

Abstract of dissertation.

The subject of my dissertation is “Spatial structure of new building investments in small towns in Łódź voivodeship”. The paper consists of an introduction, five chapters and is almost 300 pages long. The thesis establishes three main aspects:

analysis of spatial structure of new building investments in terms of type and time of realization, type of property and the fact if investors are local or not;

determination of factors deciding about origin of new investments;

determination of building sites in urban space in small towns in Łódź voivodeship.

Based on the conducted research the diversity of small towns was also determined in terms of specialization of the executed building objects and the influence of decisive factors on new investments. Additionally collateral goals were realized such as finding the most attractive sites in the small towns and also indicating many occurring changes in those towns on social, demographic and economic fields.

The research was conducted in 19 small towns of up to 10000 inhabitants situated in Łódź voivodeship. The focus was on all building investments which have been granted official permission in years 1995-2004. The choice of this time period was caused by changes in the Polish building law and acts on spatial development. In addition the selected period of 10 years was characterized by stable situation on the building market. At the same time the government reduced economic chaos which had been seen after the change of political system in 1989, and until 2004 there was a little influence of economic and legal changes before The Polish accession to the European Union.

All data about building objects was acquired in 19 local government offices. Then the author conducted terrain observation and verification of correctness of the collected data, later there was prepared a consolidated study using statistical and cartographical method. The final stage was the classification of the collected data and research, results were shown on more than 70 maps and charts and 57 tables.

The choice of small towns as a place of research was due to their distinctness in terms of appearance and function compared to bigger cities. Small towns have common features of rural and urban areas, they are also the largest group – they constitute more than half of all cities in region. For many decades they have been neglected and underfunded, small towns were often overlooked in research. Nowadays they are given the opportunity to make up for rapid development. The changes taking place in the area of small towns in recent years have caused great deal of interest among scientist. One of the visible effects of these changes are new building investments.

The first chapter concerns the indication of the factors determining the development of new investments and strength of their influence. The study involved the impact of various external and internal factors. The analysis showed that the greatest impact on the development of new investments had economic factors (number of business entities, employment rate) and demographic factors (population). Less important was the financial condition of local governments and of the least importance were the location of small towns in the communication and settlement network of region, legal actions and planning activities of local authorities and current state of infrastructure, e.g. road network, water supply system, sewage system.

In the next chapter the research included generic structure and time of realization of the new building objects. From 1995 to 2004 in all the small towns over 5400 building permits were issued. Six towns clearly dominate over the rest in terms of the number of investments. A common feature of most of them is the large number of inhabitants and the administrative functions of the district town. More new objects are built in small towns located in the central and southern parts of Łódź voivodeship. All the towns are similar in terms of the type of the build objects, i.e. new residential buildings dominate (approximately 40%), every fourth building is an outbuilding, followed by infrastructure objects and service buildings. From 1995 to 1999 there was a visible increase in the number of building objects, while from 2000 to 2004 there was a decrease the number of investments. It was due to the economic situation of Poland and changes in the Polish building law. At the time there was a decrease in the number of new houses, outbuildings and infrastructure objects but there was an increase in the number of service buildings.

The third chapter deals with investor structure, the study covered the property of investments and registration place of economic activity or permanent address of the investors. Based on this information small towns are similar. Private property of new investments dominated, on average more than 10% was a communal ownership, cooperative ownership was only 2%. In the small towns the majority of investors was local and the level of development depends primarily on them. The biggest share of local investors was in peripheral towns of Łódź voivodeship, with poor access to main roads. External investors came primarily from Łódź, Warszawa and medium-sized cities located in Łódź region. They usually chose the towns situated in the centre of voivodeship, having an attractive landscape or communication location. External investors mainly built new houses, infrastructure objects or service buildings.

In the fourth chapter the research included place of concentration of new building investments and presented their localization. The aim was to indicate the diversity of the

towns, as well as to identify the most attractive sites for investments. In many towns the most attractive places to build investments are external areas, located at a distance of over 0,5 km from the center. This was mainly due to a lower price of land and a greater number of available building plots. Most of the new objects were built in areas: along the major roads, near commercial and public buildings, with access to the necessary technical infrastructure. In the peripheral zones of towns with the largest number of new investments there can be seen the process of “urban sprawl”. The center is dominated by service and residential-services buildings, and most of them are modernized or rebuilt. Small towns are diverse in terms of allocation of new building objects. The first group of towns stands out with the most uniform deployment of the investments, the common feature is the small number of new objects. The second group classified most of the cities, majority of the investments were located at a distance of 0,5-1 km from the center. In the last group of towns most of the new buildings were built in the external zones, their common feature is the largest number of investments. The density of new investments was examined by dividing the area of all towns into smaller pieces to an area of 1 hectare. Areas with very low or low density of new objects dominated in all the towns dominated.

The last chapter is conclusions. There was done the classification of all 19 towns, using the method of taxonomy which indicated 3 groups of similar entities. In the first group there are attractive towns for investors, they are characterized by dynamic development. Private investors mainly decided on changes in appearance of these towns, there was a large participation of external investors. In these towns the urbanization of peripheral zones is the most visible. In the second group of towns the share of municipal investments is the highest, especially of the infrastructure objects. Lots of investments were built in the center or in its surroundings. The last group is distinguished by the largest share of local investors, there was also the biggest share of the cooperative sector. Compared to the other towns outbuildings and service buildings were the most popular.

Until recently small towns were similar, but since 1989 as a result of socio-economic changes the studied towns have begun to be clearly different. Some of them are better adapted to the current conditions and used the opportunities for further development, but in most of the towns investment activities have not produced the expected results. Local governments should continue to look for ways to attract external investors, and effectively support local investors.