

## PLACE OF THE CONTEMPORARY COMMERCE IN THE SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF SMALL TOWNS AROUND WROCŁAW\*

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### ABSTRACT

The transformation of the Polish economy in the nineties led to the development of the services sector, often forced by missing alternatives. Along with the development of the capitalist system in Poland the contemporary commercial facilities were appearing. They appeared in the big towns in the early 90s, and in small ones 10 years later. Authors define the place of contemporary commercial buildings<sup>1</sup> in the spatial structure of small towns. Downtown as well as residential and suburban locations are taken into account. The subject to the analysis were 22 towns with population from 4 to 20 thousand inhabitants. Based on statistical data and the different types of locations it proved possible to determine trends that accompanied the development of new forms of trade in small Polish towns over the period of 10 years.

**Key words:** contemporary commerce, spatial structure, town, transformation

### INTRODUCTION

The direction of retail development in Poland is in line with its evolution around the world. On one hand the liberalization of economic activity (after the transformation) resulted in fragmented, privatized retail network in cities and towns. On the other hand, the contemporary shopping facilities emerged in the urban fabric as a result of globalization. While the development of contemporary forms of trade in major

European cities has been subject to a scientific analysis, the status of research on the same topic in small towns is a relatively new problem, requiring a broader study. New forms of commerce appeared in the tissue of Polish large towns after 1989, while in the small ones – 10 years later. They occupied both downtown and suburban locations. Due to the fact that these are objects of considerable size, having strong interest of customers, they are not indifferent to the functional layout of the town.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, author recalls the definition of modern shopping structure, which was created by Sławomir Ledwon. For the purpose of his research author introduced his own definition contemporary commerce as a individual commercial building (or complex of buildings) where people buy and sell goods. Such building or complex has been designed and is managed as a single property and has a parking for customers. This kind of buildings didn't exist in Poland before 1989. Introduced definition includes supermarkets, hypermarkets, discount stores, outlets, malls and shopping centers.

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This paper aims to determine the place of the contemporary trade in a changing spatial structure of chosen towns. The subject of the research are small towns. Due to the small number of inhabitants and a relatively simple spatial arrangement, the emergence of new investment in the town is an important event, and the smaller scale of the town helps to understand the society and the spatial transformations (Besser et al. 2009, 580–604). It should also be noted that in the Polish settlement system small towns are quantitatively dominant. In 2011 there were 688 of them, which accounted for 75 % of the total number of urban centres – 908 (Central Statistical Office raport 2011). According to the statistics the problem of location of the contemporary shopping centres in small towns concerns a vast number of 75% of Polish towns. The authors researched the location, the method of land development and the dynamics of the development of the contemporary shopping centres in several towns in the close neighbourhood of Wrocław. In addition, they were searching for the relationship between contemporary commercial facilities and the traditional commercial tissue, the residential buildings and the communication system of the town.

## **TRANSFORMATION AND NEW FORMS OF THE RETAIL TRADE IN POLAND**

The transformation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the late twentieth century was a unique phenomenon in the world. Political and economic changes led to significant growth in the services sector. In the period of the centrally planned economy the development of the country was associated with the heavy industry, while the services in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been particularly neglected (Nicholls 2001 pp. 11–29). A breakthrough in Poland constitutes year 1989, which was followed by dynamic growth of the service sector. Along with the political system change, the competition from foreign retail chains emerged in the country, which led to a gradual increase in the level of customer expectations. Enforcing of The Enterprise Law of 23 December 1988 (Journal of Laws

U. No. 41, item 324) allowed running own business. This Act should be regarded as a human right to freedom of speech, beliefs, convictions as well as undertaking economic and creative activity. Since then everyone could run a business on equal terms (*Transformacja w usługach...* 2001, pp. 29–43). The transformation took place about 20 years ago. Since that time the inhabitants of the New Europe live better and better. Polish well-known professor of economy said, that, the level of income, standard of living and subjective sense of happiness has never been so high in the history of the region. The new Europe will grow rapidly over the next decade (20 lat transformacji... 2009). At the same time in 2050 the countries of New Europe are likely to achieve higher level of income per capita than most countries of emerging economies.

The transformation in the East Central Europe has been the core of the process of industrialization and commercialization; it has contributed to the development of the suburbs and advancement of urban areas standards. Socialism has left a footprint on the urban layout of Central European towns, in the form of peripheral areas in which they (Coleman 2006, pp. 73–75) formed large housing units, as well as in town centres, where next to the prosperous industrial zones the old buildings deteriorated (Pichler-Milanović et al. (2007, pp. 103–135) Capitalism has contributed to the change of spatial structure. These changes were related to the new urban functions. As a result of the relocation of the industry from the town centres to the suburbs and the creation of commercial zones on the outskirts of the town, some transportation hubs proved to be redundant, but new connections formed to meet the demands of the XXI century. The lack of areas designated for commercial use resulted in the development of commercial properties. The trade development was an important power that has significantly contributed to the huge reorganization of property use in Central Europe. Such development has been recognized as a tool for local economic revival, supported by government and local entrepreneurship. Local authorities in the majority of former socialist countries encouraged the development

of the commercial real estate. Currently, the representatives of the services sector are a significant power in Central Europe. The main sources of financing suburban shopping centres were foreign investors (Dobbska 2001, pp. 44–62).

The direction of retail development in Poland is in line with its evolution in the world. Domestic trade is one of those sectors of the economy, in which the processes of market transformation began at the earliest. On the one hand the result of the liberalization of running business in towns is very fragmented privatized trade network, while on the other the contemporary commercial facilities appeared in the urban fabric (*Funkcja usługowa...* 2009, p. 5). The first to be built were the suburban shopping centres, whose main shareholders were superstores. The second stage included facilities located in the towns. However, they did not occupy the downtown location. Other investors – not just superstores, but also shopping malls increased their presence in these facilities. The next step was the placement of commercial facilities in the strict town centres. For the first time these facilities referred to the environment with its form and architecture. They were no longer tin cubes separated from the street by parking lot. Apart from grocery stores and shopping gallery these facilities offer entertainment as well (in the form of cinema, bowling, games arcade, etc.) Thus, they initiate the trend of combining commerce and entertainment in town centres. Number of the downtown investments is however limited, therefore a subsequent noticeable trend is the interest of investors in smaller towns (Ledwoń 2008). Of course, towns are not the only future shopping environment. Investor interest remains in suburbs and industrial areas.

Contemporary commercial facilities can be found in towns as small as several thousand inhabitants. Such objects occupy downtown and suburban locations, they are located in modern buildings or take up a place of no longer needed urban functions. Localization of such a facility in a small town in Poland does not remain unnoticed, mainly because it is often the only new investment. The traditional function of the small towns was agriculture support, the system had been

changing along with the socio-economic development, when small towns were gaining additional functions. Due to the relatively small number of medium-sized towns in Poland small towns have been forced to take over the over-local functions. This way they have also become the municipal service centres. As was mentioned above contemporary commercial facilities have been appearing in small towns for the last several years. To compare the development of contemporary trade in different parts of the country data for selected sub-regions (Lublin, Łódź, Kraków, Szczecin, Wrocław and Poznań) were analysed<sup>2</sup>. Sub-regions have been adopted in accordance with NUTS (Nomenclature for Territorial Units for Statistics)<sup>3</sup> in force in the European Union. The NUTS classification is hierarchical – each Member State is divided into territorial units NUTS level 1, each of which is divided into territorial units NUTS level 2, and these in turn are divided into territorial units NUTS level 3. Poland was divided into six NUTS 1 regions (which group the voivodeships), sixteen NUTS 2 regions (voivodeships) and sixty six NUTS 3 regions (sub-regions). Sub-regions analysed in this work belong to the NUTS 3 group. Poland was divided into sixteen voivodeships, around each voivodeship capital a sub-region was separated (including smaller cities and rural areas) whose population is in the range of 150 000 to 800 000. Such a subregion is a buffer zone for the voivodeship capital. On one side sub-region cities are linked to the voivodeship capital through economic, educational etc. conditions, on the other hand they are independent units, often forming centers for rural areas.

For the purpose of the work the number and distribution of contemporary commercial facilities in cities of following sub-regions was analysed: Łódź (central Poland), Lublin (eastern Poland), Cracow (southern Poland), Szczecin (north-west Poland), Wrocław (west-southern Poland) and Poznań (western Poland).

Most contemporary commercial facilities have been located in the western sub-regions. Modern trade

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<sup>3</sup> Eurostat... 2014

is growing by the same scheme in the sub-regions Wrocław and Poznań. Both areas are well connected and are highly urbanized. Most, as many as 55<sup>4</sup> facilities exist in the Wrocław sub-region, here we have one facility per 10 003 inhabitants in Poznań – 14 333. Szczecin sub-region is slightly different from the two mentioned, it has a specific geographical location because of the border location and proximity to the Baltic Sea. It also has a lower population density, which determines a slightly lower number of contemporary commercial facilities. However, despite almost two times lower population (compared to the other western sub-regions<sup>5</sup>) the number of contemporary commercial facilities is still high. The network of contemporary commercial facilities in the Szczecin sub-region is dense with one facility per 8 940 inhabitants. Analysed Lublin and Kraków sub-regions are significantly different to the western ones. Despite the differences arising from the history, location, terrain and social-economic conditions there is a similarity between the two sub-regions. In both areas the population is higher than in the western sub-regions and the number of cities is smaller. The number of contemporary commercial facilities is also lower. In Lublin sub-region there is one facility per 48 949 inhabitants, while in Lublin one per 47 559 inhabitants. Łódź sub-region has a separate specificity – it has the largest population density and one contemporary commercial facility per 9 988 inhabitants. It is also the smallest of the analysed regions<sup>6</sup>. High population density is the result of strong urbanization of the area. There are only 11<sup>7</sup> cities in the sub-region and two of them – Zgierz and Pabianice have over

50 000 inhabitants. The emergence of contemporary commercial facilities in cities or regions is a global phenomenon. Contemporary commercial facilities appear in smaller and smaller towns, according to the following register they operate in towns counting a little more than 2 000 inhabitants. In Poland, the arrangement of contemporary commercial facilities is uneven. Much more new shopping investments are being located in western Poland, the most in Wrocław sub-region, which deserves special attention. Studies on the distribution of contemporary commercial facilities in the most developed region are important because they can provide guidance for regions which are still developing.

## TRANSFORMATION OF SPATIAL STRUCTURE IN THE SMALL POLISH TOWNS

Settlement processes taking place within the organism of the town are always a reflection of the time and the political system in which they arise. Formation of an investment model of the town – by concentration of population and building in the town centre and the downtown followed by gradual thinning towards the peripheries – is particularly characteristic for a market economy, where the value of the land and ground rent increases towards the central hub. The contemporary urban development force – alongside the increasingly declining role of industry – is the rapid development of the service sector. It is the access to broadly defined services that is the magnet that causes a people's desire to concentrate. At present, beside people's desire to concentrate in large towns we observe ever-increasing phenomenon of population settling in small towns.

Processes of relocation of the services – in particular trade, which has traditionally been associated with urban centres – are already clearly visible. The new service complexes are localized along the major arteries, and even in the outer zone of towns,

<sup>4</sup> Number of contemporary commercial facilities in particular sub-regions: Lublin – 15, Łódź – 38, Kraków – 14, Szczecin – 36, Wrocław – 55, Poznań – 41.

<sup>5</sup> Population: Wrocław sub-region – 550 173 (area of 6 432 km<sup>2</sup>), Poznań sub-region – 587 677 (area of 4 928 km<sup>2</sup>), Szczecin sub-region – 321 843 (area of 5 321 km<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>6</sup> Łódź sub-region has an area of 2 206 km<sup>2</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Towns in mentioned sub-regions are mostly small ones – counting from 2 to 20 thousand inhabitants, there are less medium towns – counting from 20 to 100 thousand inhabitants, there are no big towns. In Lublin sub-region there are 8 towns (5 of which are small, 3 are medium: Świdnik, Łęczna, Lubartów), Łódź sub-region – 11 towns (7 small, 4 medium), Kraków

sub-region – 15 towns (12 small, 3 medium), Szczecin sub-region – 17 towns (14 small, 3 medium), Wrocław sub-region – 20 towns (18 small, 2 medium).

in total isolation from built-up areas. This is often due to the size of an available land, which is required by contemporary commercial facilities, and the need for thousands of parking spaces and ease of their accessibility. The period after World War 2 was not lucky for Polish towns. The collapse of the private trade and crafts as well as supremacy of the so-called social ownership did not allow for the natural development of this specific urban design figure. Most towns of Lower Silesia are small towns and in the coming years they will determine the nature of spatial transformations of our region. These towns had an industrial, tourist and spa, or administrative character. Agriculture support function – until recently the dominant one – practically ceased to exist.

In small towns, especially in those who have suffered the greatest losses during the war, the process of treatment of wounds and healing the breaches in ruined downtown structure has not yet ended. The process of the birth of local awareness started in 1989 only now it allows the formation of the image of the town tailored to the needs of local communities. Local authorities only now can start the process of “furnishing” the town to its measure. To this day on Lower Silesia there are towns of medieval origin and an old town structure destroyed during the war or shortly afterwards, and never reconstructed so far. These include such towns as Strzelin, Trzebnica, Lwówek Śląski or Lubomierz. Urban investment areas of Lower Silesia in most towns inherited the legacy of the disrupted and random spatial structure from past half-century. The settlement processes carried out on the basis of oddly interpreted modernistic urban ideas have left the post-war built areas of towns with undeveloped empty stretches of land and the lack of human-friendly public spaces. Ruptured structure divided into urban downtown area, usually historical, and – unrelated to it – new modernistic housing estates. In small towns multi-family buildings are usually in the downtown. Suburban districts are composed of detached houses and small residential houses. The post war period can be divided into the recovery time linked to social realism, the development time, identified with modernism and prefab-

rication, and the breakthrough time, which mainly contains post-modernist ideas. These periods had their prominent role in creating a climate of individual towns. The recovery time of the 40’s and 50’s combined with traditional building materials and the accompanying technologies. Buildings destroyed by the war were reconstructed, over time they built new residential complexes combining architecture of social realism with modernist urbanism. The period of the housing needs increase induced by the expansion of the industry in Polish towns has been satisfied with the prefabrication of housing. It was then that highest number of new dwellings was created. The only thing that was forgotten were services, greenery, recreation and communications which is the rest of town functions.

Analysis of the settlement network of the Lower Silesia region indicates considerable diversity of density of urban networks, the size of towns, links with the communications network and the large urban centres. Paradoxically, small towns have the best chance for normal development and the creation of the functional and spatial structure attractive for inhabitants and tourists. In Lower Silesia there is 69 of them. The towns having a considerable potential for development are spa resorts, large attractive tourist complexes and district towns. In the influence area of Wrocław the small towns have by far the largest influence on their development. The closer they are to Wrocław, the greater the possibilities.

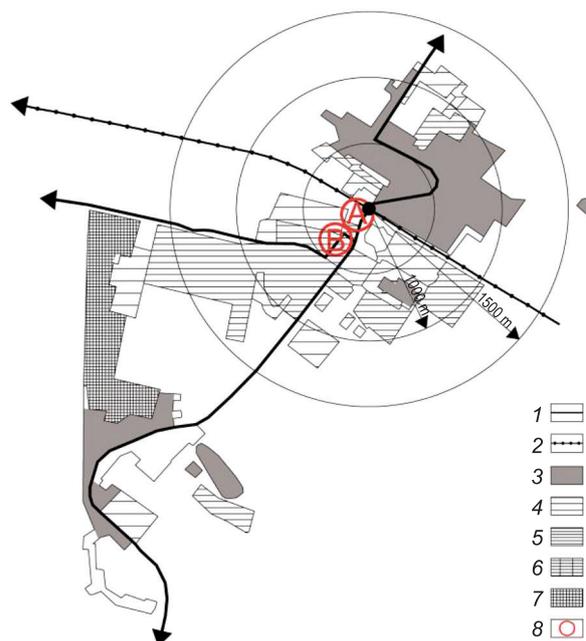
## **THE ANALYSIS OF TRADE CHANGES IN SELECTED SMALL TOWNS**

Commercial tissue in the towns listed below developed based on various patterns, but the common feature is the increasing number of shops, both traditional ones as well as contemporary commercial facilities. Their location and dynamics of the process depended on the type of town. In the majority of studied towns since the early 90s, there was clearly isolated area in the spatial structure of the town, with commercial services, which grew in importance in subsequent years. There are also some towns, in the

structure of which there was no such distinctive area, they are industrial centres, development of which largely depended on the company business. In the towns of the medieval location the largest number of shops is located in the market or is placed in the surrounding townhouses. A clear urban arrangement and the market determine the commercial tissue development in the downtown.

The Central Statistical Office reports on decreasing number of traditional shops, over the last few years. This fact is intensified by the media, which often blame the contemporary commercial facilities for this situation. However there are no academic studies that would clearly support this assertion in relation to Polish towns. The authors analysed the changes in the spatial formation of commercial tissues in several small towns confronting them with the development of contemporary commercial facilities, in years 1990–2010. The study was possible thanks to data concerning the individual shops, provided by the Central Statistical Office.

**JELCZ-LASKOWICE.** Jelcz-Laskowice is a 16-thousand inhabitants town with an industrial tradition. Established in 1987 from a combination of Jelcz and Laskowice Oławskie. The main factor in favour of the establishment of the town was a combination of the car factory in Jelcz with its service and residential facilities in Laskowice (Szmytkie 2009). The location of the company has determined the development of the residential areas. Within the area near the factory, between a former Jelcz and Laskowice a housing estate was established which, since the early 90s, concentrated the largest number of people and services. This estate is now the town centre. Whereas the area



**Fig. 1.** Contemporary commercial facility in the spatial structure of Jelcz-Laskowice: 1 – major roads; 2 – railroads, 3 – post-war service and residential buildings; 4 – service and residential buildings from the 70s; 5 – service and residential buildings from the 80s; 6 – service and residential buildings from the 60s; 7 – service and residential buildings from the 40s and 50s; 8 – contemporary commercial facility

of the old Jelcz and Laskowice Oławskie practically does not have any services. The spatial arrangement of Jelcz-Laskowice is quite chaotic. The centre of town was not planned several dozen years ago. It was located on the area of housing estate, close to industrial plants. The services for residents concentrated in random residential area buildings: kiosks, pavilions etc. The result of such activities is the irregular shape of the centre. In addition, its shape was magnified by the location

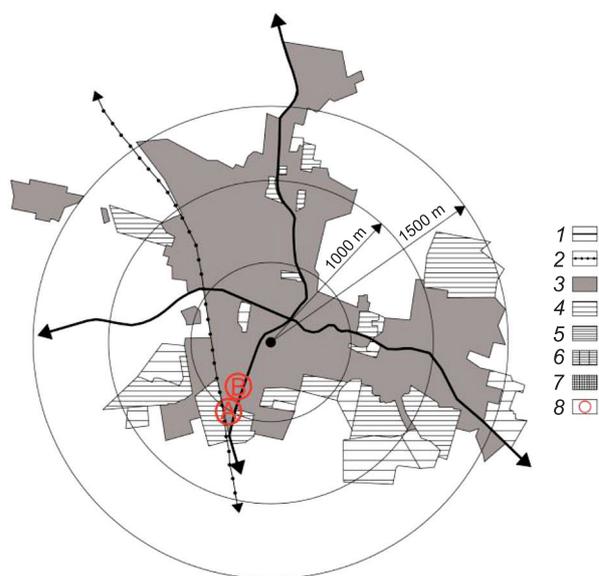
**Table 1.** Parameters describing the contemporary commercial facilities in Jelcz-Laskowice

Jelcz-Laskowice, population: 15 508							
Building	Year built	Plot area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Build-up area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Sales area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Building height [m]	Number of parking places	New building/adaptation
A	2001	5027	1554	~1300	7	47	new
B	2010	4318	1029,09	~1700	7	29	adaptation

Source: own study based on data provided by the District Authorities on the basis of paragraph 1 and Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Act on Access to Public Information, of 6 September 2001 (OJ No 112, item 1198 as amended) and on the basis of the site verification

of contemporary commercial facilities operating in the town centre for the last 10 years. Contemporary commercial facilities have been located on adjacent parcels along the main street. They are important objects in the spatial structure of Jelcz, located near the bus stop, surrounded by a large number of traditional shops, they are accessible by foot, bicycle, car and public transport. Both objects are separated from the street by parking lot. In Jelcz-Laskowice the largest number of shops ends their operations in the area of the estate, that is in the “centre” of the town. However, while the largest number of shops is located at the main street, the shops ending their operations are found at the adjacent streets. This demonstrates the commercial nature of the street and keen interest of investors. The main street while the road itself leads to the district town or in the opposite direction – to Wrocław.

**OBORNIKI ŚLĄSKIE.** Oborniki Śląskie are eight-thousand inhabitants centre that deserves special attention. It is a town with the tradition of health resort, located 25 km away from Wrocław, in conjunction with a good public transport link the town is popular among residents, and their number since World War II gradually increases. At the beginning of the 90s in the spatial structure of Oborniki Śląskie, there was no area with particularly more shops than the others. With the development of the capitalist system the number of traditional shops started to increase and build up around the central roundabout and on the road leading to the railway station. Railway station is an important object in the structure of the town because it is used by many residents commuting daily by train. Contemporary commercial facilities have



**Fig. 2.** Contemporary commercial facility in the spatial structure of Oborniki Śląskie: 1 – major roads; 2 – railroads; 3 – post-war service and residential buildings; 4 – service and residential buildings from the 70s; 5 – service and residential buildings from the 80s; 6 – service and residential buildings from the 60s; 7 – service and residential buildings from the 40s and 50s; 8 – contemporary commercial facility

been opened in 2006, 2009. The first one was located in the old furniture factory adapted for commercial purposes, while the second was established as a new object on an adjacent parcel. Both buildings are located a few hundred meters from the main roundabout in the town. A typical problem of contemporary commercial facilities located in converted for commercial purposes buildings is a problem with parking. Due to the small parking lot, which in the case of “Oborniki Śląskie” occupies the former manoeuvring yard, the number of parking spaces is insufficient. The division

**Table 2.** Parameters describing the contemporary commercial facilities in Oborniki Śląskie

Oborniki Śląskie, population: 8 475							
Building	Year built	Plot area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Build-up area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Sales area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Building height [m]	Number of parking places	New building/adaptation
A	2006	5 567	1 072	870	5	31	adaptation
B	2009	8 735	1 657	1300	10	106	new

Source: own study based on data provided by the District Authorities based on Article 2 paragraph 1 and Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Act on Access to Public Information of 6 September 2001 (OJ No 112, item 1198 as amended) and on the basis of the site verification

proposed by the investor is not respected by motorists, resulting in the communication chaos around the facility. The same problem is faced by customers of the above mentioned Jelcz-Laskowice. One of the buildings, opened in 2005, had a sizeable parking lot located between the building and the road. After several years a petrol station has been located within the parking lot, and a new entry appeared. Layout of parking spaces, however, remained unchanged, parking in the designated areas is not possible anymore, because this leads to blocking of the entry into the facility. Lack of properly designated parking spaces makes drivers leave cars where they please, causing traffic chaos.

**KĄTY WROCLAWSKIE.** Kąty Wrocławskie and the discussed below: Sobótka and Trzebnica received municipal rights in the thirteenth-fourteenth century. Due to the regular grid of streets and a distinguished centre the largest number of services after transformation period was located in these towns within the downtown area. While the development of the traditional commercial tissue took place in these towns following a similar pattern, the location of contemporary commercial facilities is a more complex issue. Kąty Wrocławskie is a small town with several thousand inhabitants away from Wrocław about 27 km. Due to the proximity to the motorway access to Wrocław takes about dozen or so minutes. Kąty Wrocławskie population is gradually increasing since the Second World War. The new residents mainly occupy detached houses spreading on suburbs. The town has one contemporary commercial facility. It is located in the new building on grounds previously undeveloped, a few hundred meters from the very town centre. The facility was opened in 2001.

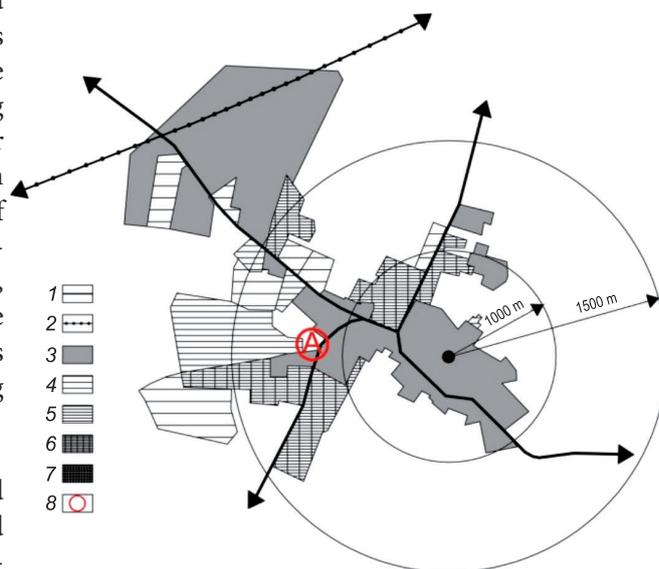


Fig. 3. Contemporary commercial facility in the spatial structure of Kąty Wrocławskie: 1 – major roads; 2 – railroads; 3 – post-war service and residential buildings; 4 – service and residential buildings from the 70s; 5 – service and residential buildings from the 80s; 6 – service and residential buildings from the 60s; 7 – service and residential buildings from the 40s and 50s; 8 – contemporary commercial facility

Despite its location in the town, one drawback of this investment is a pedestrian access. At a public road, at which there is a shop, there is no dedicated lane for pedestrians, and the walkpaths, coming from the housing estate are unpaved. This impedes access for mothers with children, people with disabilities and the cyclists. Due to the modernization of the facility in 2010 the shop was closed for several weeks. During this period sellers from other local shops (clothing, footwear), complained of a dramatic reduction in the

Table 3. Parameters describing the contemporary commercial facility in Kąty Wrocławskie

Kąty Wrocławskie, population 5 722							
Building	Year built	Plot area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Build-up area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Sales area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Building height [m]	Number of parking places	New building/adaptation
A	2001	4 257	1 232	950	7	92	new

Source: own study based on data provided by the District Authorities based on Article 2 paragraph 1 and Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Act on Access to Public Information of 6 September 2001 (OJ No 112, item 1198 as amended) and on the basis of the site verification

number of customers. In their opinion<sup>8</sup>, the main clients of local non-food shops are those visiting the contemporary commercial facility, and the small local shops do not compete with the contemporary commercial facility but supplement its offer.

**TRZEBNICA.** Trzebnica is a town with the mediæval tradition. Traditional trade focuses in the historical centre. In Oborniki Śląskie the largest number of shops was on Dworcowa Street leading to the railway station. While in Trzebnica the street connecting the market and a bus station serves as the commercial centre. The primary function of the town is housing and the district support. In Trzebnica there are currently operating two contemporary commercial facilities, opened in 2009, 2010. Both are located in new buildings in the areas previously occupied by warehouses. The first one is located in the suburbs, available to walking and driving customers alike. The second one, opened in 2010, is closer to the centre. It is a the contemporary two-storey commercial facility that has own parking. Both facilities operate in the town for short period of time, both have the adequate number of parking spaces and are tailored to the requirements of the modern customer.



**Fig. 4.** Contemporary commercial facility in the spatial structure of Trzebnica: 1 – major roads; 2 – railroads; 3 – post-war service and residential buildings; 4 – service and residential buildings from the 70s; 5 – service and residential buildings from the 80s; 6 – service and residential buildings from the 60s; 7 – service and residential buildings from the 40s and 50s; 8 – contemporary commercial facility

**Table 4.** Parameters describing contemporary commercial facilities in Trzebnica

Trzebnica, population: 12 460							
Building	Year built	Plot area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Build-up area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Sales area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Building height [m]	Number of parking places	New building/adaptation
A	2009	6 670	1 544	1 270	7	83	new
B	2010	4 546	1 255	950	10	55	new

*Source:* own study based on data provided by the District Authorities based on Article 2 paragraph 1 and Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Act on Access to Public Information of 6 September 2001 (OJ No 112, item 1198 as amended) and on the basis of the site verification

**SOBÓTKA.** Sobótka is the several thousand inhabitants town, about 33 kilometres away from Wrocław. The town is a destination for weekend breaks for the residents of Wrocław. In Sobótka begin numerous hiking trails that led on Ślęza Massif. A town with the mediæval tradition has suffered

greatly during World War II, nearly 60% of the buildings were destroyed. Over the next decades no attempt was made to complement the demolished market frontages with new buildings. It was only in the 80s, when in the place of the destroyed ones, new buildings were constructed. In one of the buildings constructed in the 80's there is a contemporary commercial facility located. The building in its conception also served as commercial object, it was modernized for the needs

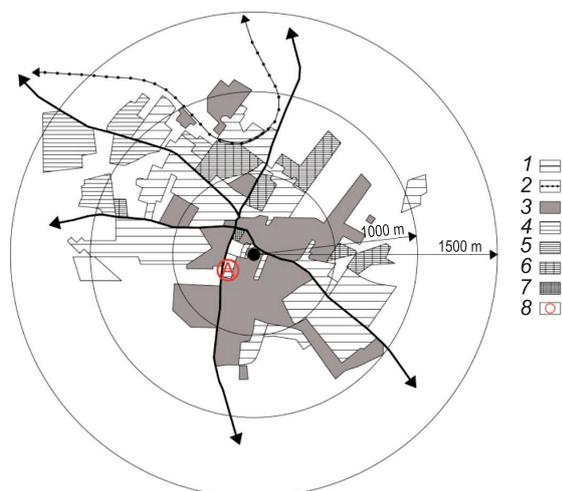
<sup>8</sup> These Information were received in a conversation with the owners of traditional shops in Kąty Wrocławskie.

**Table 5.** Parameters describing the contemporary commercial facility in Sobótka

Sobótka, population: 6 924							
Building	Year built	Plot area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Build-up area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Sales area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	Building height [m]	Number of parking places	New building/adaptation
A	2005	1836	456	400	6	11	adaptation

Source: own study based on data provided by the district authorities on the basis of Article 2 paragraph 1 and Article 10 paragraph 1 Act of the Access to Public Information of 6 September 2001 (OJ No 112, pos. 1198 as amended), and on the basis of the site verification

of the new network in 2005. Despite the large area of investment (1836 sq. m) on the plot is only 11 dedicated parking spaces. However, there are more customers coming for shopping, which results, as in the case of Oborniki Śląskie and Jelcz-Laskowice, in the communication chaos on the site.



**Fig. 5.** Contemporary commercial facility in the spatial structure of Sobótka: 1 – major roads; 2 – railroads; 3 – post-war service and residential buildings; 4 – service and residential buildings from the 70s; 5 – service and residential buildings from the 80s; 6 – service and residential buildings from the 60s; 7 – service and residential buildings from the 40s and 50s; 8 – contemporary commercial facility

The trends accompanying development of the new forms of commerce in small towns of Lower Silesia were determined on the basis of several dozen of investments located in the region<sup>9</sup>. On the basis

<sup>9</sup> Trends determining the development of contemporary commercial facilities in small towns were based on a detailed

of the parameters describing the objects it was possible to determine the changes that took place in the spatial shaping of contemporary commercial facilities. By analyzing the distribution of contemporary commercial facilities, it's possible to specify the town zones of interest to investors. The American sociologist Ernest W. Burgess, developed a model of concentric zones of the town, by distinguishing in it five areas arranged around a central point in the town. This concept assumed that the nucleus of the town was a trading centre, which has become an urban centre, therefrom the downtown has developed. Around it a transition zone has developed, character of which is industrial and commercial as well as residential. Another area was covered by residential zone only, after which there was a the next one – detached houses zone. The last one, outer zone linked the town with rural areas, acting as the suburban zone (Burgess 1996, pp. 85–72). In the first stage of the development of new forms of commerce in the analysed towns downtown locations attracted the interest of investors. Traditional trade was concentrated in their vicinity. This trend was particularly evident during the early years of the process. Due to lack of undeveloped downtown plots, commercial objects occupied existing buildings with a storage, industrial or cultural function. One of the towns where the object of the cultural function has been upgraded to the commercial function was Twardogóra. In 2000, sports and entertainment hall was adapted for the purpose of the popular commercial network. All of adaptations include the conversion of the commercial, cultural, or warehouse function

analysis of twenty-two such facilities located in selected small towns in Wrocław sub-region: Trzebnica, Oborniki, Żmigród, Milicz, Oleśnica, Bierutów, Syców, Twardogóra, Jelcz-Laskowice, Kąty Wrocławskie, Sobótka, Siechnice, Środa Śląska.

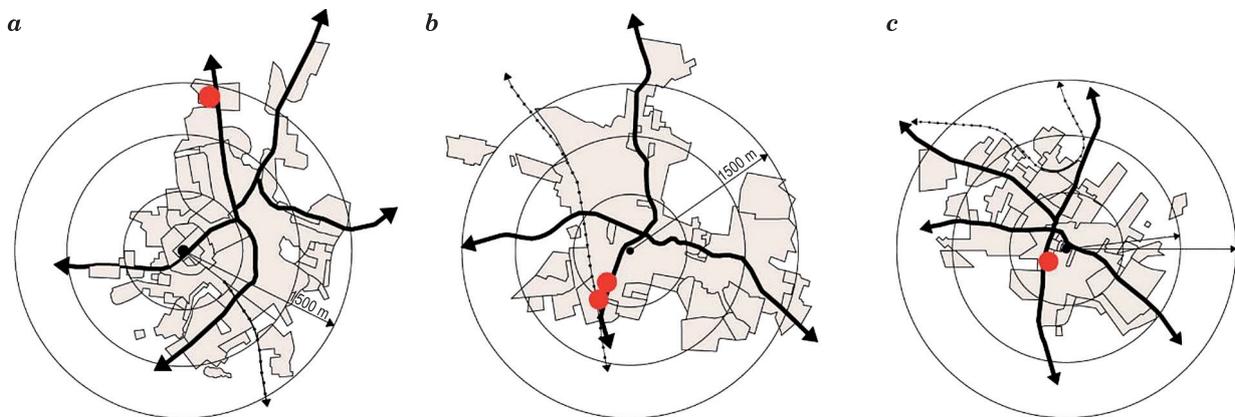


Fig. 6. Location of contemporary commercial facilities in a city: *a* – Trzebnica – location in suburban area; *b* – Oborniki Śląskie – location in the transition zone, *c* – Sobótka – location in the downtown area

and adapting it to the requirements of the modern consumer. The next stage is to stimulate investors' interest in areas located outside the downtown. In the years 2006–2010 investments in the transitional, housing and suburban zones were carried out simultaneously. These locations occasionally included the adaptations. The vast majority of them were newly built objects, equipped with parking, attracting customers with cars. After 2008 in the small towns only new investments have been localised. This phenomenon could be explained by economic factors, pleading for the construction of a new object (convenient parking, clearly legible form, unnecessary difficulties arising from the previous function) or just a limited number of investments that can be adapted. In all the analysed cases, the investor was the representative of the food sector, which occupied most of the area. In half of the contemporary commercial facilities there are additional service points, representing small services (florist, bakery, ATM, etc.), located close to entrance zone.

Over last dozen or so years, the size of contemporary commercial facilities has also changed. First contemporary commercial facilities were located on lots with an average area of  $5\,094,66^{10}$  m<sup>2</sup>, while new investments incurred in the years 2008–2010 occupied areas with an average of  $6\,577,42$  m<sup>2</sup>. With the increas-

ing plot and sales areas there is very little increase in building area. The average is only  $1\,148,12$  m<sup>2</sup> –  $937,13$  m<sup>2</sup> for adaptations and  $1\,289$  m<sup>2</sup> for new investments.

The first contemporary commercial facilities located in buildings adapted for commercial purposes did not have large enough plot to provide parking, communication support and the possibility of access. In Sobótka, for example, in the facility opened in 2005, the number of parking spaces within the investment was 15 spaces. In 2000, in Żmigród, the contemporary commercial facility located in the town centre did not have a dedicated parking. Comparing – the number of parking spaces located within the new investments built in the years 2008–2010 has increased to about 100 dedicated parking spaces. The location of contemporary commercial facilities in small towns after the transition period is an important matter. Large dimension objects, having dedicated parking, appear in the spatial structure. These objects capture the attention of clients, in a small town they tend to be one of the few new developments. Illuminated, with colours that represent the network, they become the icons of the chain they represent.

## CONCLUSION

Contemporary commercial facilities are important elements of the functional and spatial structure of small towns. The expansion of international

<sup>10</sup> The average plot area of newly built contemporary commercial facilities created in the years 2000–2003 was calculated.

networks is progressing rapidly, and the effects of the location of new commercial investments affect the daily life of inhabitants. In this paper we analyzed in detail the parameters and indicators that characterize contemporary commercial facilities, which allowed to identify changes and trends associated with the development of this form of trade in small towns. Contemporary commercial facility is mostly a new building in the city, with an area of development and overall dimensions<sup>11</sup> generally larger than the neighboring buildings. As a result of the location of new trade investment the existing spatial structure, dominants and closing axis view of the street are changing. Creation of identical objects, in similar sites leads to the unification of space. Because of the ready-made templates of retail-chain buildings designers role in the formation of a discount facility is negligible. The aim of the investor is to create a clear, recognizable forms. Thus arise of the same facilities with the same area, with the same land development. Customers are served by staff dressed in the same uniforms, stores opened in the same hours – regardless of region. The goals of the investors and institutions caring for the image of the city are different. One side wants standardization and the other side – which represents local authorities aims to keep the character of the place. Discount stores occupy urban locations, regardless of the history of the city. In most cases they do not correspond with the local architecture, and long open luminous facilities are sometimes the only evening entertainment, thus they influence the reception of space.

Observing the experience of Western European countries continued development of contemporary commercial facilities and expansion of their offering should be predicted for Poland. In a small German towns the number of such facilities is almost three times greater than in Poland<sup>12</sup>. In addition, more

often there are accompanying catering, trade and other services beside the store's main tenant. Land development and location of contemporary commercial facilities in small towns have been changing in the years 1990–2010. The first contemporary commercial facilities were adaptations of existing storage, cultural or commercial buildings – these facilities were modernized to fit the new function. Most of the adapted buildings were located in downtown or in the transition zone. With the development of contemporary commercial facilities their location has changed – they moved away from the center. The form of the buildings also has changed – the closer to the year 2010 the more simple, lightweight but above all cheap the construction was.

Based on the experience of European countries and observations, it was concluded that the optimum location of a contemporary commercial facility in a small town is in the transition zone, or on the border of downtown. Such location of a new trade investment does not modify the historical center and at the same time is close to residential units. It is thus accessible by foot and does not generate additional traffic.

Research results prove that the process of the development of contemporary commercial facilities was forming in different way than in big towns. The first emerging buildings were the downtown objects, while in metropolitan areas the interest of investors in the early 90s targeted the suburban areas. Small towns are not affected yet by the problems faced by large towns, such a significant communication load nearby contemporary commercial facilities. There has also been no change in the spatial shaping of the traditional commercial tissue as a result of competition. However, the phenomenon of functioning of contemporary commercial facilities is relatively new and requires further research.

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<sup>11</sup> The parameters that most influence the perception of a contemporary commercial facility are its height, building area and the plot area. They are generally larger than the adjacent buildings, in addition they are surrounded by parking which highlights their size even more.

<sup>12</sup> Research report: Comparison of land development and location of contemporary commercial facilities located in

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small towns of Wrocław sub-region and Landkrais Leipzig (A. Szumilas). Project co-financed by the European Union under Human Capital Programme.

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## MIEJSCE WSPÓŁCZESNEGO HANDLU W STRUKTURZE PRZESTRZENNEJ MAŁYCH MIAST PODREGIONU WROCŁAWSKIEGO

### ABSTRAKT

Transformacja polskiej gospodarki w latach dziewięćdziesiątych doprowadziła do rozwoju sektora usług. Wraz z rozwojem systemu kapitalistycznego w Polsce pojawiały się współczesne obiekty handlowe. Pierwsze obiekty lokalizowane były w latach 90. w dużych polskich miastach. Do małych miast nowe formy handlu dotarły około 10 lat później. W pracy autorzy określają miejsce współczesnych obiektów handlowych w strukturze przestrzennej małych miast. Uwzględniono lokalizacje śródmiejskie, znajdujące się w strefie mieszkaniowej, oraz podmiejskie. Przedmiotem analizy były 22 miasta o populacji od 4 do 20 tysięcy mieszkańców. Na podstawie badań własnych, danych statystycznych oraz różnych typów lokalizacji udało się ustalić tendencje, które towarzyszyły rozwojowi nowych form handlu w małych polskich miastach w określonym przedziale czasowym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** współczesny handel, struktura przestrzenna, miasteczko, transformacja

