

**„The sustainable development of small cities of Western Pomerania
after Poland accession to the European Union”**

Summary

The subject of the work is the development of small cities and the search for a method that will enable to evaluate the development within the city space. The ongoing monitoring of functional and spatial changes taking place in the centres of small cities seems to be a key precondition for precise diagnosis of current problems and to develop current and target strategies for the development of the cities.

The selection of the examined cities was made on the basis of the following criteria: location - Western Pomerania, legal and administrative status - towns with municipal rights, size of the urban structure – small cities of up to 20.000 inhabitants, diverse effectiveness in applying for EU funds, diverse natural conditions, diverse communication connections with the regional centre - Szczecin and the diverse value of cultural heritage. The emphasis on the diversity of the selected cities is determined endogenous and exogenous factors affecting spatial changes. Thanks to this, the proposed method has a chance of being universal.

The aim of the undertaken research was to evaluate the functional and spatial changes taking place in selected cities of Western Pomerania in terms of their compliance with the idea of sustainable development and the assessment of the integrated order of these cities. The research on the development of small towns presented in this dissertation enabled multi-aspect observation of the changes. The application of the proposed author’s model of monitoring of the urban development (MMRM) adjusted to accessibility of spatial data at the local level allowed for the evaluation of the integrated order in the selected cities. The extended research and data collection for the 10 selected small cities of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship resulted in formulating many conclusions of both, general and specific nature. The conclusions have cognitive and practical impact. The collected research data allowed contributed to achieving the secondary objective of the dissertation: to create research tools allowing for the evaluation of the quality of the development effects, particularly regarding the allocation of the external EU funds.

The results of the research on development trends of the examined small cities with an in-depth analysis of projects co-financed by the European Union, confirm the main thesis of the dissertation: that financing of the development projects within the small towns from external EU funds enables the implementation of the idea of sustainable development under the condition of targeted actions to stimulate development.

The trends of functional and spatial changes of the selected cities of Western Pomerania region indicate some actions consistent with the idea of sustainable development of cities, as well as those, that are contradictory to its assumptions. The research completed in the dissertation indicates that the main reason hindering achievement of satisfactory results of the development projects is the lack of proper monitoring and an appropriate system of evaluation of the implemented projects and adjustment of project assumptions to the changing circumstances. The conclusions from the review of undertaken actions and implementation of development projects confirm the secondary thesis or the dissertation: the ongoing monitoring of factors stimulating and hindering sustainable development as well as adapting the planning system to the changing conditions increases the efficiency of using EU funds for investment and social purposes.

As a result of the conducted research and analyses, the most important features of the potential monitoring system for urban development and action stimulating sustainable development of small towns were enumerated and specified.

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