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CRISIS PHENOMENA IN “CITY-DISTRICT”

Crisis phenomena occur in the majority of settlement units regardless of location, size, social structure and other significant factors influencing the quality of life and correctness of urban processes. This paper is an attempt to present relations of social problems and urban layout and genesis of the spatial structure of the selected small town. Unit selected for analyses – Poniatowa town, characterizes with specific layout and time of founding – this is a town founded “in cruda radice” during the construction of structures of the Central Industrial Region (Polish: Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy, abbreviated COP) built on the basis of residential development for nearby industrial plants associated with military production.

Keywords: city-district, multi-family development, Poniatowa

1. Introduction

In general belief small towns are settlement units with specific morphological structure - centrally located main (market) square surrounded by a more or less compacted frontages, then dense small town tissue gradually transforming into dispersed single-family and farmstead developments [1], [8], [12]. Sometimes this structure includes multi-family buildings occurring as a single or in groups identified by researchers as a pathology of urban layout of the small town [2].

However, there are cities with a residential development at its core, which were constructed as a result of location “in cruda radice” of polycentric settlement unit, e.g. industrial plant and ancillary residential development intended for engineering, civil service and working staff brought for the operation of the plant [11]. These developments, at the time of construction, characterized by a specific social structure - people involved in production in local plants and their families were almost exclusive inhabitants. City-forming process followed over time. New services were created and city tissue was filled with new residential buildings. Developing residential estate has acquired features of urban environments and received town privileges.

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A town located in eastern Poland - Poniadowa (Lublin Province) was selected to present the problem. Settlement system of Poniadowa was formed during construction of the Central Industrial Region, which was intended to be a source of development of the re-emerging Poland at the beginning of the 20th century. Location of the Central Industrial Region, besides the territorial and geographical dimensions, had also very high social value. First of all, it is worth pointing out that Poland at that time characterized with very inconsistent economic development - two areas could be distinguished. Area A, that is western part of the country concentrating 73% of the industry and area B with marginal industrial resources what has been influencing living conditions of the inhabitants, their education and cross-section of the society [13]. Due to investments in the development of the Region over the period 1936-1939 a major change in social-economic functioning in this part of the country was observed: increase of work productivity, an increase of professional qualifications of the employees and in consequence improvement of their standard of living. Requalification from agricultural activities to a group of citizens living from gainful employment resulted in a considerable reduction of unemployment [13]. At the same time, dynamic changes in the intensity of industrialization of the Region resulted in an influx of migrant population of different social statuses what caused series of negative effects: reduction of public safety, thefts and burglaries, robberies and excessive and uncontrolled price increase [4].

2. Functional and spatial transformations of the selected urban centre

Poniadowa is a town classified as small (up to 20 thousand inhabitants) inhabited by about 9 thousand people. First investments have been made over the period 1937–1939 and a status of the town was granted in 1962.

Construction of urban-type residential development in Poniadowa village began from three factory buildings of the Państwowe Zakłady Tele- i Radiotechniczne [National Tele and Radio Research Plant], worker's hostel and residential building for technical staff. Further on the implementation of the urban project for large residential development, which was the biggest investment planned for the Central Industrial Region, was started. Twenty two multi-family residential houses in comb layout were successfully completed until September 1939 [5]. During the war German troops were stationed here and then buildings of the production plant and residential facilities were used as a camp for Russian prisoners of war and then for a labor camp for Jews [7]. The Red Army stationed in the camp after the war and following the departure of the troops Poniadowa was an abandoned and deteriorating town.

The nationalised company was transformed into Zakłady Wytwórcze Sprzętu Instalacyjnego (a branch of the company from Bydgoszcz) in 1944 and new inhabitants started to appear in the town. The 1950s and 1960s is the period of

a heyday for the town. It was at that time when Nowe Osiedle residential development was constructed - which is currently a core of the urban unit and important city-forming services: “Czyn” movie theatre, Anti-tuberculosis Sanatorium, Factory’s Cultural Center, summer camp centre and stadium. Social activity was concentrated around the factories where most inhabitants and visitors were employed. Similarly to many towns the turn or 1980s and 1990s, that is system transformation period, was a time of slump in the functioning of the industry in Poland. The factories were transformed into EDA joint stock company, dismissals of the employees began and a number of unemployed people started to increase. EDA company announced its bankruptcy in 1998 [3]. Currently several companies are operating at the premises of the factory: Zakład Produkcji Granulatu Gumowego Orzeł S.A., a manufacturer of films for thermoforming Polifolia sp. z o.o., Metalton specializing in the production of precision tools and Browar Zakładowy.

The urban tissue of Poniatowa preserved a character of residential development although the multi-family buildings constructed in the last forty years do not have so compact and strictly defined structure. Single-family houses were constructed mainly on the outskirts and service areas and potential public spaces are located at the meeting point of old tissue of Nowe Miasto and new, more dispersed residential structure.

3. Crisis phenomena in the spatial structure of the town

In the context of history and functional transformations of the town, the following question seems to be very interesting: what phenomena and problems relate to the city area with such specific genesis and characteristic urban structure? A map extract (Fig. 1) was prepared using the Local Revitalisation Program for the Poniatowa Borough for 2017–2023 (hereinafter referred to as LPR) by overlaying the boundaries of auxiliary units on the topographic map obtained from the BDOT10k database [9]. Referring the identified crisis phenomena to indicated part of the structure it is possible to indicate social problems accompanying the areas of specified genesis, history, urban layout and architecture.

The Local Revitalisation Program identifies the major social problems in the town:

- the steady decline in the number of inhabitants,
- negative natural growth rate,
- negative net migration rate,
- the decrease in the number of people in pre-working age and an increase in the number of people in post-working age,
- a large number of inhabitants being dependent on unemployment benefits,
- increase in the number of dysfunctional families,
- accumulation of dysfunctions in the town centre: alcoholism, drug addiction, hooliganism, high level of crime,

- insufficient infrastructure for care and mobilization of older people,
- relatively high level of unemployment resulting from stagnation and discouragement of people.

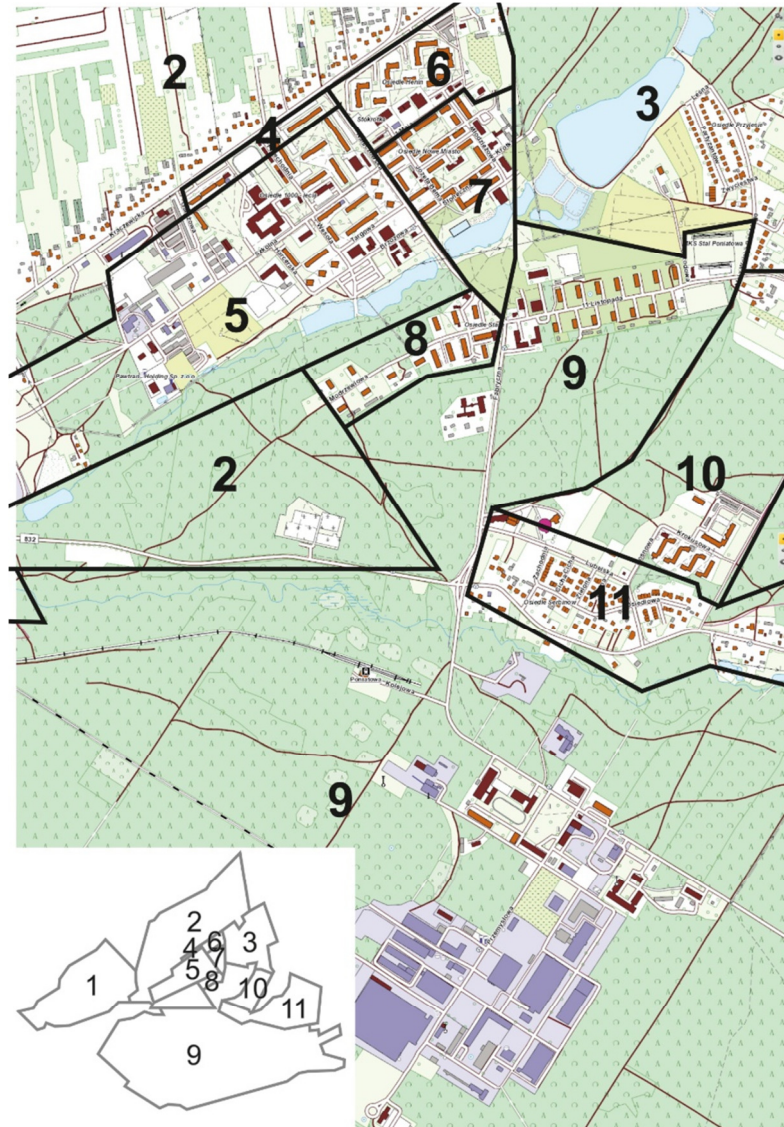


Fig. 1. Map extract from the BDOT10k database with marked boundaries of auxiliary units indicated in the Local Revitalisation Program for the Poniatowa Borough for 2017–2023 for identification of crisis phenomena in the area of the town. Boundaries of the borough with division to auxiliary units at the lower left: 1 – Leśniczówka, 2 – Henin, 3 – Przylesie, 4 – Tysiąclecia – Kraczewicka, 5 – Tysiąclecia, 6 – Nowe Miasto – Północ, 7 – Nowe Miasto – Południe, 8 – Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa, 9 – Stare Miasto, 10 – Przedwiośnie, 11 – Młynki (own work based on the LPR)

Concentration of occurrence of the above-mentioned phenomena differs depending on the auxiliary unit: Leśniczówka '1', Henin '2', Przylesie '3', Tysiąclecia – Kraczeńska '4', Tysiąclecia '5', Nowe Miasto – Północ '6', Nowe Miasto – Południe '7', Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa '8', Stare Miasto '9', Przedwiośnie '10', Młynki '11'. Structural units were separated based on the culturally established names of residential developments, districts, areas, specific urban development, architectural character and period of construction of housing stock.

Analysing the population figures [6] (Fig. 2) within the 5-year period (2010–2015) it can be noticed that the highest decrease in the number of inhabitants was noted for Tysiąclecia '5' (-8.3%) and Nowe Miasto-Północ '6' (-10.7%) units, that is the areas of relatively young urban structure, where development was constructed in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. In urbanised units, Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa '8', Stare Miasto '9' depopulation is smaller but it is still high, '8' (-6.8%), '9' (-6.6%) respectively. Analysing housing structure in terms of time of construction and the structure these are the oldest parts of the town of interwar genesis and with prevailing comb layout. Against this background, an interesting issue is a change of population on the area of Nowe Miasto-Południe '7' that is in city core region with quarter-meander development formed in the 1950s. Depopulation in this part is relatively small and equals to -2.2%. The largest population growth of 13.7% was noted for Leśniczówka '1' unit where single-family housebuilding industry is developing and it is in line with the trends where city inhabitants move to suburban or peripheral areas [10].

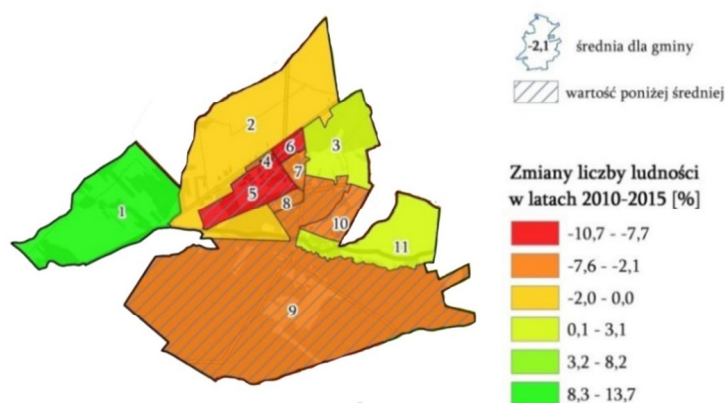


Fig. 1. Population changes for 2010-2015 [%] (own work based on the LPR)

Another social problem found in the area of Poniatowa is a high percentage of post-working age population (Fig. 3). The highest share of older people is found in Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa '8' (31.9%), Nowe Miasto – Południe '7' (29.2%) and Tysiąclecia '5' (26.7%) units. These are adjacent areas but varying in terms of time of formation of spatial structure (from the 1930s to 1980s).

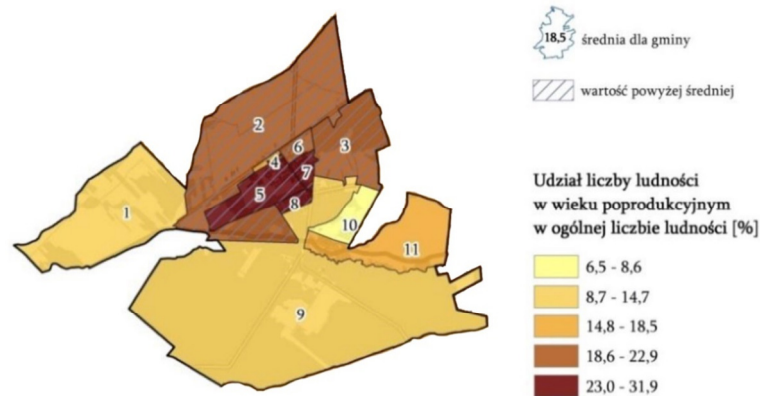


Fig. 2. The share of post-working age population in the general population [%] (share of older people) (own work based on LPR)

Areas with the smallest share of the population in post-working age are units of peripheral character with single-family development Leśniczówka '1' (11.5%) and Przedwiośnie '10' (6,5%) and, interestingly, Stare Miasto '9' (12,0%) [6]

Map of offenses and crimes (Fig. 4) shows that the highest intensity of events is located in the units forming a city core, constructed between the 1950s and 1980s: Nowe Miasto – Południe '7' (54.8 per 1 thousand inhabitants), Tysiąclecia '5' (52.7 per 1 thousand inhabitants) and for Stare Miasto '9' (48.4 per 1 thousand inhabitants). No events of infringement were noted for Leśniczówka '1' area.

Totally different distribution of intensity of occurrence of the studied phenomenon is presented on the extract from percentage share of long-term unemployed persons in the general population (Fig. 5). The largest number of people live in Stare Miasto '9' (9.6%) oraz Leśniczówka '1' (8.6%) units that is

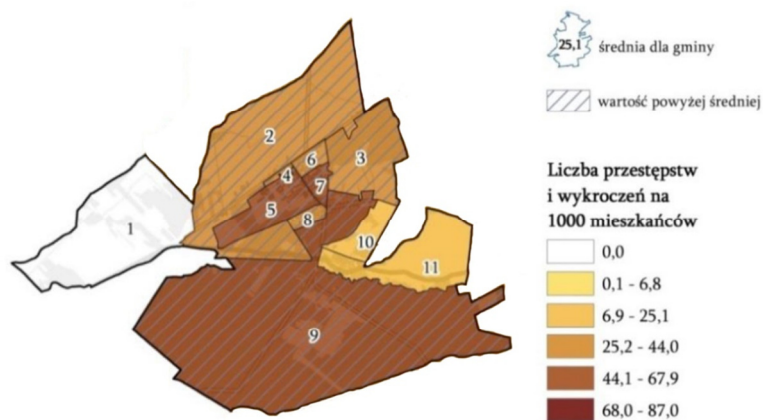


Fig. 3. Number of crimes and minor offences per 1000 inhabitants (own work based on LPR)

areas of various time of origin (interwar period and on the turn of 20th and 21st century) and various prevailing form of use (multi-family residential buildings and single-family buildings). Central areas Nowe Miasto – Południe ‘7’, Nowe Miasto – Północ ‘6’, Tysiąclecia ‘5’, Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa ‘8’ and Tysiąclecia – Kraczewicka ‘4’ indicates at least half of number of long-term unemployed persons, respectively: 4.4%; 3.9%; 3.3%; 3.2%; 3.1%; The lowest unemployment rate was noted in the peripheral Młynki ‘11’ unit (2.2%) [6].

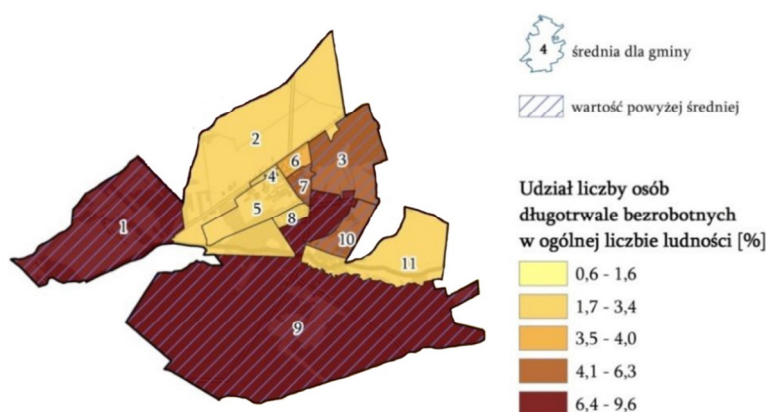


Fig. 4. The share of the number of long-term unemployed persons in the general population (own work based on LPR)

4. Summary

Small towns, where groups of multi-family buildings are town-forming centres occur very rarely and are the result of planned spatial actions of designers and location of structural units “in cruda radice”. In general, their functional structure is polycentric: residential development or developments in relation to industrial plant, for purposes of which the residential developments were constructed. A segregation of urban and architectural form can be noticed while analysing the local scale.

Looking at existing layout, from a sociological point of view, it can be assumed that because the tissue grown in roughly controlled manner in terms of time, function and form (new developments were added to these already existing) it can be assumed that units (developments, districts, etc.) formed in this way have a diversified social structure and thus social phenomena, including crisis phenomena, occurring in the units differs.

In the case in question, of Poniatowa town, information related to the functional-spatial structure of the town and basic data diagnosing condition of social infrastructure obtained from an analytical part of the Local Revitalisation Program for the Poniatowa Borough for 2017-2023 were compared. This allowed to draw conclusions (concerning given example) related to the

correlation between the morphology of the studied area and crisis phenomena occurring in separate auxiliary units. This analysis led to conclusions that negative social phenomena (decline in population, demographic ageing and crime rate) concentrate in the western part of Poniatowa, where multifamily blocks from the 1970s and 1980s, Tysiąclecia residential development, dominate. The oldest part of the town (Stare Miasto, Stare Miasto – Modrzewiowa and Nowe Miasto – Południe) the discussed crisis phenomena are also visible, but to a substantially lesser degree. The interesting conclusion is a fact that area, where a share of long-term unemployed persons in general population is the highest does not match with the area delimited by analysis of the other crisis factors and covers Stare Miasto unit, that is the oldest part of the Poniatowa, with prevailing development from the 1930s.

Considerations carried out cover only an outline of the identification of social problems in towns-districts, however it seems that they can be useful for the shaping of sustainable development policy for small towns of specific layout of the spatial structure.

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