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## ATTITUDES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TOWARDS A NEIGHBOURING TOWN

**Abstract:** As a result of suburbanization, intensification of urbanization processes in suburban areas is taking place. The suburban zone is understood to be an area located in direct neighbourhood of a city or town, related to it and being systematically transformed. It is also defined as a transient area between a village and a city/town, mainly in spatial terms (mixed forms of space development and transient settlement types). The aim of this paper is to define the attitudes of suburban local government authorities towards neighbouring city/town. In order to achieve this aim, methods of analytic description, direct observation, analysis of documents such as “Local development plans”, “Development Strategies”, “The study of causation and directions in spatial management” of suburban municipalities in the Kielce county were used.

**Key words:** suburban zone, municipal local government authorities

### INTRODUCTION

As a result of suburbanization, intensification of urbanization processes is taking place in suburban areas. It is a process characteristic both for towns and cities in highly developed countries and in developing countries (Czerny 2005). It may assume different forms. It comprises all aspects of urbanization, i.e. spatial by expansion of urban architecture, demographic by intensification of human migration, in this case from urban areas to suburban areas, as well as social by changes taking place in the occupational structure, changes in people's attitudes and development of an urban lifestyle.

The attitude of suburban local government authorities towards these processes is of great importance. By making certain decisions they may restrain the transformation process taking place in areas governed by them. Undoubtedly, the size of a town is significant as well.

Municipal governments have functioned in Poland, according to the rules of a democratic, civil state, since March 8, 1990, that is since the moment when the Act on Municipal Self-Government was enforced. The Act on Spatial Management and Planning of March 27, 2003 was another important law on the activity of municipal local governments. Both these regulations impose on local governments many tasks which aim at social and economic development of the areas governed by them. These tasks include, among others, the enactment of programmes constituting the strategy for social and economic development for each municipality. In the case of smaller administrative units, mainly endogenous factors, related to the local conditions, should be the basis for striving for economic growth and social development (Parysek 2005). Among these conditions, the following may be found: geographic location, also in relation to other towns, size of a municipality, its functions and various resources. Taking them into consideration and defining all the strengths and weaknesses as well as threats and opportunities, municipal authorities, with the help of specialized units, prepare development strategies, in which the objectives and tasks aiming at their realization are assigned.

The aim of this paper is to define the attitudes of the suburban local government authorities towards closeness of a big town (though, as yet, not a metropolis) on the example of the Kielce county. An answer to the following question was sought: are authorities of municipalities surrounding Kielce aware of the benefits resulting from a localization in the neighbourhood of a big town?

Eight municipalities neighbouring with Kielce (a provincial town in central Poland with a population of 207 088), constituting the Kielce county were analyzed. They are the:

- rural municipality of Sitkówka-Nowiny (46 km<sup>2</sup>, 6 988 inhabitants),
- urban and rural municipality of Chęciny (127 km<sup>2</sup>, 14 694 inhabitants),
- rural municipality of Piekoszów (103 km<sup>2</sup>, 15 229 inhabitants),
- rural municipality of Miedziana Góra (km<sup>2</sup>, 10 017 inhabitants),
- rural municipality of Masłów (86 km<sup>2</sup>, 9 534 inhabitants),

- rural municipality of Górnó (83,3 km<sup>2</sup>, 12 944 inhabitants),
- urban and rural municipality of Daleszyce (222 km<sup>2</sup>, 14 662 inhabitants),
- rural municipality of Morawica (141 km<sup>2</sup>, 13 218 inhabitants)

(The data were applicable on December 31., according to the *Rocznik Statystyczny Województwa Świętokrzyskiego* (Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Yearbook 2006).

In order to answer the question posed above, analytic description methods, direct observation, analysis of documents such as the “Local development plans”, “Development Strategies” and “The study of the cause and directions in spatial management” of each municipality were used.

## SUBURBAN ZONE

Suburban zone is thought to be an area located in the direct neighbourhood of a city/town, related to it and systematically transformed (Liszewski 1985). It is also defined as a transient area between a village and a city/town, mainly in spatial terms (mixed forms of spatial development and transient settlement types). The suburban zone distinguishes itself with some characteristic features, i.e. it is related to the town and forms one system with it, connections between a zone and a town are of spatial (resulting from the location) and functional character, it develops due to the influence of a town, it changes together with the development and structural transformation of a town, it performs specific functions without which a town could not develop appropriately or even exist, there are satellite towns and settlements in it, inhabited by people working and studying in the central town (Straszewicz 1985; Maik 1985). It was stated that despite the fact that the suburban zone has some features, exclusively typical of it, the zone is not an isolated area with clearly and unequivocally set borders (Misiak 1992). Rajman (2000) defines the suburban zone as organized part of geographic space, which adjoins developed areas of the central city/town. According to new definitions, the suburban zone is described as an area located between a central (mother) city/town and traditional rural areas, complementarily related with this city/town, undergoing continuous transformation as a result of its influence and performing specific functions, changing both in time and

space, in order to adjust to the developing mother city. Moreover, in the suburban zone area, a fast growth of urbanization processes is being observed, which leads to the disappearance of traditional rural landscapes and pervasion of rural and urban lifestyles.

Many authors point out that suburban zones perform specific functions. As Staraszewicz (1985) underlines, these are functions without which a city/town could not develop or even exist. The oldest function which a suburban zone used to perform in ancient times was the rural function, thanks to which food was supplied to towns. A term of a city food-zone can also be found in literature, but its range is far wider than the range of the suburban zone because contemporary suburban zones are not able to satisfy all the food needs of the city. However, today, considering fast transport, this is no longer a problem. Nowadays, a regression is observed of the food-supplier function in the suburban zone. Food is supplied in international turnover. Other suburban zones functions which (except for the housing function) emerged or developed, particularly in the middle of XIX century, are the communication,, industrial and communal functions. They are a consequence of the fact that in suburban zones there are wider and more accessible areas, lower prices of land and cheaper labour force. The rest and recreation function is one of the newest. In Poland, its significant development dates back to the interwar period. A real boom, however, occurred in the post-war period.

Among the functions which the suburban area performs for the benefit of a city/town, the following stand out most often: housing, food-supply, recreation, general supply, service and the so called unburdening functions, for example: industrial, communications, communal and others (Ślódczyk 2001).

Communicational accessibility allows to move other functions further out of the city centre, improvement of communication and contact are thought to be the basic factors for suburban areas development. In terms of the transport sector, in suburban areas there are rail lines and objects, roads and objects connected with car transportation, airports, sea ports and inland ports, pipelines and radio station broadcasting devices.

The housing function is one of the basic ones executed by the suburban zone. It is here that a substantial part of inhabitants, so far working and living in the city, settles down. Wealthier people move from the centre in view of healthier living conditions while the poorer

move from the centre searching for lower costs of living. As a result, quarters of detached houses are developing and middle class villas are emerging, whereas in proximity, along public communication routes, grow chaotic buildings of the poor (Maik 1997).

The suburban zone performs an unburdening functions in favour of the city, becoming a very important area for municipal economy. It is here that rubbish tips, incineration plants, sewage-treatment plants, water intakes, thermal-electric power station, graveyards and scrap yards are located.

Performing unburdening functions is also connected with the development of industry in a suburban zone. Plants which are inconvenient for the surroundings and are area-consuming are move away from the centres and relocate to the outskirts.

The suburban zone is an area of growing importance for localization of various services, including social. Huge suburban trade and service centres, comprising great shopping molls, furniture warehouses, car dealers and many others give testimony to of the development of the trade function (Suliborski 1985).

Recently, implementation of the recreational function has been observed in suburban areas. Large sport facilities, gardens and holiday camps are emerging there.

### KIELCE SUBURBAN ZONE

Municipalities of the Kielce suburban zone (Sitkówka-Nowiny, Chęciny, Piekoszów, Miedziana Góra, Masłów, Górnio, Daleszyce, Morawica) comprise a multifunctional, service and industrial area with domination of trade, construction industry and industrial processing. The service function has been undergoing reinforcement in recent years, which can be proved by growth of the entrepreneurship indicator for the service sector in the years 1995–2005 as well as a systematic increase in the number of employees in the service sector. The industrial function is very strong as well, though number of the employees in industry, in the analyzed area, has been decreasing during the examined ten-year frame. What is more, the suburban municipal area around Kielce performs the residential (housing) function for people commuting to work, who live temporarily (have other houses) or permanently in the area of suburban municipalities. In the analyzed area, the food-sup-

plier function becomes less and less important, which is proved by a decline in the share of arable land in the general municipal area and in an increase of fallowed areas, awaiting transformation into building parcels. The recreational function is very important for the suburban areas of Kielce. All the municipalities in the neighbourhood of the town are rich in tourist values, both natural and anthropogenic.

#### ATTITUDES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TOWARDS A NEIGHBOURING TOWN

It should be underlined that a vicinity of a city/town is treated by individual authorities of each municipality in a different way. Local government authorities of Morawica most strongly emphasize the importance of the location of the municipality in the neighbourhood of Kielce. They see a chance for development of their municipality in the fact that it is becoming a bedroom for Kielce. That is why they propose to develop lands for house building, mainly detached houses, at the same time, emphasising the need for investments related to trade and services. They are planning to build, among others, a weekend entertainment and rest centre (Tab. 1). Considering the vicinity of a big city, a positive factor for development of industry, they have also designated in their plans areas for its development. Currently, they are looking for investors. As in the case of Morawica, the local authorities of Daleszyce are going to make the most of the vicinity of Kielce. Aiming at development of their municipality as a bedroom for Kielce, they try to encourage inhabitants of the neighbouring city to build houses in their area, by promoting landscape tourist values. They also see a chance for the development of an environmentally-friendly industry (Tab. 1).

Local authorities of the Górno municipality, when listing their strengths, put most emphasis on "vicinity to the metropolis" (as Kielce, a town inhabited by 200 thousand people, was exaggeratedly called). Being a significant producer of strawberries, they are the only local authorities in the area to envision an opportunity for a develop functions connected with agricultural production in the area, to satisfy the needs of the large neighbouring area (Tab. 1).

The loocal authorities of the Masłów and Miedziana Góra municipalities, alike the former cases, are aware of the advantages resulting from localization in the suburban zone. However, they seek their op-

portunities for further development mainly in developing new settlement areas. They try to attract new inhabitants by landscape values. In the areas with less accessible communication they see a chance to develop ecologic agricultural production (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1  
Exemplary strategic aims and strengths of the municipalities  
which facilitate development of new urban areas

Municipality	Selected strategic aims	Selected strengths
Chęciny	All forms of tourism development  Areas destined for investment development  Attracting foreign investors in the service and industry sectors  Cooperation with foreign partners: Ronde, Denmark; Jaworin, Ukraine	Extraordinary tourist cultural and natural values  A vicinity of Kielce, for which the municipality can become a tourist base, an accommodation base
Daleszyce	Rest spot for the inhabitants of Kielce and other regions  Bedroom for Kielce, place destined for housing projects  Development of industry, with exception of environmentally unfriendly sectors	Tourist landscape values  Localization in the vicinity of Kielce
Górno	Development of tourism, industry, services and agricultural production	Vicinity of "metropolis", natural and landscape values
Masłów	Development of new settlement areas  Communication network extension and development on the borders of municipality and city of Kielce  Dynamic spatial development of the municipality which adjoins Kielce, in the remaining areas – development of agricultural production, housing and tourism	Attractive location for living and tourism development  Areas characterized by high tourist values, mainly landscape values  Access to the Kielce labour market
Morawica	Municipality with attractive investment area  Municipality – weekend entertainment and rest centre (among others, performing a bedroom function)  Municipality as building industry background of Kielce	Vicinity of a large city, areas destined for investment, geographic location  Pure natural environment, yew nature reserve in Radomice

Miedziana Góra	Miedziana Góra as an attractive place to live  Development of the services related to tourism	Influx of well-educated people, natural tourist values occurrence, rich history of the municipality, location in a vicinity of a city
Piekoszów	Housing function development  Development of industry related to rock mining  Tourism development, people having other houses in the municipality	Partner, not satellite position in relation to Kielce  Communication network, roads, vicinity of Kielce  Rock materials resources  Natural environment tourist values
Sitkówka-Nowiny	Extension and modernization of the infrastructure backing up municipality's development  Development of industry, services and house building  Environment preservation  Development of local human resources	Attractiveness for investors  Tourist attractiveness  A vicinity of Kielce as a big urban centre

Source: "Local development plans", "Development Strategies", "The study of causation and directions in spatial management"

As in the formerly described suburban areas, local government authorities of Sitkówka-Nowiny municipality, point in the vicinity of Kielce – a big urban centre, as a strength of its localization. This is a municipality of an industrial character, that is why special attention is paid to development of this branch of the economy.

The Kielce vicinity is treated differently by the local government authorities of Piekoszów. In spite of the fact that they intend to dynamically develop housing facilities, they aspire, unlike others, to be "a partner, not a satellite position in relation to Kielce" (Tab. 1). Piekoszów is a municipality which, alike Sitkówka-Nowiny, earns high profits from the mineral industry. It allows for a different policy towards the far bigger, however poorer in terms of annual income per inhabitant, neighbour.

The vicinity of Kielce is considered least important for development of their own municipality by the local government authorities of Chęciny municipality. According to their plans, the municipality should become an independent tourist accommodation base, also for tourists who want



to visit Kielce (Tab. 1). This perspective places Chęciny into competition with Kielce – a city which is heavily into operating tourist attendance. Having become acquainted with the development plans, one can get an idea that local government authorities of Chęciny find cooperation with the foreign partners much more important for economic growth of their municipality than cooperation with the nearest, albeit bigger neighbour. The basis for this atypical attitude are extraordinary tourist cultural and natural values of this very area.

## CONCLUSIONS

The attitudes of local government authorities residing in suburban zones of the big town (though, as yet, not a metropolis) – Kielce, are diverse. Majority of the local government authorities see an opportunity for development of their municipality in attracting new inhabitants to their area, tempting them by natural environment values, clean air and waters, numerous tourist attractions as well as access to the Kielce labour market. Development of services, related mainly to rest and recreation is considered by the authorities to be very important. In some cases, location in the vicinity of a big town such as Kielce is considered an asset for development of an industrial activity, the basis for which, in this case, are the municipalities' own rock resources.

One can point out that the local government authorities of municipalities located in suburbs around Kielce, in majority of cases, accept their weaker, satellite position in regard to their bigger neighbour, admitting in the development plans that, for them, the most important function is the town's bedroom function. However, there are examples of local government authorities' attitudes where the far bigger neighbour is planned to be treated as a partner, not from a satellite position. There also are examples of local government authorities, who, as it seems, try to dominate the bigger neighbour. In these last two cases local government authorities seek their strength either in wealth resulting from mineral resources or in the municipality's extraordinary tourist values.

On the basis of the conducted analysis, one can state that, unlike metropolitan areas, where authorities of suburban municipalities, despite the similarity of their objectives, usually are in a weaker position, in non-metropolitan, they may even try to compete with the city.

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