular were reduced, which in turn placed more emphasis on the tertiary (market and non-market services). The participation of economic and business actors from the industrial and construction sectors decreased steadily until around 2001-2002 in most small to medium-sized towns, which denoted a broader trend in the region. The most dynamic changes in this respect took place in the smallest centres, and became a significant factor in their economic decline. The last several years have been characterised by a slight increase in private businesses in the region.

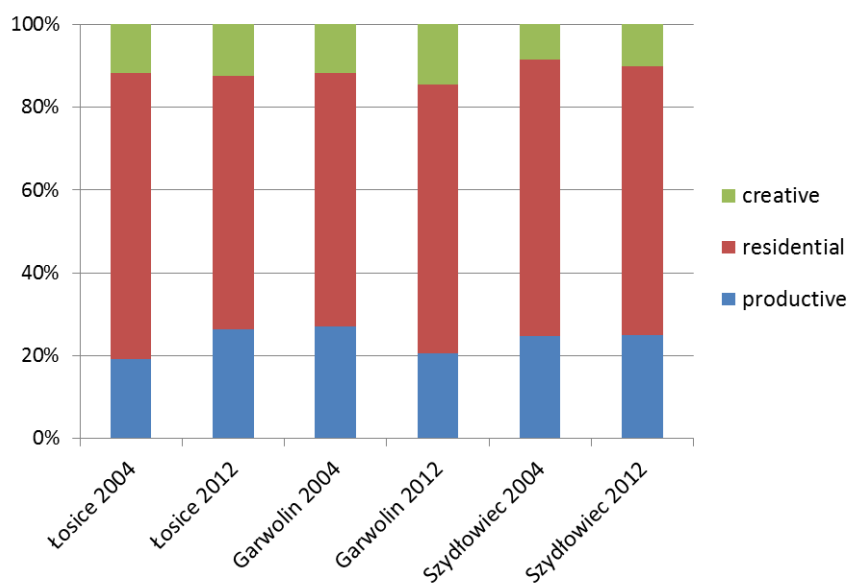
Apart from positioning the three case study towns with regard to other towns and urban centres in the region, the comparison of economic profiles was elaborated. The economic development of SMSTs is the result of different macroeconomic orientations that can be grouped under the residential, productive or knowledge economy. Each town is probably based on an original combination in which some predominance factors can be highlighted. The main distinction is about the fact that the orientation of local economies may be more linked to external markets (in case of productive economy or knowledge-based economy), or in a larger part to internal (local) demand (in case of residential economy). The economic profiles of the three case study towns were prepared on the basis of two data sets issued from 2004 and 2012. As the data concerning the employed persons by NACE classification is not accessible, the share of enterprises by NACE classification was used. However, the results of this analysis are difficult to be compared with other countries. In addition, due to changes of classification between 2004 and 2007, aggregation of data in 2004 under three types of economies: residential, productive and creative, was an estimation. For this reason, the conclusions drawn from this analysis should be considered with caution.

Fig. 9. Economic profiles of the urban centres of Garwolin, Łosice and Szydłowiec.



Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the CSO 2004, 2012.

Fig. 10. Economic profiles of the microregions of Garwolin, Łosice and Szydłowiec.



Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the CSO 2004, 2012.

In the three urban centres that were the subject of detailed analysis as well as in their respective microregions, in 2004 and 2012, businesses with a residential economic profile predominated. In general terms, there was a high degree of similarity between the business structure of the three centres, as well as between the centres and their microregions and between 2004 and 2012. That being said, several minor differences can be highlighted. First, entities with a creative profile are more visible in the structure of companies in the urban centres than in the microregion. Second, all the urban centres as well as their microregions recorded an increase in the share of businesses with a creative profile between 2004 and 2012. Third, in the peripheral urban centres (Łosice and Szydłowiec) and their microregions, businesses geared towards production increased in number

while the agglomerated centre of Garwolin went through the opposite tendency.

Generally, it can be said that the location of the small and medium-sized towns determines their socio-economic functions. Centres located in the immediate vicinity of Warsaw are primarily residential and much less oriented towards recreation or services. More distant centres constitute important loci of local activity in general terms (services, trade, administration). The bulk of these are agricultural/service-oriented towns that serve the needs of their own citizens as well as those of the surrounding villages. Non-market services, as well as some industry and market services, predominate in the employment structure of small towns. Non-market services are largely a staple of more peripheral towns that are located away from the large urban centres. Finally, the outskirts of the metropolitan area are home to a relatively large number of small centres where industry and construction both play a significant role.

3.1 Garwolin

Garwolin is situated around 60 km southeast of the capital city of Poland, on the motorway connection between Warsaw and Lublin (the regional capital of the Lubelskie Voivodeship). The town has a rich history, with city status granted early in the 15th century (in 1423 Prince Janusz I granted it civic rights). Over the last four centuries the town has experienced overlapping periods of development (due to the brewery and other types of crafts) and destruction (during the Swedish invasion of 1656-58, several incursion of different armies and severe destruction in 1939 by the Nazis). These events have undoubtedly influenced the current structure of the town. Garwolin is also the seat of the County of Garwolin, which spreads over the south-eastern part of the Mazovia region and borders with the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

Today Garwolin, with around 17,147 inhabitants (2012), is one of the 61 small towns in the Mazovia Voivodeship. It covers an area of 22.08 sq. km. The average population density in Garwolin is rather small (when compared to other towns with similar population) at 776 persons/sq. km, because of extensively built-up areas (Photo 1, Photo 2). Since the mid-1990s, the population size has been rather stable (16,310 in 1995), with only small fluctuations due to natural increase and migration in-flows. As a small town, Garwolin constitutes an interesting spot for newcomers from rural areas (this group dominates over the number of arrivals from urban areas in the total number of newcomers registered in recent years in Garwolin). It should be added that the official statistics do not cover all the population who settled down in the commune/town but did not formally register in their place of residence (this also carries over to the departures). Nevertheless, the above-mentioned number of inhabitants is rather accurate.

Photo 1. Garwolin – aerial view



Source: *Garwolin...*, 2012.

Photo 2. Garwolin – aerial view

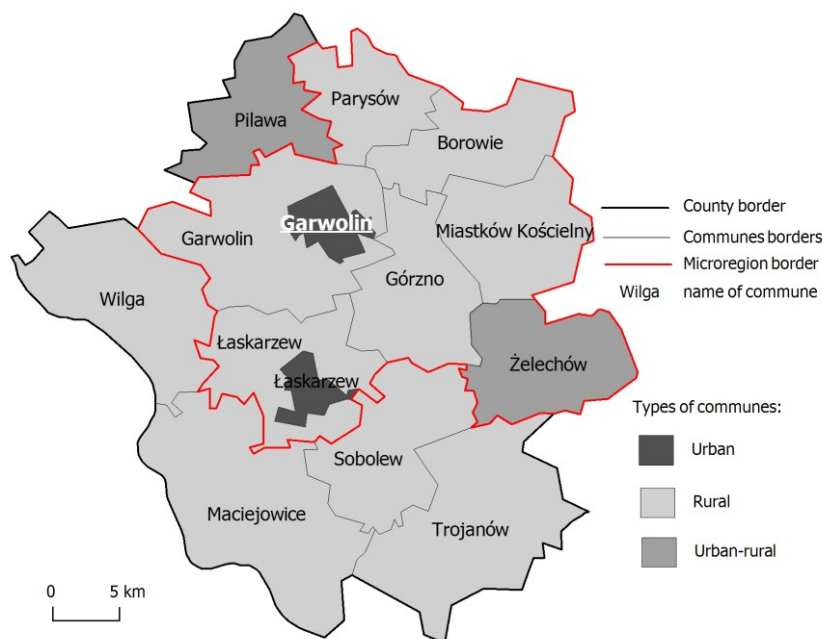


Source: *Garwolin...*, 2012.

The microregion of Garwolin is inhabited by more than 69,000 people and comprises 9 communes (LAU2), among which are 5 rural communes (Parysów, Borowie, Miastków Kościelny, Górzno, Garwolin¹¹), one town in an urban-rural commune (Żelechów), and one very small town (Łaskarzew) with a population lower than 5,000 (Fig. 11).

¹¹ In Garwolin County, there are two communes with the same name „Garwolin”: the first one is the Town of Garwolin and the second is rural commune nearby.

Fig. 11. Location of Garwolin within the county and its microregion



Source: own elaboration.

One of the crucial features of the town is its location in proximity to Warsaw and near one of the Poland's important road axes (National Road no. 17), going to Ukraine (border crossing point in Hrebenne) and Belarus (Brest). Because of the important traffic on the Warsaw-Lublin-Hrebenne route (mainly for transportation of goods), a ringroad was constructed in Garwolin between 2005 and 2007 (Photo 3), which facilitated traffic and removed it from the town's centre. Moreover, Garwolin is situated within one of the transport corridors of the Mazovia region, with the highest average length of bus lines per square kilometre and with an important number of bus connections per week (between 101 and 300) within the Mazovia region (Śleszyński et al. 2011). Moreover, one of the most important train connections (line no. 7) from Warsaw to Dorohusk (in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, near the border with Ukraine) crosses the territory of Garwolin. However, the train station is situated 5km from the town's centre, in a small village (Wola Rębkowska) in the rural commune of Garwolin.

Photo 3. Ringroad of Garwolin



Source: *Garwolin...*, 2012.

In terms of living conditions, single-family dwellings constitute an important part of the housing stock. What is more, 61.5% of dwellings belong to natural persons, 32.2% to cooperatives and only 4.9% to the municipality (2005), which confirms the relatively low share of multi-family housing in the totality of Gawolin's housing stock. As the town was heavily bombarded in 1939, only 7.3% of the current stock had been in existence in 1944 (Photo 4.). In the following years the number of new dwellings has been steadily increasing. There are also examples of newly constructed neighbourhoods (Photo 5).

Photo 4. Old wooden houses in Garwolin



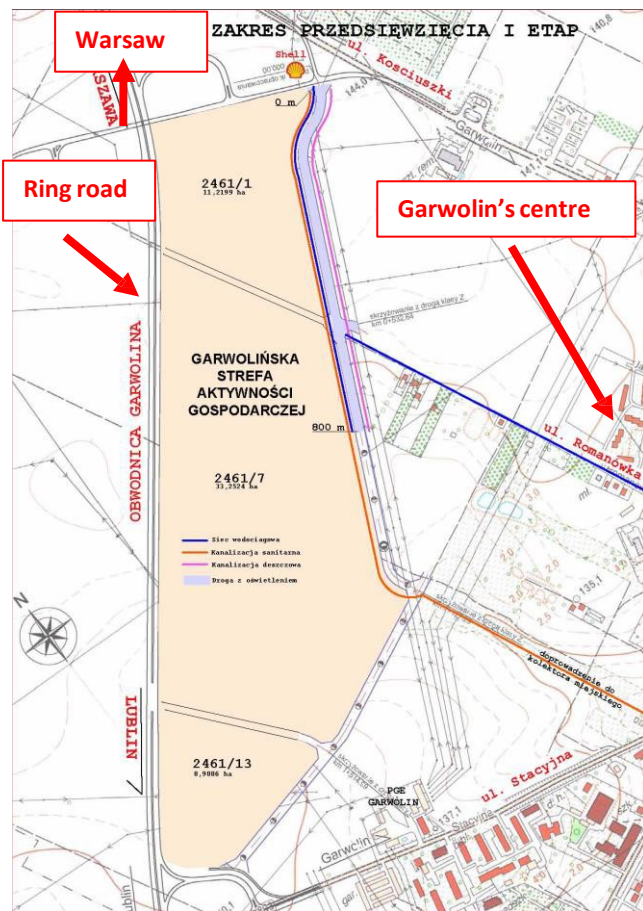
Photo 5. Modern multi-family houses in Garwolin



Source: *Garwolin...*, 2012.

What is more, there is around 108 ha of terrain dedicated for investment within the town's limits; this land is the possession of both the County Council of Garwolin (Starostwo Powiatowe) and private owners. The first attempts to take advantage of this asset have already been made with the establishment of the Economic Activity Zone in Garwolin (Photo 6), which covers around 60 ha of this area (by virtue of an agreement signed between the County and Town authorities in 2006). The technical infrastructure within the zone was cofinanced by the Regional Operational Programme for the Mazovia Voivodeship (ERDF).

Photo 6. Economic Activity Zone in Garwolin.

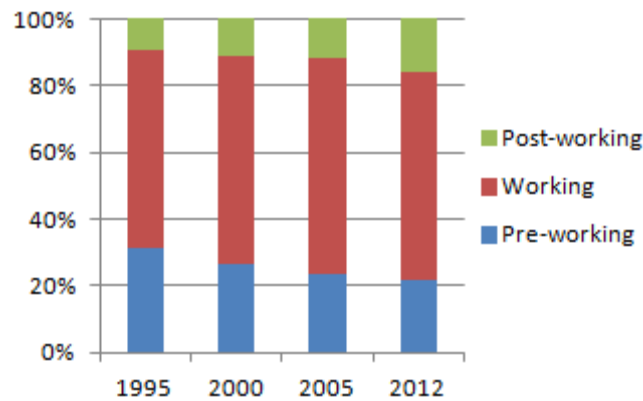


Source: http://www.garwolin-starostwo.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=570:garwolińska-strefa-aktywności-gospodarczej&catid=116:dla-inwestorow&Itemid=551

3.1.1 Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in the settlement system

The age structure of the population of Garwolin changes slowly and is shaped by an increase in the share of the population in the working and post-working age (Fig. 11). Moreover, the size of the population in the post-working age relative to the population in the working age has risen in the last 10 years from 17.8 (2002) to 25.2 (2012), which reveals negative trends in the demographic structure of the town (similar but less rapid changes are observed at the regional level, and opposite tendencies exist at the county level). Although the contemporary demographic structure does not indicate any severe problems, the growing share of the population in the post-working age should be taken into consideration by local authorities when planning future policies and goals for development.

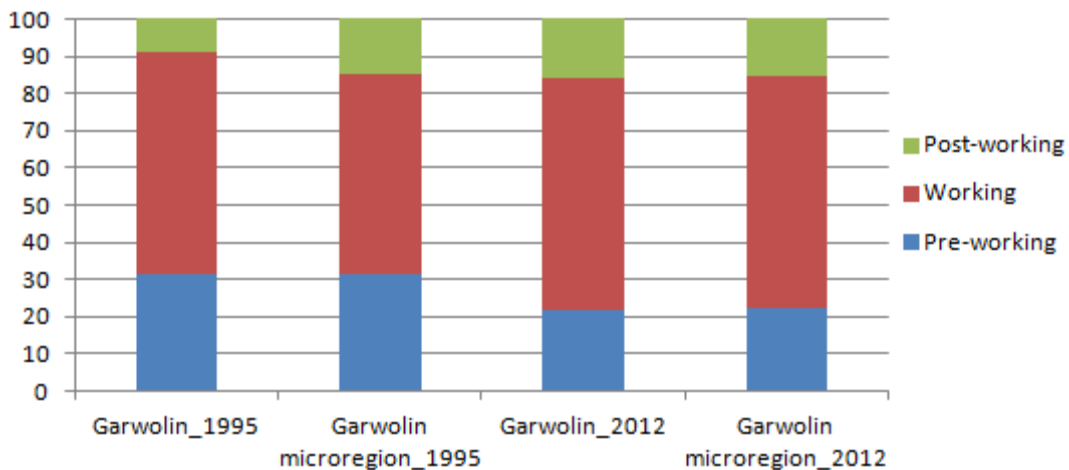
Fig. 11. Changes in the demographic structure of the population in Garwolin.



Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

With regard to Garwolin’s microregion, the age structure of the population is quite similar, especially in 2012 (Fig. 12), when the share of the population in the post-working age stood at around 15% in both cases.

Fig. 12. Age structure in Garwolin and Garwolin microregion in 1995 and in 2012.



Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

In 2002, in terms of education, citizens with tertiary education constituted 13.2% of the total population of Garwolin and 6.2% in Garwolin’s microregion whereas those who had completed primary education constituted 22.8% in town and 35.6% in the whole microregion.

Based on the data from the Central Statistical Office, the unemployment rate in Garwolin County has decreased between 2004 and 2012 from 17.1% to 14.4% (at the regional level, it also fell from 14.7% to 10.8%). At the end of 2011, at the Labour Office in Garwolin County, 5077 persons were registered as unemployed (Table 12). Out of all the unemployed persons, only 683 were still entitled for unemployment benefit. The major problem is the high share of young individuals in the unemployed group (in 2011, people aged 18-24 constituted 25.8% of the unemployed while people between 25 and 34 constituted 29.8%).

Tab. 12. Number of unemployed persons in Garwolin county, town and microregion in 2011.

	Number of unemployed	Share of unemployed (%)
Garwolin county	5077	100
Garwolin town	897	17.7
Garwolin microregion	3356	66.1

Source: based on *Sprawozdanie z działalności powiatowego urzędu pracy w Garwolinie za rok 2011*, Garwolin, January 2012

The number of enterprises registered in Garwolin in 2012 was 1,971, which constituted 27.8% of all enterprises registered in the Garwolin powiat (county) and 0.3% of all businesses registered in the Mazovia region. With respect to their size (in terms of the number of persons employed), the majority of the businesses were small and medium-sized firms (Tab. 13), which reflects the overall structure of enterprises in the Mazovia region (and in Poland as well). In Garwolin, there are only four large entities that employ more than 250 people (Zakłady Przemysłu Odzieżowego CORA GARWOLIN SA, Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska Garwolin, Ochnik, and Avon). Simultaneously, the number of enterprises registered in the microregion, excluding the town of Garwolin, constitutes around 60% of all the enterprises registered in the town, which confirms the role of the town as a job centre in this microregion.

Tab. 13. Structure of enterprises by number of persons employed in Garwolin town, microregion, county and the entire Mazovia region (2012).

	Number of enterprises	Structure of small and medium sized enterprises (%)			Large enterprises (%)
		Less than 9	10-49	50-249	More than 250
Garwolin (town)	1971	94.9	4.0	1.0	0.2
Garwolin microregion (<i>without Garwolin</i>)	2990	94.9	4.5	0.5	0.1
Garwolin (powiat)	7117	95.1	4.2	0.6	0.1
Mazovia region	699212	95.6	3.5	0.7	0.2

Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office, 2012.

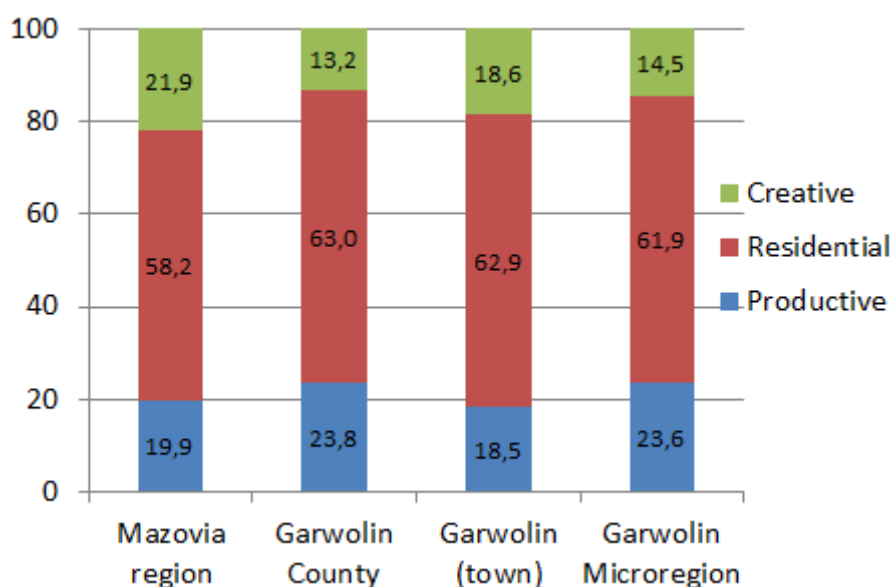
With regard to the types of activities carried out by the enterprises operating in Garwolin, the overall economic structure has not changed dramatically since 2009, and the town still presents a residential profile (Tab. 14, Fig. 13). However, a very slight change has occurred in the share of enterprises within the creative and knowledge-based sectors.

Tab. 14. Changes of economic profile of Garwolin between 2009 and 2012.

Year	Productive profile	Residential profile	Creative and knowledge-based profile
2009	22,9	59,7	17,3
2010	22,5	59,4	18,1
2011	22,1	59,5	18,4
2012	22,5	58,9	18,6

Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

Fig. 13. Economic profile of Garwolin, microregion, County, and Mazovia region in 2012.



Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office.

3.1.2 Socio-economic and demographic performance¹²

Since the establishment of local authority in 1990, Garwolin has developed in a very dynamic manner. This pertains mostly to the creation of technical infrastructure (e.g. in the mid-1990s around 30% of the area possessed a water supply system while today the whole area is well served) and other investments such as: refurbishment of local schools, new sport halls and centres, and a swimming pool. Undoubtedly the democratic transition has created new preconditions for development as well as for better provision of public services, which in turn contribute to the amelioration of the quality of life of the local population. The representatives of the local population have a right to select the goals that best correspond to the population's needs.

In terms of economic structure, the town has changed from being strictly connected with rural areas

¹² The content of this chapter is based on the opinions and information received from the representatives of the local authorities of Garwolin (Tadeusz Mikulski – Mayor of Garwolin, Katarzyna Nozdryn-Płotnicka – Treasurer, Wojciech Zalewski – Department Investments and Spatial Planning).

to one involved in production and providing services. The largest single company (in the cosmetics sector), operating in Garwolin since 1997, ensures jobs for more than 2,500 people and has become one of the drivers of development for other types of services connected with transport, repairs, cleaning, etc. The free market also contributed to better standards offered by local transport companies. The formerly public company PKS (providing transport by coach) has been losing its market share to private companies which operate in a more flexible manner.

Garwolin's location near Warsaw, and especially next to Expressway no. 17 leading to Ukraine and Belarus, were singled out as the most important strengths that create positive conditions for development in the area. Moreover, the ring road built between 2005 and 2007 contributed to the removal of heavy circulation inside the town. Garwolin presents itself as a small town that is capable of fulfilling all the needs of its inhabitants, which can be considered another strong side. There are numerous enterprises which offer jobs, not only for the local population, but also for incoming workers from nearby communes (daily) as well as for migrants from distant communes (especially from the Lubelskie Voivodeship). A certain share of the population also commutes to Warsaw while others have gone abroad (mainly to countries in Western Europe). A good system of educational institutions and facilities is yet another one of Garwolin's strong sides. The town not only has kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, but also an external branch of the Private Academy of Sciences (Społeczna Akademia Nauk), headquartered in Łódź, which allows students to undertake their studies without commuting or moving to a big city. In addition, other cultural and recreational infrastructure addresses the needs of the local population for leisure (i.e. public stadium, tennis court, public swimming pool, places for recreation and walks, public library, 3D cinema etc.). Additional leisure infrastructure is planned (e.g. a reservoir). To conclude, Garwolin is a small town which possesses all the required features of a big city and fulfils the daily needs of its population.

According to the local authorities, there are no particular weaknesses of the town. The only one drawback noted concerns extensive land use within the town limits (domination of single-family households) and relatively low population density when compared to other towns. As the population and housing are spread across the area in extensive way, the costs of maintaining the infrastructure are much higher than in other towns that are more compact. The system of local roads should also be improved as it does not correspond to the needs of the local population. Moreover, among the external preconditions that may threaten the development of Garwolin, the delayed construction of Expressway no. 17 has been indicated. The local authorities also recognised the potentially negative aspects of basing the town's economy exclusively on big enterprises. In the case of the collapse of such a huge job provider, the fired workers would have a severe problem on the local labour market. While the enterprises in the production sector were considered as being important for the town's development, the others, dealing in trade and sales (such as large supermarkets) were assessed in a more ambivalent way. On the one hand, they offer jobs for a large number of local people, but on the other, they contribute to the collapse of small, local shops which often constitute an important source of revenue for the whole family. It was recommended that the number of large and small enterprises involved in trade should be balanced somehow. However, this was assessed as a tough task that local authorities should face.

Despite the fact that Garwolin performs quite well, there are some general drawbacks of being a small town. The small towns in Poland do not receive much attention from the national government. In terms of external funding (e.g. from EU funds), small towns can receive certain aid, but in the case of Garwolin, this funding somehow came too late, as the town had already built its primary technical infrastructure (e.g. sewage system and water supply network). More specifically, the mechanisms of attribution are not always relevant and appropriate. For example, in the case of Garwolin, when the sport centre was planned, the overall performance of the town (budget and especially location) was too positive and Garwolin was not eligible for any external funding. The distribution of funding does not always correspond to the real needs of small towns, which often have to invest more in technical infrastructure and the amounts for human capital (such as workshops and trainings) are sometimes not sufficient. The creation of new jobs is the crucial point that should be given more attention.

Considering the wide scope of the functions played by Garwolin – both in terms of jobs, public services and leisure – the town plays an important role in its microregion in different spheres.

According to local authorities, the production and services sectors are the main components of the local economy, focused on the fulfilment of local needs. This may confirm the residential profile of the town, which was defined through statistical analysis in the previous sub-chapter. It should be also highlighted that local authorities have a special policy towards entrepreneurs. Since 1996, tax exemptions have been introduced for entrepreneurs who set up their business in Garwolin and offer jobs (the exact degree of tax exemption depends on the number of jobs offered). In that way, the biggest company operating in Garwolin avoids paying around 2 mln PLN (zlotys) in taxes per year. Furthermore, the local authorities have a policy of encouraging entrepreneurs: friendly atmosphere, ease of setting up a business (help with formalities).

Despite not having spectacular natural resources, Garwolin tends to take advantage of its strengths and develop in different directions.

3.2 Łosice¹³

3.2.1 Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in settlement systems

The town of Łosice is located in a peripheral lowland area in the eastern part of the Mazovia region, in the vicinity of the Polish-Belarusian border. The local economy is primarily structured around agriculture, which is dominant in the rural areas of Łosice County. Mushrooms in particular play a major role in production (the area around Łosice is a so-called “mushroom basin”, yielding the largest number of mushrooms in all of Poland), as do chokeberries and strawberries.

The population of Łosice is approximately 7,200 (2009). In the administrative division of the country, the town is the seat of both commune (LAU2) and county (LAU1) authorities. In terms of population, Łosice comes in 304th out of 314 county seat towns in Poland, which makes it one of the smallest population centers in this category. Łosice was granted the status of county seat due to several factors: 1) its location at the intersection of several transport routes; 2) the historical role the town has played; and 3) the lack of any significant urban centres in a 15-20 kilometer area. Łosice received its civic rights as early as 1505, and for a considerable period of time in the 17th century, constituted

¹³ In developing chapters 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 the information derived from the in-depth interviews was used. The interviews were conducted for the project ESPON TOWN in May 2013 with the mayor of Łosice (Janusz Kobylński), a head of Łosice Spatial Planning and Municipal Economy Department (Jerzy Walczyński) and representative of Łosice Development Association EQUUS (Elżbieta Roszczak).

the county seat. During the partitions of Poland, the tsarist occupants stripped the town of its status as county seat, which it regained only following World War II.



Photo 7. One of Łosice's main streets.

Source: own work.

In Mazovia's regional settlement system, Łosice plays the role of a local centre of development. As a town, it is peripherally located, and Łosice County, in which it is embedded, is itself wedged between two former (pre-reform) voivodeships – the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the south and the Podlaskie Voivodeship in the north. At a distance of about 30-40 km lie the sub-regional centres of Siedlce and Biała Podlaska, both of which were regional centres (capitals) prior to Poland's last administrative reform (1999). In the overall settlement structure, Łosice can therefore be classified under the third functional category of towns and cities – after Warsaw, the central and regional city, and Siedlce and Biała Podlaska (located in the Lublin Voivodeship, about 40 km away from Łosice), the sub-regional centres. The town can be considered active from many functional perspectives (administrative, service, residential, commercial), but all of them are, by and large, subordinated to agriculture and the provision of services thereto. Services, trade and the labour market are developing thanks to the intensive production of mushrooms, chokeberries and strawberries in the rural areas surrounding Łosice. The town is a local labour hub; it provides residents of the smaller villages in the vicinity with healthcare, basic and secondary education, and a number of repair services; and finally, constitutes a notable local transport and trade hub. Recent years have seen the development of the town's social and self-government functions, which resulted from the creation of several socially oriented non-governmental organizations that focus on a combination of self-governance, improving living standards, social work, and support for the socio-economic development of the town and the county as a whole.



Fig. 13. Łosice County and the location of Łosice within the region.

Source: <http://powiat.losice.pl/> and own elaboration.

Łosice County is composed of 6 rural communes; Łosice is the only town in this administrative unit. According to an analysis of the population of the county in the last 5 years, the number of inhabitants has been steadily falling – a consequence of low natural growth and an outflow of young migrants to the big city (mainly Warsaw) and abroad. Studies conducted by the governments of both the commune and the town suggest that Łosice is also afflicted with an aging population, and this tendency will probably be aggravated as time passes. Children and young people aged 18 and below made up a mere 13.5% of the town’s population in 2008 (compare to a national average of 19.2%). At the same time, the percentage of population in the post-working age (65+) was equivalent to the national average in both the commune and the town (around 13.5%). The demographic situation of the town is, however, more favourable than that of the surrounding rural areas, where the rates of out-migration and aging are proportionally worse.

Łosice is situated at the confluence of the Białystok-Lublin and Siedlce-Janów Podlaski-Terespol transport routes. A significant distance separates it from any large urban agglomerations – it is 120 km from Warsaw, 120 km from Lublin and 130 km from Białystok. For this reason, Łosice can be considered an isolated centre whose accessibility for transport leaves some to be desired. On the other hand, relatively accessible transport routes lead from the town to Warsaw and Siedlce, Lublin and Białystok, although the amount of time it takes to reach one’s destination is relatively long, which limits the possibility of commuting daily to work in these cities. Commuting to the larger cities is therefore typically done on a weekly basis.

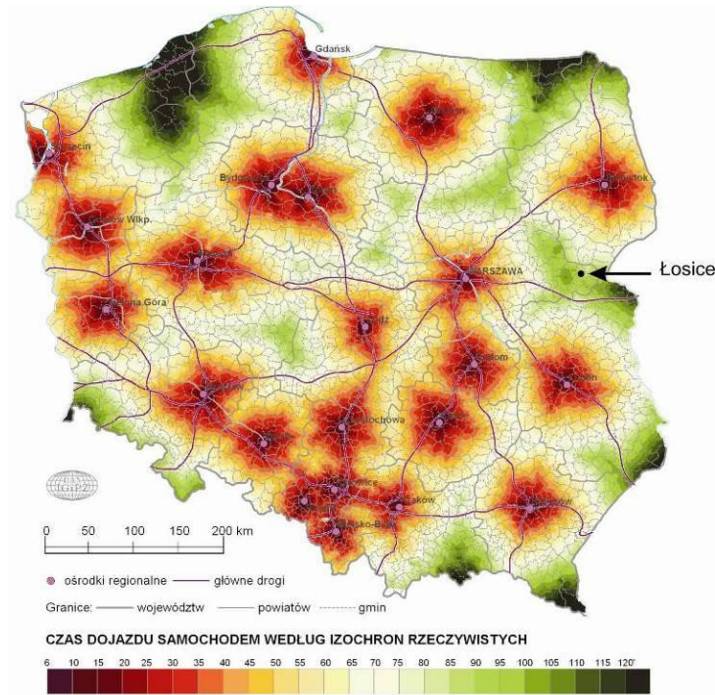


Fig. 14. Real-time isochrone map of driving times (2009)

Source: Komornicki, Śleszyński 2009.

Around 315 people commute from Łosice every day, but most of them (about 250) have jobs in the vicinity of the town, where a number of large employers operate (primarily dealing in large-scale mushroom production). The transport factor, especially the limited possibilities of commuting to work daily in big cities, elevates the role of Łosice as a local labour market and population centre serving the needs of the surrounding area. Every day, about 600 people come to work in the town due to the concentration of enterprises that are based there (Czapiewski *et al.* 2011). According to the *Municipal and Communal Strategy for the Resolution of Social Problems in Łosice* (2009), the number of businesses registered in the town and the commune is relatively high. However, among the latter, small businesses, employing 1-5 people, predominate. The largest companies in town (with over 50 workers) are employed in dairy (milk) production, peat gathering and processing, manufacturing of synthetic products, and production of welding tools.

The town is surrounded by rural areas where the agricultural function enjoys clear preponderance; agricultural activity in the commune covers about 70% of its surface. Farmers mainly cultivate grain, potatoes, corn, and the locally cultivated mushrooms, strawberries and chokeberries. As a result, Łosice plays an important role as a local hub of agricultural services (financial, technical and commercial).



Photo 8. Part of the Głuchowski mushroom production facility.

Source: own work.

According to information from the County Employment Office, there were 447 unemployed individuals in Łosice in 2009, which suggests that this social problem affects the town more heavily than it does the surrounding rural areas: in the same year, 228 unemployed persons were identified in the countryside. Since 2002, there has been a significant drop in the unemployment rate, which may be attributed to economic growth in the country as a whole, development of businesses, projects that encourage entrepreneurship, and people in the working age migrating abroad to find employment. The strongest economic ties Łosice enjoys are with Warsaw and Siedlce. These are primarily focused on the labour market, public services, higher education and healthcare. In comparison, the ties that bind the town to other centres are insignificant. Studies of directions of travel (to or from Łosice) have clearly shown a larger number of vehicles leaving Łosice County than arriving there (Czapiewski *et al.* 2011). Additionally, depending on the direction of the exit road from the town, a relatively large number of vehicles from Siedlce County (33%) and the Podlaskie (15%) and Lubelskie (25%) Voivodeships was reported.

3.2.2 Socio-economic and demographic performance

According to respondents, the greatest economic strength of Łosice is the significant degree of economic activity of its residents, which only came to the fore following the collapse of the socialist system (after 1989). Firms that had, in the fading days of the old system, belonged to the state (e.g. *Bumar*) or to cooperatives (*Hodycze*, *Łosiczanka*) were going out of business, and were systematically replaced by minor enterprises, primarily in the area of transport services, trade, and repair and construction work. Firms that specialized in the production of mushrooms began to appear. It is estimated that around 25% of the national production of mushrooms originates in the commune of Łosice, and "Głuchowski", a company based in Nowosielec village (about 5 km from Łosice) is one of the biggest mushroom producers in Europe.

The most commonly cited economic weaknesses of the city include: lack of large firms to stabilise the labour market; shortage of available jobs and unemployment; little interest on the part of outside

investors; and the local government's excessive concentration on the town's current economic problems coupled with insufficient engagement in planning development in the long run.

Unfavourable demographic processes are also highlighted in survey responses, including the aging of the town's population and the migrational outflow exceeding the influx. Young and educated people in particular are prone to leaving Łosice. On the administrative level, governmental actors attempt to counteract this unfortunate trend through initiatives such as: tax exemptions for individuals setting up enterprises in the town and commune; construction of new apartments in order to attract newcomers; and conducting training and courses for those opening their businesses in the area.

The natural environment of the town and its environs is free of significant levels of pollution and ecological threats; however, it is not attractive enough to draw in tourists. The lack of protected areas allows for a wide range of potential economic investments.

The town's location is generally considered unfavourable and discouraging for outside investors. For this reason, important changes are not expected in terms of the current economic functions of the centre. Its proximity to the border may create chances of development for trade and services, but the "hermetic" border of the country and the European Union limits significant movement on the borderlands. A more optimistic corollary of the town's isolated position, far removed from other towns, is the important role Łosice has to play as a local economic centre. The town possesses a large concentration of services and trade, both of which can be tapped by inhabitants of a relatively large area around Łosice. One example are the sales figures for the local branch of the popular Biedronka supermarket chain. According to the mayor of Łosice, the store places second in the country in terms of sales.

Another recurring comment is that the greatest advantage of the small town is the security and lack of anonymity. In comparison to large cities, this entails a more peaceful, tranquil life and a lack of internal transport problems (commuting to work, school and other institutions). On the flip side, the fundamental problems of the small town include an unattractive labour market that lacks in flexibility and diversity, as well as limited access to some services of a higher order.



Photo 9. Newly constructed housing projects are intended to attract newcomers to settle in Łosice.

Source: own work.

As a town, Łosice has not drafted a separate set of strategic plans for development in either the short or long run. Planning documents pertaining to the county (*Local Development Plan 2004*), the commune or the town (*Local Development Plan 2004*) were outlined and accepted about 10 years ago. However, they make the mistake of rehashing very broad projections originally conceived for other administrative units, and do not sufficiently address the local specificity of the area. The bulk of these documents constitutes a socio-economic diagnosis of the unit, which could have been a good starting point for defining more detailed strategic goals for the town.

The town's development policy relies on *ad hoc* actions taken with the premise of "plugging holes" and sweeping problems under the carpet, handling difficulties as they arise. The goal of local policy is to maintain the "status quo" and, at the same time, searching for new investors. To illustrate, an area of several hectares was created in anticipation of investment; the town and the commune have expressed their will to support the PKS partnership (providing local personal transport solutions), which is owned by the local administration; the county hospital is being developed and expanded; a museum dedicated to the three border cultures (Poland, Belarus and Ukraine) is under construction; and actions are being taken to attract potential investors. What is lacking is a well-defined vision of the future of the town and, as a result, an informed development policy for Łosice. The local government considers it preferable to develop all sectors of the local economy.

Łosice fulfils a variety of economic roles (administration, schooling, trade, housing, services), but they are all subordinated to agriculture, which dominates both at the level of the commune and the county. Agricultural services in a broad sense and trade in agricultural products are the primary spheres of activity of the enterprises that are active in the town. Transport services are also relatively important. Łosice is first in the country in terms of number of delivery vehicles per capita. Before 1989, a large subgroup of the employed residents was made up of drivers working for state- and cooperative-owned firms whose area of activity was sizable. After these firms collapsed, drivers took up their profession individually, joining or establishing separate firms in the whole county. The cooperative "Grzybek Łosicki", for instance, which unifies several dozen mushroom producers, has a large and well-developed transport system to help meet demand.

In terms of daily commuting to work, Łosice constitute a local labour market for the inhabitants of the surrounding area, which features a very small number of non-agricultural enterprises. People whose destination is the town itself, mainly originating from another area in the county, predominate. The composition of the group of incoming commuters is made up largely of administrative workers and individuals with fewer qualifications. The citizens of Łosice commute to work outside of town mainly in connection with the production of mushrooms, but it is difficult to estimate their real number, as a large part of the group is working illegally (in the so-called grey zone). Mushroom producers' average earnings are relatively high (exceeding the national minimum wage twofold). A small group commutes to work in Siedlce and Biała Podlaska. According to respondents, the group that leave to Warsaw (week-long cycles) or leave the country altogether to find work abroad also play a vital role.

The utilisation of tools meant to be used for the town's development is assessed negatively by locals. The town carries out different projects and programs with the financial support of the European Union, but they all not linked to any single development strategy. There are no initiatives to set up programs for which a source of support will later be sought; rather, actions are taken specifically with

the acquisition of funds in mind. In other words, wherever there is a possibility for a project to receive funding, that is where projects tend to crop up.

Most of the initiatives to date have been connected to transport (modernisation and renovation of roads), technical infrastructure (sewage system and sewage treatment plant, water pipes, garbage dump), and advances in social capital, a goal that benefited from the involvement of non-governmental organisations. One of these is *Equus*, established in 2004 to counteract unemployment, foster entrepreneurship, conduct skill-focused career-enhancement courses, and support the social engagement of the inhabitants of Łosice.

The lack of a well-defined, unified concept of the development of the town renders assessment of the local government's competence in its realisation impossible. Theoretically, though, it can at least be said that the local self-governing body has a wide range of possibilities for defining possible paths of development, and selecting one or more of them. Łosice is not constrained in its development by factors like the proximity of land belonging to the Natura 2000 network or other protected natural areas, or for that matter, any zone that would hinder investment. One difficulty related to the area's location is its being wedged between two regions (Podlasie and Lublin), which removes the possibility of joint endeavours in domains such as recycling and waste processing at a regional level.

The town participates in collaboration networks, but its activity in this respect is not significant. Cooperation is more dynamic at the county level; for instance, there is an inter-commune association whose goal is to organise the garbage dump. Additionally, Łosice participates in national associations of communes, but this encompasses most communes in Poland and is not, in itself, a sign of intense activity. At the county level, there is an active federation of mushroom producers called "Grzybek Łosicki", which draws together several dozen enterprises.

Łosice is also involved in a partnership with towns and cities in Belarus and Ukraine whose ultimate goal is to carry out an infrastructure project financed by the European Union.

Funding for projects is largely provided by the various programmes of the European Union, as well as from the town's own budget. Regional and national resources for this end are more limited. The proportional use of the town's own resources is greatest in spatial planning, transport, and public services; conversely, European funds are channeled into social development at the local level, public services, and support for entrepreneurship and business.

3.3 Szydłowiec¹⁴

3.3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of SMSTs and their position in national/sub-national settlement system

The town of Szydłowiec is situated in the southern part of the Mazovia Voivodeship, around 30 km from a major sub-regional urban centre (Radom, pop. 222,000), several kilometres from the border of the region and a little farther from the large industrial centre of Skarżysko-Kamienna (pop. 48,000). Szydłowiec is the seat of the administration of both the commune and the county. It covers an area of 22 km² and has a population of 12,200 (2012).

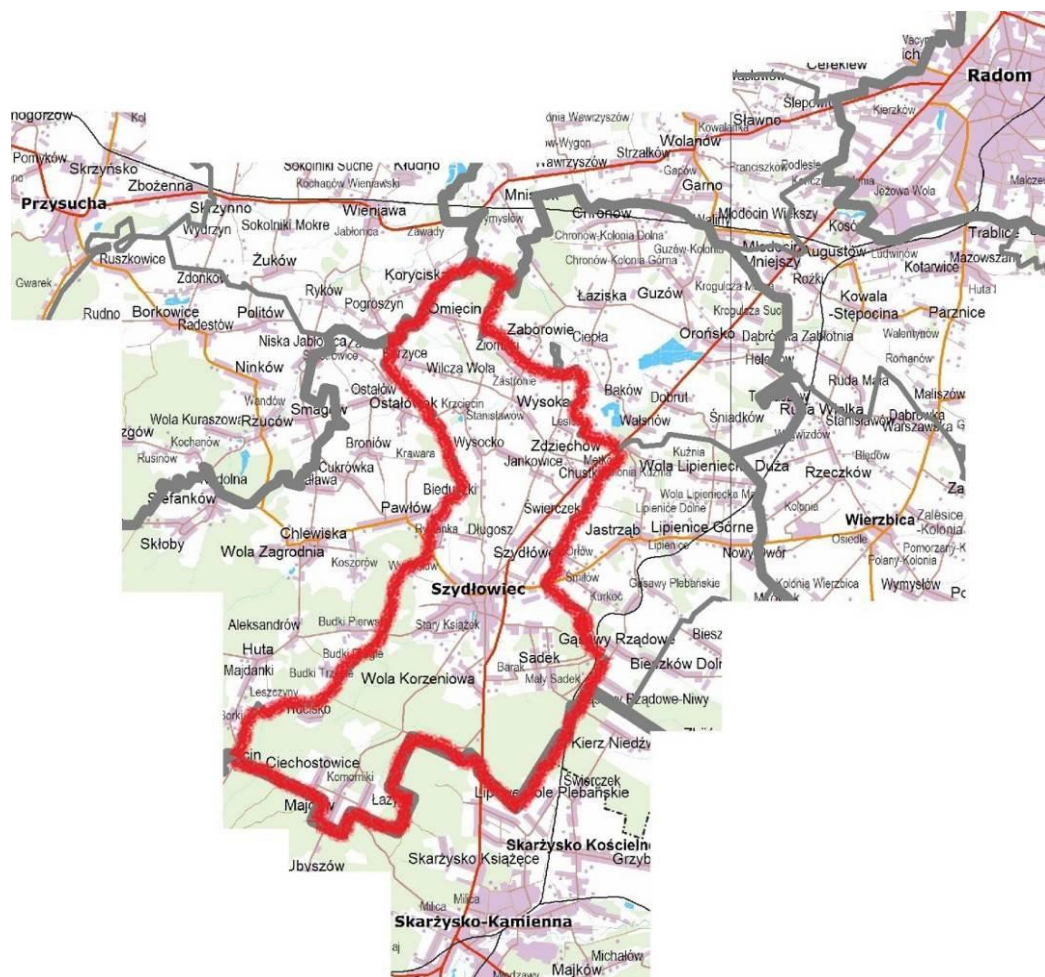


Fig. 15. Location of the commune of Szydłowiec.

Source: IGSO PAS.

Aside from the town of Szydłowiec, the commune comprises 24 villages and settlements that together are inhabited by fewer than 7,200 people. It should be noted that rural settlement patterns are marked by considerable fragmentation and dispersion. The population of the grand majority of the individual settlements does not exceed 300 people.

¹⁴ In developing chapters 3.3 and 4.2, the information derived from the in-depth interviews was used. The interviews were conducted for the project ESPON TOWN in May 2013 with the mayors of Szydłowiec (Andrzej Jarzyński and Krzysztof Ziółkowski), an entrepreneur active in the Guild of Handicraft (Paweł Górlicki) and director of Szydłowiecki Culture and Sport Centre (Małgorzata Bernatek). Moreover, the information from interviews conducted in April 2011 for the project Trends for Mazovia Development was also used. Those interviews covered discussions with the representatives of the Szydłowiec County, Labour Department, Centre for Family Support and High School.

A highly consequential circumstance, both for the current situation and for carving out future paths of development for the commune and town of Szydłowiec, is the peripheral location of the area in the southern reaches of the Mazovia region, at the border with the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. A beneficial factor for development is the fact that National Road No. 7 and voivodeship Road No. 727 through the commune. Despite this, no large enterprises or businesses, logistical centres or other objects have formed around, and as a result of, the arrival of these new transport routes. Furthermore, construction of the ring road around the town has eased heavy traffic, but has also entailed a sharp decrease in the number of passers-by making use of any of the roadside services offered by the town (e.g. shops, restaurants), and has marginalised the town with respect to the main transport route.



Photo 10. Traditional single-storey structures stand next to multi-storey buildings

Source: own work.

One of Szydłowiec's positive distinguishing features are the physical manifestations of its cultural heritage – particularly a distinctly urban and well-preserved arrangement of buildings and streets and valuable historical buildings (town hall, castle). The history of Szydłowiec as an incorporated town goes back over 600 years, although its history beyond that is much longer, stretching out to the early 13th century. At the time, Szydłowiec was in the possession of – and developed by – affluent families that represented the nobility of the day. Historically, Szydłowiec was once an important centre of trade and craftwork, as well as extraction and processing of sandstone (sandstone from Szydłowiec has been known and valued since the 16th century and extracted on a larger scale from the 19th century onwards, finding wide use in decoration and lining). Economic downturns occasioned slowdowns in the 17th and 19th centuries, primarily owing to the political, economic and military circumstances of the day. Following World War II, as part of the policy of industrialisation championed by the socialist government, industrial infrastructure (masonry, electronics, metallurgy and extraction) expanded significantly in Szydłowiec and its surrounding area. The traditional one- or two-storey urban structure was nearly crowded out by several residential neighbourhoods with high-rise buildings several storeys high (Photo 10). Szydłowiec began to experience considerable immigration, with workers receiving jobs at the industrial plants and living in the newly-constructed tower-block apartments. In 1970, the population of Szydłowiec was 6,200, in 1978 – 8,100, and by 1988, towards the end of the socialist period in Poland, it had grown further to 11,800; since then, the population has remained more or less stable. At the beginning of the transition to democracy, most of the large industrial developments (some of which had employed 1,000-2,000 people) were shut down, or otherwise significantly reduced their range of production, hiring and existing employment. Poland's accelerated system change and abrupt opening of the country's economy to free-market competition brought about the collapse of many branches of industry located in and

around Szydłowiec. The aftermath of this comes in the form of very grave employment problems – at present, the unemployment rate in the whole county stands at 37.6%. Today, Szydłowiec is no longer home to large-scale production and major industrial development. The biggest firms employ no more than 100 people at any one time. It is symptomatic that public institutions remain the largest single employer; due to the town’s significance in the administrative system, the town hosts a large number of offices, as well as public, educational and cultural institutions, clinics and hospitals. Another predominant type of enterprise offers services and craftwork; these employers typically hire up to several to a dozen or so workers. The supply of work on the labour market is sorely insufficient in relation to the demand.

Thus faced with reality, not all citizens are able to find work close to home, and therefore have to commute to other locations. On a daily basis, two large urban centres are the most popular targets for commuters – Radom and Skarżysko-Kamienna. While both of these cities possess a rich industrial past and the negative effects of the political transformation are visible in both, their unemployment rate is estimated at around 20%. One indicator of the importance of these cities for the people of Szydłowiec are the numerous courses conducted by private transport firms (Photo 11). Another major city that remains an important labour market for Szydłowiec is Warsaw. Both commuting on a weekly basis (departure on Monday and return on Friday) and permanent migration – with citizens remaining in the capital after finishing their education – are observed. Agriculture, in turn, presents few alternatives for employment – although agricultural holdings cover approximately half the commune, up to 75% of them are of the type considered least amenable to agricultural production.

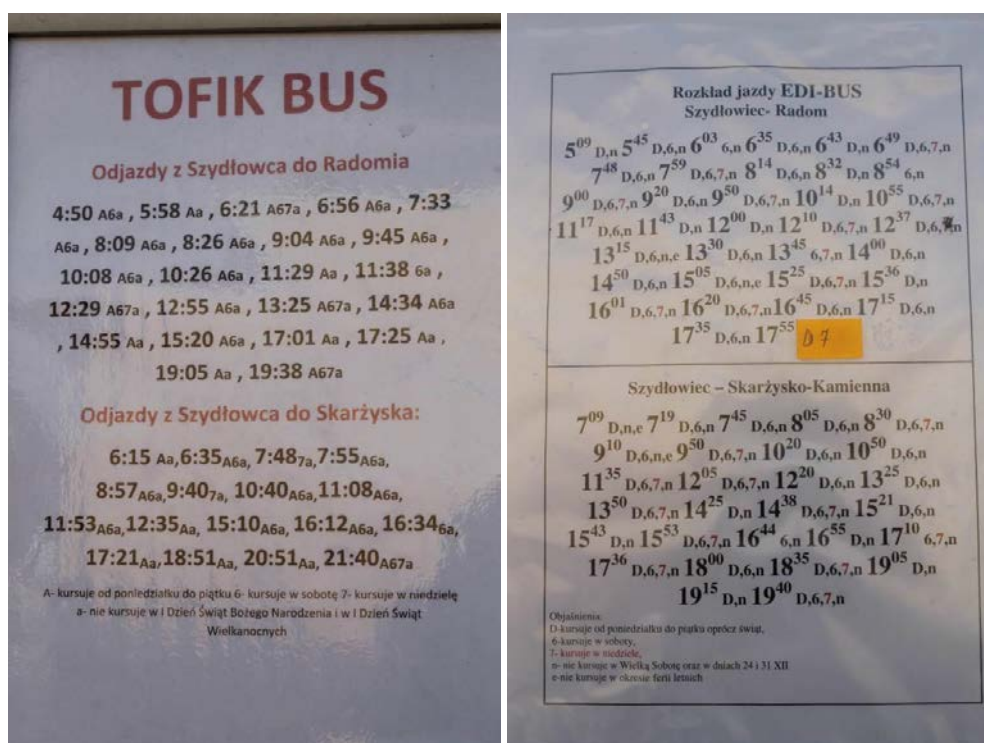
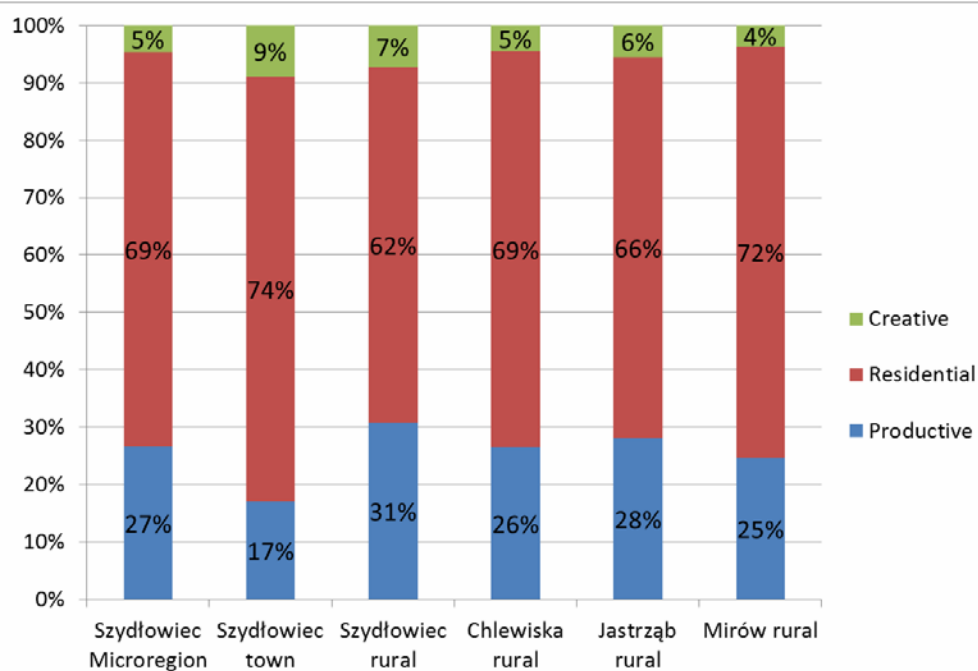


Photo 11. Connections from Szydłowiec to Radom and Skarżysko-Kamienna dominate the bus schedule.

Source: own work.

All of these observations are confirmed by statistical analyses on business entities based in Szydłowiec and the surrounding area. The entire area exhibits a preponderance of subjects with a “residential” profile. However, this is clearer (if slightly) in Szydłowiec due to the town’s higher concentration of subjects in the area of services and administration. Szydłowiec is also home to twice as many entities with a creative economic profile than the microregion’s average. As a result, entities that engage in production are also slightly underrepresented. This corroborates the profile outlined above, according to which modern-day Szydłowiec can be classified as a town essentially concentrated around craftsmanship and services, primarily geared towards the local market.

Fig. 16 Number of business entities according to the three types of local economies in the microregion of Szydłowiec and its surrounding communes.



Source: own elaboration on the basis of data from the CSO, 2012.

3.3.2 Socio-economic and demographic performance

The most significant problem Szydłowiec faces, and one pointed out by all respondents, is the high unemployment rate, spurred by a lack of openings for jobs. It was through this issue that the surveyed individuals viewed and discussed the actions of the local government and different institutions that are active in Szydłowiec. The closing of large industrial firms and plants, a dearth of significant investors, and the pre-eminence of small family-owned businesses focused on artisanship and services influences popular views that connect all social matters and initiatives to the labour market. The high unemployment, it was emphasised, is forcing young, often educated people to leave for greener pastures. After finishing their secondary education, young people often choose to study in the big cities (Warsaw, Kielce, Radom, Łódź, Lublin) and usually end up settling there. Individuals with technical training, lacking job prospects locally, often migrate internally (commuting to and from work on a weekly basis), or leave the country. Respondents also noted, however, that a certain number of unemployed people only represent statistical unemployment, when in reality they benefit from the free healthcare that comes with this status and work without registering their activity.

Next, respondents named two very strong sides of Szydłowiec, both of which can be classified as spatial factors. The first of these are the richness and natural beauty of Szydłowiec and its surroundings in terms of architecture and environment. The town's long history (with its past development based around trade and artisanship), myriad historical buildings, diverse landscapes (most of Mazovia is made up of monotonous lowland landscapes, but the terrain in the area of Szydłowiec is more varied, featuring numerous rolling hills) (Photo 12). Granted, these are not first-class historical and natural tourist attractions that could attract a large number of visitors, but on a regional level, compared with the rest of Mazovia, the town and its surroundings stand out in a positive way, and may encourage a short stay in the case of occasional visitors, those seeking respite for the weekend, or people travelling through the commune along the national road. The second factor is Szydłowiec's general location. Despite the town being situated in the outer, peripheral area of the Mazovia region, its citizens underlined that the national road has proven to be an important factor in the commune's development even though, at this point, it was not possible to establish the exact benefits it brings.



Photo 12. Szydłowiec's historical urban spatial arrangement.

Source: own work.

The strong and weak points of the town transform with time, and never remain static. The underlying, fundamental structural change in Szydłowiec in the last two decades has been the aforementioned collapse of the industry, which led to the destabilisation of the town's existing economic base. A direct effect of these changes was the increase in unemployment, but also declining revenue for the town. A factor that turned out to be unfavourable for the development of the town was the fact that most of the firms that existed previously were cooperatives, and as such, the town currently does not have much lands that could be put up for investment, and does not have its own communal plots. This significantly hinders advances in local investment policy.

One important factor that is commonly considered either unfavourable or neutral was Poland's administrative reform of 1999. In that year, the 49 existing voivodeships were merged into 16 larger regions, and Szydłowiec was incorporated into the Mazovia Voivodeship. Because Mazovia is the richest region in the country (with the dynamic expansion of Warsaw and its environs), it is also less able to swiftly manage and ensure uniform – or at least parallel – development throughout the

region in real time. There are fewer funds for these purposes, and financial aid or subsidies for projects are more difficult to hand out, among other problems. In contrast, in the neighbouring Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, which begins 7 km south of Szydłowiec, entrepreneurs and local governments can expect more support for development, as the region is one of the poorest in the European Union and therefore benefits from the European Union's special balancing programmes. However, at the local level, respondents generally deemed Szydłowiec's plight much more serious, as the unemployment rate is twice as high as in neighbouring Skarżysko-Kamienna, on the other side of the border. Some point out the benefits of being located in the Mazovia Voivodeship, although the drawbacks of this circumstance (primarily financial) are raised just as often.

The pre-eminent function of the town is also going through changes. In the socialist period, Szydłowiec was classified as an industrial/agricultural centre, whereas at present it is strictly a town revolving around services and artisanship, serving the needs of the local population and focused on ensuring access to public services. A range of locations around the town offer complex services and facilitate access to trade, education, healthcare, culture, exchange of goods, and administration; these points serve both the citizens of Szydłowiec and the whole county in which it is situated. The transformation of the dominant function or orientation was not just the result of the forced reorganisation of the industrial sector, but also of a change in the investment paradigms of local self-government units in the transition period. In the last 20 years, self-government units across Poland (including Szydłowiec) clearly turned towards investing in technical infrastructure (pipelines, sewage systems and sewage treatment plants, heating plants), social infrastructure (especially schools and sports venues) and transport infrastructure. In terms of the development of infrastructure, the transformations that have taken place in Szydłowiec over the last dozen or so years have been some of the most beneficial and conspicuous. Therefore, rather paradoxically, as the situation on the labour market worsened, the living conditions of the citizens of Szydłowiec improved significantly.

It was noted that the greatest virtue of Szydłowiec is that it is a clean, pretty, tranquil little town. Citizens still consider that no matter where one lives, it is "close to everything". Of course, the greatest complaint is the situation on the labour market.

One positive change that has taken place in recent years in Szydłowiec is the greater intensity of social activity, as exemplified by the surge in the number of non-governmental agencies and associations. Szydłowiec has always cultivated a tradition of cultural activity, but this has taken on greater dimensions in recent years. The town's repertoire in culture and sports has also been greatly expanded, and many citizens can now spend time more actively by joining artistic, cultural and dance groups. Respondents emphasised that in a town as small as Szydłowiec, it is imperative for multiple institutions, organisations and entrepreneurs to collaborate in realising joint endeavours. In a city where most people know one another to some extent, cooperation across institutions should be equally natural. It should not be approached with reluctance and pessimism, but rather as a manifestation of both formal and tacit ties as well as the free flow of knowledge and information. It was also noted, however, that the vertical network of connections (with higher-level authorities and the national government) is not always free of problems. Certain laws and regulations are passed at the national level whose implementation falls on the communes, and it is the local institutions that must bear the social and financial responsibility of effectuating them. Often there is little negotiation

or discussion – the communes do not take part in talks on the form of the laws that they are eventually tasked with executing, in part or in full (this affects certain spheres such as education, waste management, local self-government units' financial policy etc.). Due to its location deep within Poland, Szydłowiec has practically no contact, much less real cooperation, with similar entities in other countries.

4 Policy dimension of SMSTs

4.1 Impact of EU, national and regional policies on SMSTs

Small towns and settlements are not the object of a separate regional or national policy, but rather are incorporated into it along with the territorial units to which they belong (communes, counties). According to the Act on Planning and Land Use¹⁵ (2003), each municipality in Poland conducts a study of the conditions and directions of spatial development (suikzp)¹⁶ and local master plans¹⁷. The latter constitutes the local law. The planning documents (suikzp) elaborated at the local level have to be in line with the planning documents elaborated at the higher administrative level (voivodeship and national). Local plans define the set of rules concerning land use and the character of the modes of construction and the functions performed in different areas. At the end of 2010, almost all municipalities in Poland had their own planning document (suikzp) and 26.4% of the territory of Poland was covered by local plans, which is still, however, insufficient to properly manage land use (Śleszyński et al. 2012).

Most communes also possess a strategy of development that assesses the current level of socio-economic development, in addition to defining directions of progress for the commune. Towns and communes therefore have far-reaching autonomy in terms of planning their own development.

On a regional level, policy issues concerning small and medium-sized towns largely revolves around the distribution of financial resources for regional investments, or identifying priorities and actions that need to be taken for each town. Regional and national policy, expressed through planning documents (e.g. the regional development strategy, the national outline for spatial planning, the national development plan), paints a very broad and vague picture of the pathways of development of small and medium-sized cities, owing to the development priorities of the region or country. Generally, these do not constitute a major impediment to any one of the possible directions of socio-economic development of a town. A more important question is the current national development paradigm, which places special emphasis on the metropolitan area of the big city. Small towns located beyond this area are not given their due attention, and therefore suffer problems related to the labour market, lack of funding, and unfavourable demographic and social processes.

At the same time, it is essential to underline that small towns, particularly those that are simultaneously county seats, are extremely important as centres of development in peripheral areas. An analysis of the concentration of ten fundamental services (e.g. education, trade, business entities, culture etc.) available in county seat towns with respect to their population has clearly demonstrated that the best results were registered by counties located in peripheral parts of the Mazovia region (including the counties detailed in this study, whose main cities are respectively Szydłowiec, Garwolin and Łosice). The concentration of all kinds of services and activity in these towns is 2-3 times higher than that of the population. Population centres in the Warsaw suburbs have exhibited precisely the opposite trend (Bański *et al.* 2011). These results establish just how important small, peripheral county towns are on a regional level. It is there that most of the services are offered; they play a very important exogenous role for the rural areas that surround them. By contrast, the county towns that surround Warsaw primarily serve the needs of only their own populations. Those that are not citizens

¹⁵ Ustawa o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym

¹⁶ Studium Uwarunkowań i Kierunków Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego

¹⁷ Miejscowy plan zagospodarowania przestrzennego

of these centres often turn to offers in other big cities in the county or Warsaw.

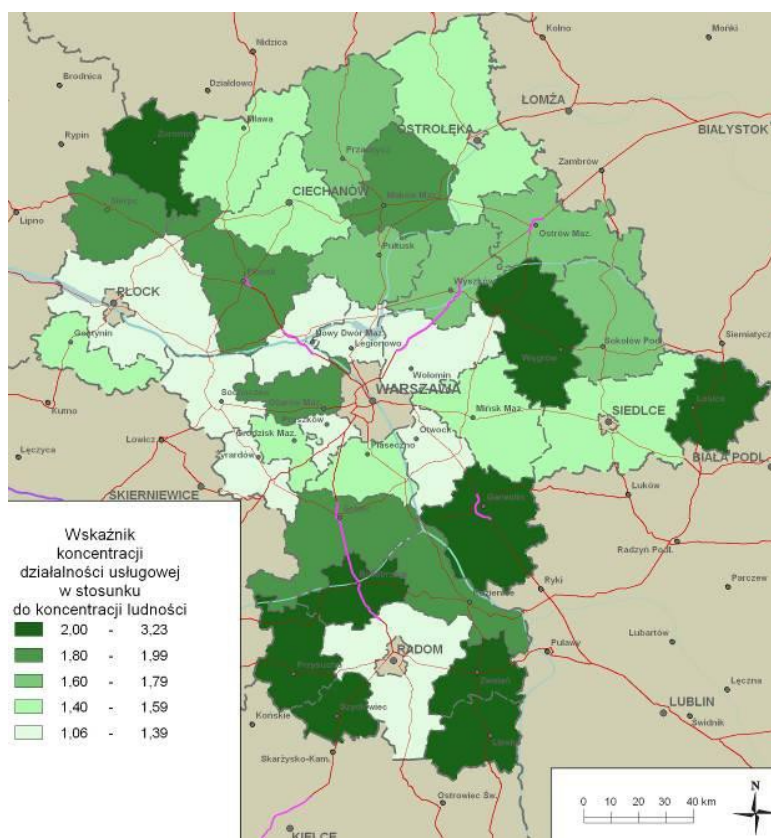


Fig 17. Synthetic indicator of concentration of service activity in county towns in relation to concentration of population (the higher the indicator, the more important the town in serving its surroundings).

Source: Bański et al. 2011.

In the existing *Strategy for the Development of the Mazovia Voivodeship until 2020* (2006) and its already published update, the *Strategy for the Development of the Mazovia Voivodeship until 2030* (2012), small towns form the fourth or fifth hierarchical level of development. The first of these layers is Warsaw itself and its metropolitan area, then two large regional urban centres (Radom and Plock), followed by three sub-regional cities (Siedlce, Ostrołęka and Ciechanów) and finally small county towns in the fourth tier, and small seats of communes in the fifth. It is difficult to argue against this kind of hierarchy, but it is quite indicative of the position of small towns in the region's development potential and opportunities. In 2009, Warsaw's contribution to the region's GDP was 61%, and including its immediate surroundings brought it up to almost 80%. However, it is pertinent to observe that both these documents demonstrate a visible development dichotomy in Mazovia. The strategy does not focus exclusively on Warsaw's metropolitan area (with respect to which the documents establish goals that largely deal with the competitiveness of the region), but also dedicates a number of goals (mostly in the interest of internal coherence and balance) to other parts of the region, sub-regional cities, small towns and rural areas. All four development goals for the region and operationalised precisely with four territorial dimensions in mind: (1) the region, (2) Warsaw's metropolitan area, (3) cities (particularly sub-regional cities with their vicinity as well as some larger county seats), and (4) rural areas (including small towns) (*Strategia Rozwoju*, 2012). To illustrate with an example from the *Strategy* (2012), the "Economy" subtopic is approached in the following way. The development goal of "boost[ing] the competitiveness of the region through stimulating production and the transfer and utilisation of new technologies" is to be carried out in the

small and medium-sized towns through the following tasks: (1) devise incentive mechanisms for the expansion of entrepreneurship in towns that are losing their economic functions, (2) maintain access to basic public services, (3) support local policy in job creation in the area of production, and (4) development of financial instruments that would stimulate local entrepreneurship. The metropolitan area, in the meantime, has completely different directions and duties within the same development goal for the whole region of Mazovia.

4.2 Local development policies and practices of SMSTs

4.2.1 Garwolin

With regard to the most crucial documents that contain indications towards Garwolin's development, two should be singled out: the Strategy for the Development of Garwolin and its offshoot Programme for Local Development in Garwolin, as well as the Study of Trends and Directions for Development. The scope of investments for each period is described in the Long-Term Financial Forecast (*Wieloletnia Prognoza Finansowa*); the current document covers the period 2013-2031.

In 2002, the Strategy for the Development of the Town of Garwolin was elaborated by an external group (Fundacja Rozwoju Demokracji Lokalnej, Dolnośląskie Centrum Szkolenia Samorządowego in Wrocław). In the Strategy, a SWOT analysis was also presented. The main strengths of Garwolin were similar to those enumerated during the interview in May 2013. It is interesting the following aspects were indicated as weaknesses: lack of terrain prepared for investments, lack of ring road, lack of integrated system of management for the town, lack of bicycle paths, insufficient promotion of the town, insufficient sport and leisure facilities, low quality of urban fringe and urban composition etc. As was revealed in the previous sub-chapter, some of these weaknesses were removed during the last decade, which may confirm that the town successfully carries through with its goals, step by step. Perhaps the town's development is not as eye-catching or conspicuous as in bigger cities, but the progress is undoubtedly stable. The Strategy contained three main goals for the town's development:

(1) High quality of public services provided

A. Improvement of the quality of the environment and restructuring of technical infrastructure: management of waste according to the requirements of environment protection, modernisation of sewage system and extension of drainage network, reduction of emissions;

B. Improvement of living conditions: amelioration of quality of local roads, construction of new roads and bicycle paths, parking places, reduction of traffic in the heart of the town, elaboration of the "Safety Town" Programme, improvement of accessibility to education, sport and recreation facilities;

C. Integrated system of management for the town: introduction of long-term financial and investment plans, improvement of information policy, introduction of system of assessment of clerks at the Town Hall, creation of reception point at the Town Hall, computerisation of Town Hall, creation of the position of specialist for strategy and promotion for the town,

(2) Improvement of the position of Garwolin in the Warsaw metropolitan area:

A. Improvement of the position of Garwolin as the centre of the County: creation of platform of cooperation with local authorities from communes in the County, improvement of town's aesthetics, development of tourist accommodation and catering base,

B. Promotion of the town: elaboration of an economic "itinerary", elaboration and implementation of promotion strategy for the town, introduction of annual event for promotion and leisure (Picnic in Garwolin),

(3) A dynamic and enterprising local community:

A. Local economy based on small and medium-sized enterprises: creation of an organisation of entrepreneurs, creation of Economic Activity Zone, creation of a system of economic information,

B. Mobilisation of local society: creation of a programme for the socio-cultural mobilisation of different social milieus in Garwolin, cooperation with the Town Council of Youth.

The above-mentioned goals were then repeated (almost unchanged) in the resulting document (the Programme for Local Development).

When looking at the goals enumerated in the Programme for Local Development and information gathered from the interviews, certain incoherent visions and expectations can be indicated. For instance, in terms of the enterprises that could set up their headquarters in the economic zone, on the one hand, local authorities recognise the need for small and medium-sized enterprises as crucial for the town's development. On the other hand, the plots that are offered in the Zone are very big, which in turn eliminates small investors from becoming operators on these sites. It seems that sometimes the opposing visions of local councillors and difficulty in reaching agreement with regard to development objectives can be pointed out as a possible obstacle. The ring road of the town is assessed positively by certain stakeholders and negatively by others. The second group points out that the ring road removes the "life" from the town.

The *Study of Trends and Determinants for Development* was adopted in 2000 and is currently being updated. In this document (still valid despite its age), 14 directions of land use and spatial development were enumerated for the town. The majority of them are similar to the objectives listed in the previously mentioned documents for local development. The study tackles the need for reinventing a functional and spatial structure for the town based on concentric rings surrounding the historic centre. Moreover, this document lists the directions for the development land use on different terrains with regard to the requirements imposed by the Law on Planning and Land Use (2003). In addition, the study indicated certain undeveloped areas where it was recommended that master plans be drawn up in order to develop certain functions and types of land use (residential and services, production, green areas). According to the survey on local planning (Central Statistical Office, 2011), there are eight valid master plans in existence in Garwolin (around 9.69 km² of the town, or around 44% of the area, are included in the plans) and another five are in preparation.

The Long-term Financial and Venture Forecast for the period 2013-2031 indicates the main investments that are to be implemented, the first period being between 2013 and 2019. The planned 9 investments concern: projects for street construction (4 projects), creation of a social building, technical building for the Centre of Sport and Culture, sport hall for one of the school, and construction of a kindergarten. These investments are in line with the goals listed in the Programme for Local Development and focus mainly on the amelioration of living conditions and the quality of life in Garwolin.

The first objective of local authorities is to fulfil the needs of the local society, and then to encourage new investors and entrepreneurs. Despite the fact that Garwolin has not updated its Programme for Local Development to date, the local authorities stressed that the main objective is currently to ensure jobs for the local society by attracting new enterprises. The town is closely cooperating with numerous non-governmental organizations and associations which strongly influence the cultural and sport life of the citizens. However, it is important to stress that cooperation with NGOs is one of the tasks of the communes themselves, imposed by the Law on Local Self-Government (1990). In order to ensure good cooperation between the local authorities and local NGOs, a centre for sport and culture was established and is responsible for cooperation coordinating cooperation with associations. Cooperation with NGOs has both a financial and non-financial dimension. Between 2006 and 2016 the funding for local NGOs in Garwolin has doubled (and reached 640,000 PLN). Non-financial cooperation covers different spheres such as: mutual exchange of information about planned activities, recommendations given to that try to obtain external funding, support for acquiring external contacts, promotion of the activities of NGOs etc. Each year, the local authorities announce an open competition for the execution of public duties, with regard to different recreational, leisure and other activities (i.e. promotion of activities connected with health and a healthy lifestyle, culture, and support for national heritage etc.).

Concerning cooperation with other towns and communes, Garwolin does not have any formal agreement and does not participate in any form of Association of communes. But cooperation does exist, both with cities from all over Poland (Stupsk, Siedlce, Zamość) and with communes from Garwolin County. This informal cooperation is based on meetings of representatives of local authorities from Garwolin County in order to discuss certain common issues, connected mainly with new investments (e.g. solar collectors/panels) or education. The communes do not have any common resources to cover the costs of investments, but can reach separate agreements in implementing certain projects together (e.g. the swimming pool in Garwolin was co-financed by other communes who can now benefit from using this site).

It should also be stressed that local authorities try to involve local society in taking crucial decisions concerning new investment (in the case of the swimming pool, the citizens were asked for their opinion in a referendum; after receiving around 80% of positive feedback, the investment was set up).

International cooperation

Garwolin has partner agreements with two cities: Gorki (in Belarus, signed in 2002) and Fürstenau (in Germany, signed in 2004). Early contacts between the two cities and Garwolin were based on the exchange of youth from the local high school. Subsequent exchanges also included representatives of the local authorities. Each year an official visit of the partner cities takes place in Garwolin, an in turn, local representatives from Garwolin travel to both partner towns. These exchanges enrich the knowledge of local authorities about how foreign tax systems work, the funding of schools and kindergartens, the functioning of cultural institutions and organizations, management of roads and land use. Furthermore, the cooperation is seen to increase the participants' cultural awareness, facilitating the exchange of experiences and the learning of foreign languages.

Implementation of local goals

No specific additional measures or programmes were used to support the implementation of the goals and objectives enumerated in the Programme for Local Development. The only document that

contains the main investments and is crucial during implementation is the long-term financial forecast. Almost all goals, both concerning spatial planning, transport, and localisation of public services and leisure facilities, were financed by local resources (only once did local authorities negotiate significant co-funding for transport from the national budget). However, each year Garwolin receives minor external funding – which, however, constitutes approx. 0.4% of the total budget and is thus not very meaningful. The main obstacle in acquiring more external funding is the very good performance of the town, which routinely receives very positive assessments, and in consequence, is considered to be in too good of a position to be eligible for any additional funding from different programmes (the currently active project co-financed by external funding concerns socio-professional among the “excluded” population and is being realised in the centre for social aid). Local non-governmental organizations try to benefit from external funding but are also financed by the town.

With respect to the elaboration and implementation of different goals, certain obstacles appear because of the specific distribution of powers among the mayor and councilors. The councilors should work under the leadership of the local mayor, which would improve the implementation of different objectives.

Moreover, certain difficulties in the implementation of local goals are connected with the very complicated ownership structure of roads in Poland. In one commune, different levels of public authorities may be responsible for different roads according to their position in the national hierarchy of transport axes. Thus, any changes concerning certain areas and roads require the agreement of the authorities responsible for certain segments of the road. Maintenance of local educational institutions is also difficult because the general subsidies from the government do not cover their real costs, thus the town is obliged to cover the missing part and allocate money from its own budget to schools and kindergartens. To conclude, the amount of competences and responsibilities transferred to local authorities is too large when compared to the budget for their implementation.

4.2.2 Łosice

According to the *Local Development Plan for Łosice County* (2004), some of the chief virtues of the area include its strategic location near the border, the confluence of transport routes, and the touristic (both cultural and natural) potential of the area around the Bug River. Its weaknesses include the low quality of the roads, limited capital, lack of organisation in the market agricultural produce is sent to, lack of outside investors, and the deterioration demographic situation of the citizens. These characteristics pertain to the urban centre itself to a significant extent.

The town of Łosice does not have a separate document that would plan the development of the centre or present a given view of future prospects. Strategic documents drafted at the level of the county (*Local Development Plan for Łosice County*) or the commune (*Local Development Plan for the Town and Commune of Łosice 2004-2006*) concentrate on carrying out a diagnosis of socio-economic development in the centre in question, and are devoid of planning and prospects for the coming years. Both documents were created at the start of the 2000s, and therefore cannot be considered current anymore. Moreover, their content is very general.

The lack of strategic documents reflects the prevalent policy of local governments, which focuses on resolving current problems in an *ad hoc* fashion. The interviews suggest that the town’s development will continue to be dependent on agriculture, which is predominant in the commune. The local government is also hoping to deepen cooperation with their eastern partners.

The economic and social activity of the citizens of Łosice plays a large part in the development of the town, according to respondents. A view has taken root in the collective social consciousness in the area that it is difficult to find work and guarantee a proper living for one's family without demonstrating personal initiative. This is part of the reason why so much minor economic activity and small businesses are to be had there, with some periodically leaving to work in Warsaw or abroad. Non-governmental organisations also play a major role in the activation of society. Especially *Equus* and the Friends of Łosice Association enthusiastically organise training sessions and courses, and take measures to support citizens in their business endeavours.

4.2.3 Szydłowiec

Szydłowiec has its own *Development Strategy for the Town and Commune of Szydłowiec*, but the document has not been updated in years. The document comes together with different kinds of local regulations (the bulk of them mandatory for most communes) that tackle specific issues, problems, spheres – e.g. Spatial Management Plans, the Local Commune Revitalisation Programme, the Long-term Investment Plan, the Monument Protection Programme, the Communal Plan for Environmental Protection and Waste Management, the Tourism Development Strategy, the Strategy for Resolving Social and Alcoholic Issues, or the Crime Prevention Programme. The basic conception for the town's development notes that Szydłowiec is a *historically defined centre of more than local importance, one that will progressively become more attractive for its citizens through the development of entrepreneurship, tourism, unique monuments and historical buildings, a well-developed education system and a system of incentives for investors*. Of course, such a regulation must forcibly be broad and vague in nature, but also makes a point of highlighting the three spheres of the town's development: (1) public services, (2) tourism and (3) economy.

The first of these spheres of development is addressing the needs of the locals. The government of the commune, in accordance with the law, are responsible for satisfying the collective needs of the community, particularly in relation to roads, education, culture, markets, healthcare etc. As previously mentioned, in the last dozen or so years, investments made by the commune in expanding technical, transport, social and economic infrastructure were taken as a priority. Investments and related actions were also taken in Szydłowiec and the surrounding rural areas that belong to the same commune. Three years ago, a number of projects were carried out whose purpose was to modernise and construct roads in the commune and renovate different public-use facilities – fire stations, sports fields, bus stops, parking lots. These projects were co-financed by external funding, comprising European Union funding, national resources and regional resources. Cultural activity is also rather expansive – see the description in section 3.2. Most of the initiatives that transform into projects would not have been possible without external funding. Two things need to be considered, however. First, the development goal that stipulates residents should be provided with an attractive place to live is so broad that practically every project with external funding contributes to its realisation. Representatives of the local government do point out that the development goals came first, and only then was a search conducted for projects with external funding that would fit the goals. Nonetheless, even if reality turned out to be different and every possible project was realised, no grave errors were made in the process. Second, it is noticeable that a series of social, culture, religious, educational, and sporting initiatives are being realised in the town; these are endeavours that do not require a large financial commitment, only logistics and organisation. As such, it can be concluded that both government and locals take up initiatives that help bring endeavours “for the

good of the people” to fruition, despite very limited funding options.

The second area of development that emerges from the conception of the town’s development is tourism. For around a decade now, tourism has been one of the development priorities of the town. According to the local administration, each self-government unit is required to take care of its heritage. Sometimes this heritage is unfavourable, or even unwanted (in the case of Szydłowiec this is best represented by former industrial developments that have since shut their doors or been reorganised), but other times it is quite the opposite (the urban arrangement, historical town hall and castle, sandstone, landscapes). The local government has decided to actively push to strengthen the touristic potential of the town. Every respondent was conscious of the fact that the development of Szydłowiec’s local economy cannot be based on tourism, as the town’s beauty and virtues are not sufficient to draw in scores of tourists. Tourism-related activity is more geared towards specialised tourism, e.g. business and conference tourism from Warsaw (about 1.5-2 hours away), “transit tourism” for those travelling using the national road (a short break from the road for a meal and a quick visit), and weekend tourism for those who converge to the surrounding towns and villages where they possess summer homes. With this in mind, a series of efforts to address this issue have been made: collaboration with other communes through the LEADER programme, an association between the communes of Szydłowiec and Przysucha (the purpose of which is to create a large enough sub-region to increase chances of success in lobbying), collaboration with private ventures (hostels, hotels, restaurants). In the last few years, steps have been taken to promote the region – walking and biking trails, publications and pamphlets as well a cultural agenda featuring many regularly organised events. All these measures have pointed to Szydłowiec as a desirable place for carrying out what became one of the keystone projects of the Mazovia Voivodeship – *“Renovation of historical objects and public space in Szydłowiec, improvement of and accessibility to cultural and touristic infrastructure, for the people of Mazovia”*. Worth 30 million zlotys (over 7.2 million euro, with 85% of the sum covered by external funding), the project enabled the complete renovation and revitalisation of Szydłowiec’s most important historical monuments – the town hall, the hotel building, the castle, the town square and the pedestrian zone (Photo 13). These investments are, financially, the largest the town has ever undertaken; they are to help rekindle tourism in the city in a major way, and help improve the living conditions of the local population. This connects them to the goals of the development plan for the town. Thanks to the realisation of this regionally crucial project, the commune of Szydłowiec is at the forefront of the funding world, and is one of the most effective communes in the voivodeship in terms of acquiring funding from the European Union.

The final area of development in Szydłowiec is the economy. As has been repeatedly mentioned, the most important development problems of the town include the lack of job openings, weak industrial and processing infrastructure, and the limited degree of entrepreneurship among the local population. The difficulties associated with employment determine the general viewpoints of the citizens with respect to the steps being taken to address any kind of issue in the town. The local



government, however, is not directly responsible for ensuring jobs for everyone. The self-government unit can only take indirect action. One such initiative was the public opening of the Inter-Commune Zone of Economic Activity and the Incubator of Entrepreneurship in Szydłowiec. The fundamental goal of these structures was the provision of legal, financial and logistical help to newly-created enterprises and conveying information to potential investors. Unfortunately, as of today, these entities are not exploited in full. The second initiative of the government was the creation of a new industrial neighbourhood in the revised spatial plan of the commune. As noted before, the town does not possess any communal ground that could be used for development, or to attract investors.

Photo 13. The restored town hall building (currently home to the local administration) and the castle, currently under renovation (a museum of musical instruments and cultural centre that brings together many creative groups are housed in the castle).

Source: own work.

As a result, the local government designated lands owned by the commune, but also the Treasury and private property, which constituted the majority of the designated areas. A piece of land with an area of 67 ha is located in close proximity to the national road, and is additionally fully “equipped” (water pipes, sewage systems, electricity), with a stable legal situation in terms of building conditions. However, this initiative also failed to produce any lasting, palpable effects. The land remains unused and unexploited, with no investor claiming it. It is hard to state outright whether the town’s policy is ineffective or misguided, or if in fact the socio-economic circumstances and location of Szydłowiec combine to thwart any attempt to surpass a certain threshold of development. It is

beyond doubt that most local (commune and county) institutions are aware of the seriousness of the unemployment problem, but none of the measures that have been taken to date have been an effective weapon against it. It is possible that these steps were taken too late and in an unfavourable period – many communes have established such zones and incubators in past years; currently, particularly in a time of economic downturn, few firms are interested in making forays into unknown territory.

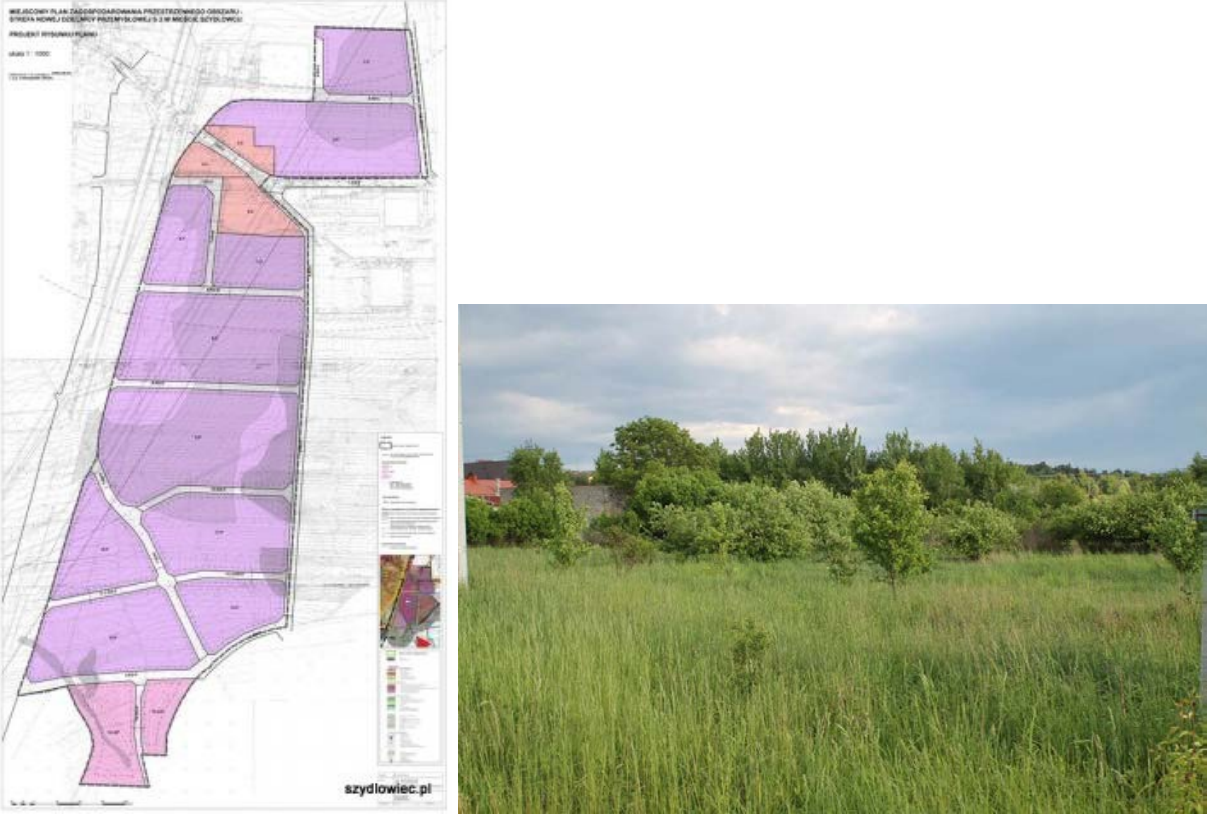


Photo 14. Part of the local spatial development plan for a new industrial neighbourhood in Szydłowiec, and a view of the same as it is currently.

Source: <http://www.szydlowiec.pl/> and own work.

4.3 Policy recommendations

Improve the position of small and medium sized towns in the strategic documents

Small and medium-sized towns do not tend to be emphasised in regional or national strategic documents as significant centres of development, largely due to their size. However, due to the large number of SMSTs, spatial distribution, and polycentric settlement system, they constitute an important place of residence and employment and ensure access to public services for the local population, as well as the inhabitants of the surrounding rural areas. Small and medium-sized towns are also an important nexus of exchange of knowledge and innovation in the direction of the villages.

Tailor-made local strategic documents

Strategic planning is less developed in the SMSTs than in larger towns and cities. Small cities devote too little attention to development strategy. The available planning documents are either dated or do not take into account the specificity of the local area to a sufficient extent. The ambitions of local mayors are modest, and the activities undertaken usually address only current needs. This raises the problem of up-to-date goals listed in the local programmes for development as well as in other strategic documents elaborated for small towns. In addition, these strategic documents often undergo unification and contain almost the same goals across several towns, notwithstanding their real strengths, weaknesses and existing conditions. In certain cases, these documents are produced by external experts (through open competition), which can be regarded both positively and negatively, but undoubtedly raises the possibility of cookie-cutter planning. Hence, it is recommended that local strategic documents should focus especially on local assets in order to build the development strategy of a small town around its specific strengths. The strategic documents should focus on the prospects of the town's development and its possible scenarios. This would allow the town to take advantage of local competition in a more controlled manner, and to form the optimal directions for the town's development.

An integrated approach to development

Medium-sized cities that perform a wide variety of administrative functions (e.g. as seat of the county and communal governments) also typically host a number of institutions that come under the local council, or are a local branch of central and regional institutions. On the one hand, these institutions often collaborate with one another, which is to be expected in such small population centres, but oftentimes they limit their activity to their own clearly defined tasks and the goals of their own projects. In many cases, there is no single institution that would be responsible for the territorial and socio-economic development of the town, commune and county, as the competences of different subjects are fragmented and overlap, which makes for unbalanced coordination of the development process. It is recommended that local management of the development process take on a more managerial and broad economic perspective rather than be based on the realisation of the specific goals of individual projects. It is useful to look at the development of the town and the region as a whole, and not only at the results and effects of specific endeavours.

Bottom-up initiatives and development of NGO sector

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the on-going process of transforming social and public awareness has also reached small and medium-sized towns. As a result, more locally driven and bottom-up initiatives are observed in SMSTs. The development of different NGOs and their networks is crucial for small towns as these organizations usually provide cultural, sport and informal, educational activities. Formal and informal cooperation with different public and private actors (NGOs and

enterprises) contributes to strengthening the town's potential indifferent spheres. Finally, local initiatives are crucial drivers of local development due to the lack of a separate national policy supporting SMTs.

Peripheral location as a benefit instead of an obstacle

Due to their peripheral location and lack of any larger urban centres in the vicinity, small towns may play an important role as local centres of development. In that way, their marginal location might be treated as an asset, or perhaps a factor for success. The concentration of economic activities and services in SMTs is extremely important for the neighbouring communes. From this perspective, support for the SMTs is highly recommended as they constitute hotspots for jobs and services for the rural areas. For this reason, it is recommended that small towns be bolstered through dedicated support programmes that take into account the local specificity of the town and the socio-economic role it plays with respect to its surroundings. Such programmes should provide special support to activities that aim to reinforce the position of small towns in the region as important components of the polycentric settlement system. Their focal points may include: actions that curb the outflow of young, educated residents; furthering the functions that derive from the specific character of a given centre; and development of social integration.

Diversification of the sector of enterprises in terms of their size and economic sectors

The social and economic situation of some smaller towns rests on large, individual employers that are both the primary economic driving force and source of sustenance for the population. This is a threat to the durable development of towns: the collapse or restructuring of such entities brought on by economic and other circumstances may have dire consequences and force highly undesirable changes. It is therefore recommended that the socio-economic development of small centres become progressively based on a larger number of small and medium-sized enterprises with a diverse structure and functions – perhaps with entrepreneurs representing the production sector at the forefront, around which a set of services may also develop. This would not have to entail the elimination of large employers.

Long-term strategic and financial planning as factors for success

In terms of funding, local authorities in Poland manage their own budget (see sources of revenue in Chapter 1) in order to fulfil all the needs of the local population (the obligations of local communes are enumerated in the Act on Self-Government of the Territorial Unit). In certain cases, projects can be co-financed by external funding e.g. EU funds. However, this option is not easily accessible for all small towns if the town exhibits above-average performance (according to the indicators given) or if the region where the town is located performs very well. Lack of long-term visions and strategic documents often cause small towns to adjust their projects to the specification given in order to receive European funding. In this way, in many cases, the projects that receive funding are *ad hoc*.

Detailed recommendations

Autonomous, peripherally located small towns

Small towns located in peripheral areas in relation to the main regional urban hubs have a natural tendency to strengthen their role as centres of local development (e.g. Łosice); a peripheral location may (but doesn't necessarily have to) contribute to the economic success of a town. Such towns

concentrate a number of social and economic functions (administrative, governmental, educational, service, trade), from which the inhabitants of the surrounding areas benefit. As the realisation of these functions implies commuting to the centre on a daily basis, a robust transport system and appropriate density of roads are essential for success.

Networked small towns

Cooperation between small and medium-sized towns as a chance to improve their capacities

The population living in all small and medium-sized towns and their surroundings surpasses the population of sub-regional cities. As such, cooperation between these centres of population is important. Instead of competing and comparing themselves to their similarly sized neighbours, networked small towns should establish effective partnerships and initiate collaboration efforts in order to boost their ability to affect initiatives that are tackled on a regional level. Cooperation with larger cities located nearby based on overlapping functional areas is also recommended. These centres are naturally more likely and able to offer their citizens services of a higher order (higher education, specialised healthcare, cultural institutions and centres), and should constitute centres of sub-regional areas.

Small towns agglomerated to large cities

An active policy towards entrepreneurs should be considered crucial in the development of small towns agglomerated to large cities which might be particularly threatened by their position in the shadow of the metropolis. In other words, local authorities should avoid the situation where a small town within a metropolitan area plays only a residential functions for people who commute to the large city on a daily basis.

On the other hand, in the case of small towns agglomerated to large cities, their location should be used as an asset. More emphasis should be put on the development of the creative sector, which could also strengthen the local economic base, provide new jobs and strengthen the role of the small town as a local job centre. According to the research undertaken, the creative class settles down mainly in two types of spaces: new industrial (high-tech) areas and metropolitan regions. At the same time, small towns located within metropolitan areas or in the zones of direct influence of the core city of a metropolitan area should build their economies on their specific location. Local policy-makers should focus their campaigns on the proximity of the town not only to the neighbouring large city, but also to important transport axes. In the case of towns that do not possess good accessibility, this feature should be established as one of the priorities towards the prospect of long-term development.

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The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory.

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