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THE POLES OF OLSZTYN DEVELOPMENT

The paper presents two thematic threads concerning Olsztyn development, mainly an analyses the development of Olsztyn from two perspectives: history and urban growth. The example of Olsztyn, as a town where agglomeration processes are taking place, is not typical from some points of view.

Since the foundation of the town (municipal rights from 1353) for 500 years Olsztyn did not develop in a spatial sense – buildings did not exceed the original boundaries of the town. The rate of spatial changes was speeded up at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

The spatial structure of Olsztyn is unique, broken by a differentiated physiography of the terrain (lakes, river, woods, sculpture of the earth's surface).

The development of industry has never been a pro-developmental factor, which is a very rare case. The town has been developing spatially incorporating new rural areas. The present town building is of a continuous character (except for lakes, woods, wet areas).

We can ask a question in this context: what are the present poles of the development of Olsztyn? The answer is not typical, because the grounds of communes next to Olsztyn (Stawiguda, Barczewo, Dywity, Jonkowo) are the poles. They are areas with the highest investment because the price of land is significantly lower outside the town. Significant influences of the town were not found in communes, situated further away from Olsztyn.

In this way one functional-land management organism connected with the town is created. These processes sometimes grow unpredictably which causes conflict situations. Functional, infrastructural and economic dependencies cannot be fully regulated, because each commune has got its own land management policy.

Historical Aspect

The development of Olsztyn is not regarded as a typical one both from the historical and modern point of view.

The town received a Location Act on 31st October 1353 which was given by Diocese Warmia Chapter. For a long time spatial development took place within the boundaries marked out in the Location Act (i.e. old Town). It was until 1818 and was caused by frequent wars and fires and first of all the location far away from trade routes.

The dates which are important for the development of the town in the 19th and 20th centuries are:

1872 – building of a railway line

1890 – building of a gas network

1898 – building of waste water and sewage network

1905 – location of a notary office

1907 – building of electricity network

1945 – Olsztyn became the seat of voivodship authorities.

Primary urban assumptions and further town development caused that its spatial structure is very specific. This structure is scattered by physiographic conditions (the Lyna river, several lakes, forests, green areas, differentiated sculpture).

The demographic development of the town has been as follows:

1939 – 40 thousand inhabitants

1950 – 40 thousand inhabitants

2000 – 180 thousand inhabitants.

Road connections from Olsztyn were with Gdansk, Królewiec and Warsaw.

At present there is a road track from Warsaw to Gdansk which goes through Olsztynek situated 26 km from Olsztyn.

The development of the town was not the result of the development of industry, which is considered a unique feature.

Urban Aspect

A former district center in East Prussia – the seat of a notary's office (with Królewiec, Gabin and Kwidzyn) – after World War II Olsztyn became the capital of the Mazurian District, then Olsztyn voivodship and at present Warmian and Mazurian Voivodship. Before 1950 the town reached the pre-war number of population i.e. about 42,000

inhabitants whereas at present the population has reached about 180,000 inhabitants.

Olsztyn is a medium-sized town in Poland with a limited influence on urbanization of the surrounding area and therefore urbanizational processes are not fully observed. It is a good example to investigate the primary phase of growth poles formation and the mechanisms of agglomeration foundation.

Olsztyn is situated in a little urbanized region with dominating agricultural and forestry economy where Elblag with about 150,000 inhabitants and Elk with 56,000 inhabitants are the largest towns too.

The above mentioned towns have got their own specificity, having different town creating powers which have led them to the present state of development and in the scale of the region they constitute three poles growth in many domains of competition.

The development of Olsztyn from the point of view of urbanization should be regarded as not a typical one. The causes of developmental processes resulted in historic conditioning. In particular the peace treaty after World War II resulted in the main and the largest town of former East Prussia – Królewiec – being beyond the boundaries of Poland. For over 40 years of the centrally managed economy the money for the development of the town and voivodship was not given on the basis of economic analysis and was more beneficial. The development of industry has been a motor for the development of many towns and cities all over the world. This mechanism did not take place in the case of Olsztyn. Briefly speaking, it can be assumed that the development of Olsztyn took place due to the increase of its significance in the settlement network of the voivodship within a short period of time (years 1950-2000). The town increased its area including rural areas (70% of a large village named Jaroty). It was planned to build a few separate districts but instead of this new areas were built in a sequence way and equipped better or worse with services. In this way some sums of money were saved but the cost of transport in such an area is higher because there are not sufficient transit roads (to Warsaw, Gdansk and Kalininograd).

The spatial structure of Olsztyn is specific. It consists of separate areas with differentiated features. The areas of green and waters (a river, few lakes) within the boundaries of the town are regarded as unique in the whole country. The municipal forest itself has got 1200 ha. The above mentioned factors decided about the broken land management structure.

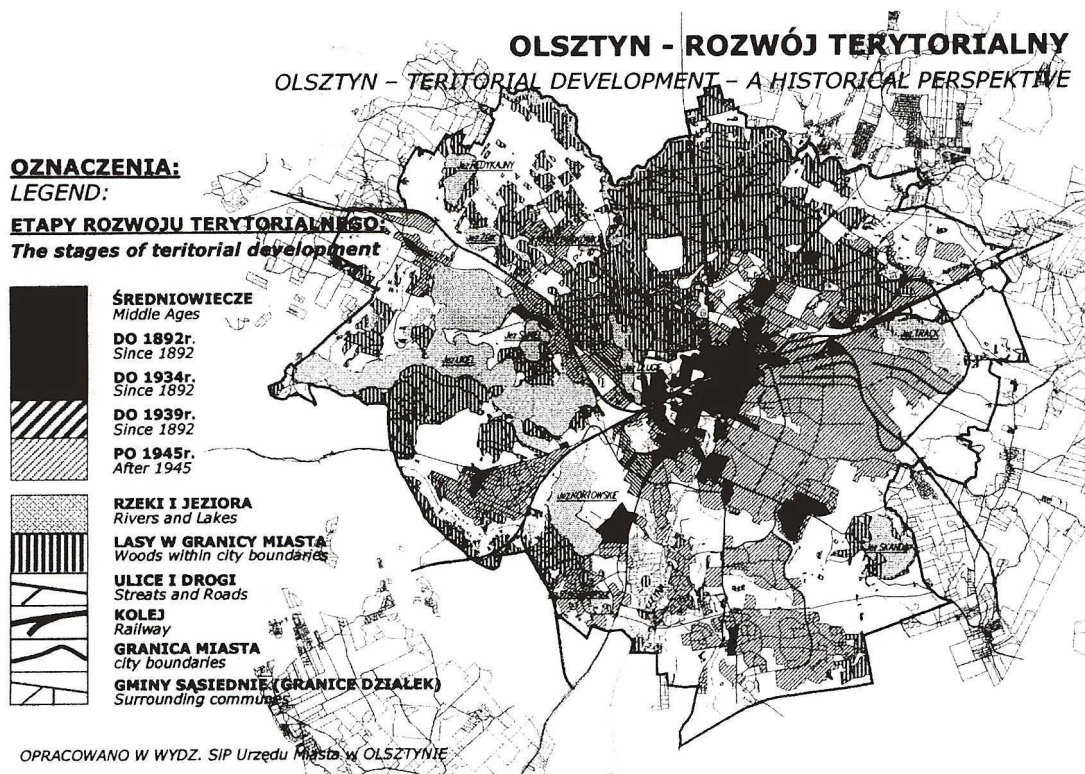


Fig. 1. Olsztyn – the territorial development – a historical perspective

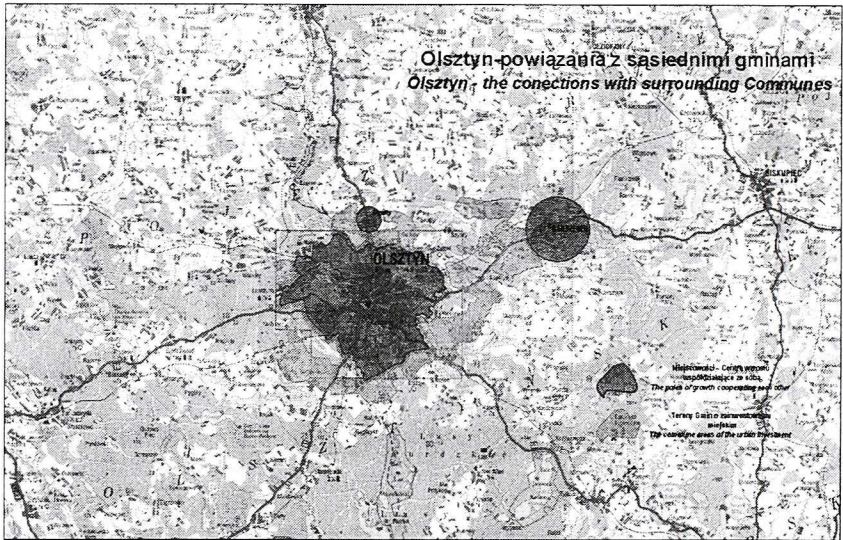


Fig. 2. Olsztyn – the connections with surrounding Communes

Separated spatial areas with a different specificity did not become independent poles of growth.

The campus of Warmian and Mazurian University can be regarded as spatially independent when the growth poles are identified in the structure of Olsztyn. It is territorially excluded, self administrated as far as communal economy and technical and social infrastructures are concerned. In its present functioning University is still not an independent growth pole but one of the spatial components of the town influencing the development and its importance.

One can ask a question: can one speak about the developmental poles of the town and if so, what can be considered as the poles? The answer is not typical – the growth poles are communes neighbouring directly Olsztyn (Jonkowo, Dywity, Barczewo, Stawiguda). They are not classic connections observed within shaped agglomeration but rather their preliminary phase.

Areas of the highest investment of these communes adjoin the boundaries of the town. Therefore an administrative belonging is not clear and one functional-spatial organism connected with the city is created. These processes increase – sometimes spontaneously causing conflict situations. Functional, infrastructure and economic dependencies cannot be fully regulated. Each commune has got its own land mana-

gement policy and the present regulations do not give any tools for coordination of land management policy of neighbouring communes and the communes neighbouring the town.

In the nearest future there is nothing that could indicate that rural growth poles of Olsztyn will become less significant. On the contrary – their present investment and significant differences in land and buildings prices (probable tax reduction) mean that the importance of these poles will increase. Taking these processes into consideration one can speak about the progress of creating the Olsztyn agglomeration, however, this process will take a long time.

It should be stated that the communes are the growth poles in competition with the city in spite of a big difference of an economic potentiality between them and the city. The communes take an advantage of investment conditions on the border with Olsztyn without taking into consideration its needs. An example of such an attitude is localization of the elements of municipal economy outside the city boundaries, for example a graveyard, water supply or an enterprise for wastes utilization, which causes protests although these objects could be used by both administrative units.

Urbanization processes leading to the creation of the Olsztyn agglomeration, as it was mentioned before, are in the preliminary phase. In a poorly urbanised region it concerns the places situated within the areas closest to Olsztyn, such as Barczewo and Dywity.

In both cases the factors slowing down full functional-spatial and economic integration is administrative separateness of these settlement units. As a result of all these factors and already created functional-spatial, infrastructural and economic relationships the connections between them are so strong that they could be suburban districts of Olsztyn.

Agglomeration character of these relationships towards towns within the influence of Olsztyn in the south reaching Olsztynek and the north Biskupiec and Dobrze Miasto has not been observed yet.

The suburban communes are attractive for the inhabitants of Olsztyn not only from the point of view recreation but the settlement as well. There is observed a tendency among the inhabitants of Olsztyn to settle outside Olsztyn and commute to work. This phenomenon is increasing and in the future technological advancement, computerization and the improvement of communication will influence it.

The last question concerns the problem if the above described growth poles will act in an antagonistic way or if they will cooperate.

The answer is not easy and the question cannot be answered basing on the research or analysis of the processes taking place. The authors think that in the case of Olsztyn the growth poles will act in an antagonistic way and that further development of the city might be spontaneous and even chaotic, regulated post factum.

The development of economic relationships of Warmian and Mazurian voivodship within Euroregions of the Baltic and the Niemen can accelerate agglomeration-forming processes in Olsztyn. Stronger economic relationships with other towns of the region will accelerate these processes.