

New towns in Poland

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1. Introduction

A unique feature of Poland's settlement network is its formal-legal dichotomy. The division into towns and villages, found in many countries, is traditional. However, in general the basis for the classification of a settlement into a particular category is arbitrary and vague. Some countries do not formally distinguish between towns and villages (for exam-

ple, in Spain and some Latin American countries); others apply only the criterion of size (cf. e.g. Liszewski, Maik, 2000; Szymańska, 2008, 2013), which is used mainly for statistical purposes; economic or physiognomic criteria are rarely used. There is also a group of countries in which there are three categories of settlements, such as Great Britain (city/town/village) and Russia, which delimits intermediate units between towns and villages (urban-type

settlement – *posyolok gorodskogo tipa*). Such a classification, modelled on the Soviet one, also used to be in force in Poland (1954-1972).

In Poland the basis for granting a settlement town status requires meeting a number of criteria, although in practice applied with some deviations (1). As a result, there are a number of very large villages in Poland with a population exceeding 10,000 inhabitants (e.g. Kozy near Bielsko-Biała, Koziegłowy near Poznań), and towns with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants (including Wyśmierzyce, Suraz, Działoszyce – all about 1,000).

The aim of this study is to characterise a group of new towns, i.e. villages which received municipal privileges in the past 35 years (after 1977). A specific turning point is associated with the reversal of the trend of transformation of the urban network. Until then, the process of changing the number of towns was bidirectional: many settlements, especially industrial, were granted municipal privileges for the first time, while a significant number of towns lost their independent status as a result of their inclusion within the boundaries of larger units. This process of incorporation, suppressed in 1977, was particularly intense in Upper Silesia. After 1977, the changes became unidirectional: municipal privileges are acquired by new settlement units, which is done either through upgrading formally rural settlements or by detaching previously incorporated towns from larger urban entities (2).

The meaning of the term ‘new town’ should be explained here. In the international literature it usually refers to towns of various origins founded in the 20th century, including satellite towns, industrial towns, garden cities and others – cf.: Milton Keynes and Stevenage in England (Whitehand, 1989), L’Isle d’Abeau in France (Labasse, 1989), Gdynia (Skupowa, 1989) and Nowa Huta in Poland (Górka, 1989). According to some scholars (cf. Straszewicz, 1989) this term may refer to towns founded deliberately and intentionally in various historical periods. Many Polish authors claim that the term ‘new towns’ may refer to those settlements that have obtained town status within the last 30-50 years (cf. Jelonek, 1989; Liszewski et al., 1989). They notice, however, some interpretation problems, for example resulting from repeated obtaining of town status by one settlement. In the post-war Polish literature identification of the ‘new towns’ based on the for-

mal-legal criterion is quite common (cf. Bagiński, 1993; Szymańska, 1993; Drobek, 2002; Krzysztofik, 2006; Sokołowski, 2008) and such a definition will be used in this article.

2. Criteria for granting municipal privileges

Obtaining the status of a town is currently linked to the fulfilment of certain criteria (3), substantially constant for decades, which can be categorised in the following way (cf. e.g. Szlachta, 1984; Drobek, 1999): (a) demographic – 2,000 inhabitants is a minimum, although in practice there are deviations from the rule; (b) spatial and urban planning (morphology) – including urban spatial layout and the character of development; the adoption of a development plan which provides for the development of the settlement; as well as an adequate level of technical and municipal infrastructure; (c) functional – appropriate institutions of supra-local functions, as well as the employment of at least two thirds of the population outside agriculture; (d) social – support of the local community. A historical criterion (possession of municipal privileges in the past) is complementary and not mandatory.

Distinguishing towns on the basis of a formal-legal criterion results in considerable inertia of the settlement system in Poland. It is based on the fact that a town does not usually lose its municipal privileges at a time when, for instance, its population falls below the set size threshold. In total, 48 towns do not meet the required population size (December 31, 2011), out of which 15 have fewer than 1,500 inhabitants. As many as 12 ‘new towns’ do not meet this required condition (including four with fewer than 1,500 inhabitants), which confirms the acceptance of deviations from the criterion in the decision-making process.

The controversial rulings are related to the use of morphological criteria which cannot be quantified. The condition for granting municipal privileges is possessing a developed urban centre with a compact structure of buildings of urban character. An urban layout with a market and a regular grid of streets is preferred. However, some industrial settlements, or large settlements being part of a larger

agglomeration, have been raised to the rank of town although they do not have an urban layout. Examples include Czarna Woda in Pomorskie voivodship, Głinojeck (Mazowieckie voivodship), Olszyna and Siechnice (Dolnośląskie voivodship), where the buildings form loose aggregations of blocks of flats and houses. Amorphous spatial structure is typical of the settlements which did not have municipal privileges in the past.

3. Changes in the number of towns in Poland

Until the 18th century the collection of towns in Poland had been increasing quite steadily, although individual parts of the country experienced their peak urban development in different periods of time. For example, most of the towns in Silesia were founded in the 13th century, in the Wielkopolska Region and Małopolska Region in the 14th and 15th centuries, while the areas in the eastern part of the country recorded the highest number of urban locations in the 16th century (cf. Bogucka, Samsonowicz, 1986). Profound transformation of the urban network took place during the period of the partitions, but it had the opposite direction: a few hundred towns lost their municipal privileges and were degraded to the rank of village.

In 1815-1827 the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland deprived 22 towns of their municipal privileges for economic reasons (e.g. they could not afford to pay the mayor's wages). At the same time, municipal privileges were granted to eight urban settlements. In the landmark year 1869 as many as 338 out of 452 towns were deprived of their municipal privileges by an imperial edict (cf. Polish Towns in the Millennium, 1965). This was justified by the need to reorganise the urban network. However, the Polish people have interpreted this act as a manifestation of the repressive policy of the tsarist regime after the fall of the January Uprising. In the current territory of Poland there are still about 200 villages which lost their municipal privileges in the years 1869-1870.

Also the independent Poland repeatedly degraded towns, the largest numbers being in the following years: (a) 1919 – 18 towns, including 15 in the current Podkarpackie voivodship; from this group municipal

privileges were regained in recent years by Narol; (b) 1934 – 45 towns, including 15 in the Małopolskie voivodship, 8 – Podkarpackie voivodship, 14 – Wielkopolskie voivodship; recently municipal privileges were regained by: Alwernia, Bobowa, Brzostek, Ciężkowice, Czchów, Nowy Wiśnicz, Obrzycko, Pruchnik, Ryglice, Szczucin, Wojnicz, and Zakliczyn; (c) 1945 – 66 towns, mainly in the Recovered Territories (including 20 in the Dolnośląskie voivodship, 16 – Lubuskie voivodship, 10 – Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship) and 8 in the Podkarpackie voivodship, out of which 12 towns had regained their municipal privileges by 1973, and another 12 after 1977: Korfańtów, Lubniewice, Miłakowo, Miłomłyn, Młynary, Nowogród Bobrzański, Oleszyce, Sośnicowice, Świerzawa, Torzym, Wąsosz, and Zalewo; (d) 1946-1951 – 13 towns, out of which eight have regained town status since 1980: Kiselice, Kleszczele, Krynki, Miasteczko Śląskie, Pasym, Prusice, Suchowola and Tykocin; (e) 1972-1973 – four towns.

For the record, it is also worth noting the periods of substantial expansion of the set of towns. These were the years immediately after Poland regained independence (1919-1923) when town status was restored by many settlements degraded in the years 1869-1870, as well as the 1950s and 1960s, when the importance of many urban settlements, mainly spas and industrial estates, was upgraded by giving them municipal privileges. Also the last three decades were filled with granting municipal privileges; most newly upgraded towns are previously degraded units.

Since 1977, no town in Poland has been degraded to village rank. The last towns which were deprived of municipal privileges in 1973 were Miasteczko Krajeńskie, Łędyczek and Sulmierzyce – all in the Wielkopolskie voivodship. A bizarre case is Sulmierzyce, which nine months after it lost municipal privileges was able to get them back. Such inconsistency in decision-making is due to, among others, lack of strict criteria specified (Drobek, 1999; Sokołowski, 1999).

Currently (2013), there are 908 towns in Poland, including 106 new towns which were administratively created after 1977. The most creative period in these terms was the decade of the 1990s: in the years 1990 to 1998 as many as 50 new towns were created (1980-1989 – 22 towns, 2000-2009 – 23 towns, since 2010 – 11 towns) – (Table 1).

Table 1. List of settlements promoted to the category of towns (1978-2013)

Town	Genetic type	The last year when a town obtained municipal privileges	Possessing earlier municipal privileges	Population (2011)
Dolnośląskie voivodship				
Świerzawa	R	1984	1295 to 1945	2,411
Wąsosz	R	1984	approx. 1250 to 1945	2,809
Jelcz-Laskowice	N	1987	-	15,858
Siechnice	N	1997	-	5,544
Prusice	R	2000	1287 to 1951	2,303
Olszyna	N	2005	-	4,493
Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship				
Skępe	R	1997	1445 do 1870	3,691
Piotrków Kujawski	R	1998	1738 do 1870	4,498
Lubelskie voivodship				
Tarnogród	R	1987	1567 to 1867	3,461
Józefów	R	1988	1725 to 1870	2,532
Zwierzyniec	N	1990	-	3,371
Piaski	R	1993	before 1456 to 1870	2,724
Frampol	R	1993	1736 to 1870	1,488
Krasnobród	R	1994	1576 to 1870	3,107
Annopol	R	1996	1761 to 1870	2,664
Tyszowce	R	2000	before 1419 to 1870	2,209
Łaszczów	R	2010	1549 to 1870	2,205
Lubuskie voivodship				
Nowogród Bobrzański	R	1988	1238 to 1945	5,151
Torzym	R	1994	approx. 1375 to 1945	2,535
Lubniewice	R	1995	1808 to 1945	2,032
Łódzkie voivodship				
Drzewica	R	1987	1429 to 1870	4,012
Działoszyń	R	1994	before 1412 to 1870	6,287
Kamieńsk	R	1994	1374 to 1870	2,899
Rzgów	R	2006	1467 to 1870	3,416
Wolbórz	R	2011	1273 to 1870	2,366
Małopolskie voivodship				
Skała	R	1987	1262 to 1870	3,753
Alwernia	R	1993	1903 to 1934	3,439
Nowy Wiśnicz	R	1994	1616 to 1934	2,768
Świątniki Górne	N	1997	-	2,313
Ciężkowice	R	1998	1348 to 1934	2,493
Czchów	R	2000	before 1333 to 1934	2,377
Ryglice	R	2001	1781 to 1934	2,881
Zakliczyn	R	2006	1558 to 1934	1,640
Wojnicz	R	2007	1278 to 1934	3,410
Bobowa	R	2009	1339 to 1934	3,011
Szczucin	R	2009	1745 to 1934	4,193
Radłów	R	2010	19 th C to 1919	2,734
Nowe Brzesko	R	2011	1279 to 1870	1,669
Mazowieckie voivodship				
Piława	N	1984	-	4,326
Łomianki	N	1989	-	16,481
Myszyniec	R	1993	1791 to 1870	3,117
Głinojeck	N	1993	-	3,168
Biezuń	R	1994	1406 to 1870	1,939
Drobin	R	1994	1351 to 1869	2,999
Kosów Lacki	R	2000	1723 to 1869	2,187
Halinów	N	2001	-	3,567
Tarczyn	R	2003	1353 to 1870	4,091
Opolskie voivodship				
Korfantów	R	1993	15 th C to 1945	1,922
Prószków	R	2004	1560 to 1915	2,600
Podkarpackie voivodship				
Oleszyce	R	1989	approx. 1576 to 1794	3,146
Narol	R	1996	1592 to 1919	2,097

Boguchwała	R	2008	1728 to 1772	5,900
Brzostek	R	2009	1394 to 1934	2,655
Końce	R	2010	1354 to 1919	1,462
Przeclaw	R	2010	1471 to 1919	1,652
Pruchnik	R	2011	1436? to 1934	3,689
Podlaskie voivodship				
Lipsk	R	1983	1580 to 1870	2,509
Tykocin	R	1993	1425 to 1950	2,002
Kleszczele	R	1993	16 th C to 1950	1,377
Suchowola	R	1997	1775 to 1950	2,273
Michałow	R	2009	1832 to 1918	3,206
Krynki	R	2009	1509 to 1950	2,554
Szepietowo	N	2010	-	2,320
Czyżew	R	2011	1775 to 1870	2,625
Pomorskie voivodship				
Brusy	N	1988	-	5,001
Żukowo	N	1989	-	6,463
Krynica Morska	N	1991	-	1,353
Czarna Woda	N	1993	-	3,300
Śląskie voivodship				
Poreba ¹	S	1982	1973 to 1975	8,899
Śląsk ²	S (R)	1984	1286 to 1869, 1958 to 1977	7,124
Bieruń ³	S (R)	1991	1387 to 1743, 1865 to 1975	19,830
Lędziny ³	S	1991	1966 to 1975	16,605
Rydułtowy ⁴	S	1992	1951 to 1975	22,083
Wojkowice ⁵	S	1993	1962 to 1977	9,193
Pilica	R	1994	before 1394 to 1870	1,946
Imielin ⁶	S	1995	1967 to 1975	8,402
Miasteczko Śląskie ⁷	S (R)	1995	1561 to 19 th C, 1866 to 1946,	7,510
			1963 to 1975	
Pszów ⁸	S	1995	1954 to 1975	14,343
Sośnicowice	R	1996	1506 to 1742, 1853 to 1945	1,853
Radlin ⁹	S	1997	1954 to 1975	18,074
Radzionków ¹⁰	S	1998	1951 to 1975	17,187
Krzyszów	R	2001	1265 to 1874	2,235
Świętokrzyskie voivodship				
Połaniec	R	1980	1264 to 1870	8,406
Ożarów	R	1988	1569 to 1870	4,798
Kunów	R	1990	1365 to 1867	3,165
Sędziszów	N	1990	-	6,703
Bodzentyn	R	1995	1413 to 1870	2,320
Osiek	R	1994	1430 to 1870	1,991
Wąchock	R	1994	1454 to 1864	2,912
Małogoszcz	R	1996	before 1342 to 1870	3,979
Koprzywnica	R	2001	1262 to 1870	2,604
Daleszyce	R	2007	1569 to 1869	2,957
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship				
Młynary	R	1984	14 th C to 1945	1,868
Kisielice	R	1986	1293 to 1946	2,187
Zalewo	R	1987	1305 to 1945	2,224
Pasym	R	1997	1386 to 1946	2,538
Miłakowo	R	1998	1323 to 1945	2,727
Miłomłyn	R	1998	1335 to 1945	2,425
Wielkopolskie voivodship				
Obrzycko	R	1990	1638 to 1934	2,363
Nekla	R	2000	1725 to 1793	3,566
Zachodniopomorskie voivodship				
Międzyzdroje ¹¹	S	1984	1945 to 1973	5,594
Golczewo	N	1990	-	2,746
Borne Sulinowo	N	1993	-	4,844
Dziwnów	N	2004	-	2,846
Tychowo	N	2010	-	2,491
Gościno	N	2011	-	2,475

Explanation: Footnotes: ¹ 1975-1982 part of Zawiercie, ² 1977-1984 part of Dąbrowa Górnicza, ³ 1975-1991 part of Tychy, ⁴ 1975-1992 part of Wodzisław Śląski, ⁵ 1977-1991 part of Będzin, ⁶ 1975-1977 part of Tychy, 1977-1994 part of Mysłowice, ⁷ 1975-1994 part of Tarnowskie Góry, ⁸ 1975-1994 part of Wodzisław Śląski, ⁹ 1975-1996 part of Wodzisław Śląski, ¹⁰ 1975-1997 part of Bytom, ¹¹ 1973-1983 part of Świnoujście

Source: Compiled by the author based on: *Miasta polskie w tysiącleciu* (1965), *Powierzchnia i ludność w przekroju terytorialnym w 2012 r.*, Journals of Laws (1980-2010) and other sources

the towns which had municipal privileges in the past have a distinctive spatial arrangement, they formed ties with their rural hinterland, and the awareness of the local villagers (and the townspeople themselves)

is well-established. Settlements having no historically established urbanity generally do not have these characteristics, thus they are considered as towns once reaching a 'surplus' population (5).

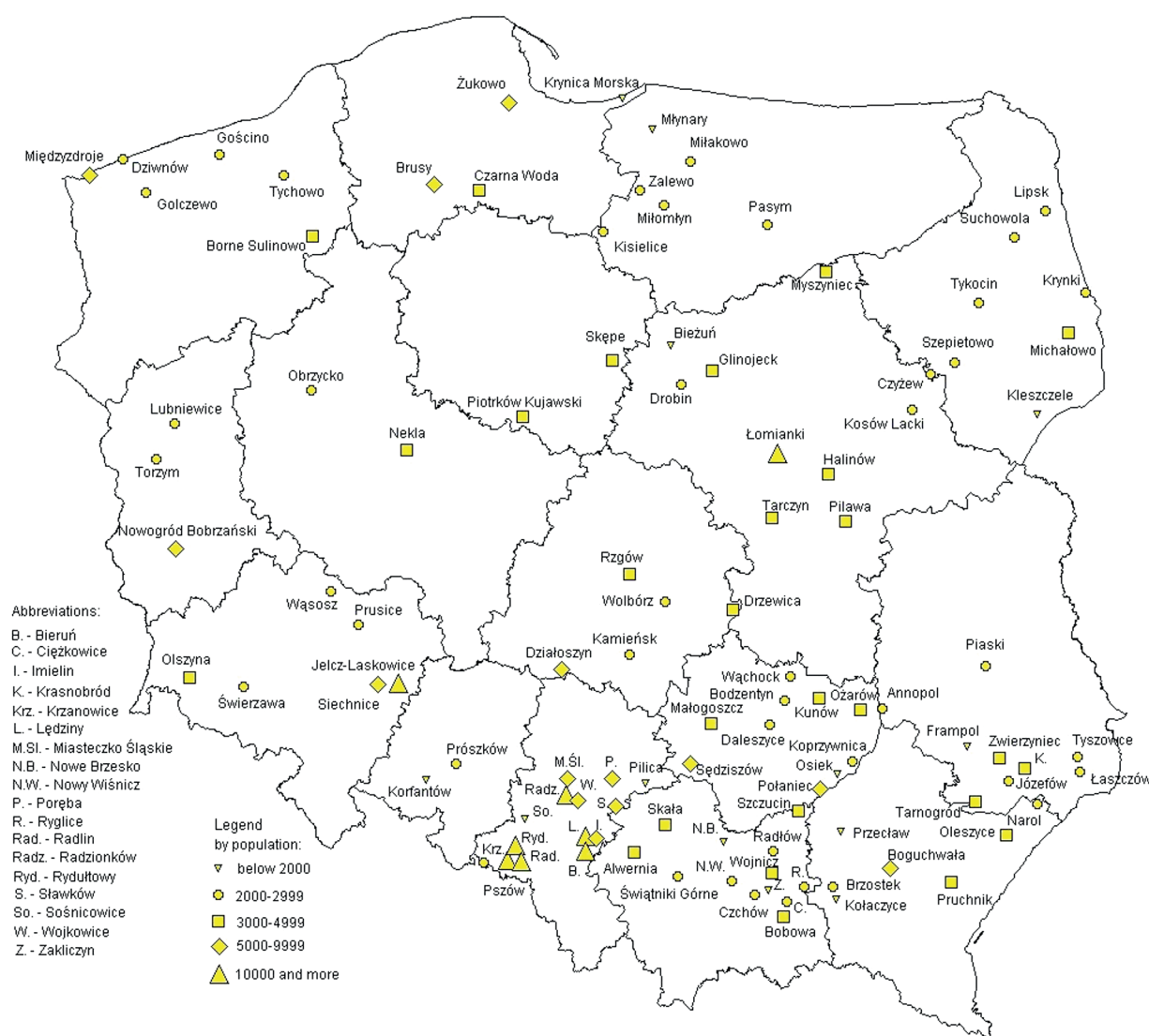


Fig. 2. New towns in Poland (created in 1978-2013) by their population

Source: Compiled by the author based on GUS data

The newly created towns are distributed unevenly. Their largest concentration is in the southeastern voivodships: Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie, Małopolskie, Podkarpackie and Śląskie (in the latter case, these are mainly the towns which have become independent as a result of the exclusion from larger urban units). The lowest number is in the central and western part of the country (for example only two new towns in the Wielkopolskie voivodship).

It is worth noting that change of settlement status (village → town) is usually motivated by ambition related to the 'prestige' of a town (cf. Siemiński, 1991; Drobek, 1999; Sokołowski, 1999). It is also easier to promote a town than a village, according to the opinions of many local communities. The reasons are more complex in cases of succession of towns, mostly highly industrialised, where an important role is played by local interests and conflicts.

When analysing the process of creating new towns in Poland, one can notice that the locations are rarely isolated. Instead, usually a group of several settlements located close to each other is awarded town status during a short period of time (usually with several years' intervals), which suggests that a particular stimulus is spread within neighbouring communities. This phenomenon has already been noticed in the literature and attempts have been made to explain it based on the model of the diffusion of innovation (Łoboda, 1983). Diffusive expansion of urban settlement outside Poland was explained e.g. by Mularczyk (1997), and in Poland (the process of granting town privileges), by Krzysztofik (2006).

The study, however, does not focus on the bottom-up motivation, but rather on the external conditions. From the point of view of the government, which decides to accept or reject an application, it is important if a given settlement meets certain quantitative and qualitative criteria, but also the regional/local density of towns within the settlement network appears to be a significant criterion. The latter factor may explain why many settlements achieve town status in regions of sparse urban network, e.g. in Lubuskie voivodship (where there are no obstacles for the diffusion of innovation), while very few are promoted in regions saturated with towns, e.g. in Wielkopolskie voivodship.

Based on that, a thesis may be formulated that the following factors influence the distribution of new towns in Poland: (a) diverse aspirations of local communities – some believe the promotion efforts are useless as they do not see tangible benefits of becoming a town (6), while others treat the matter ambitiously, especially in the case when a nearby settlement is promoted (that factor will not be included in the statistical analysis); (b) regional differences in the density of the urban network; (c) different number of potential towns, mainly due to the number of degraded towns.

4. Some factors influencing the creation of new towns

The above are some factors that contribute to the creation of new towns. In this section, an attempt

was made to verify the hypotheses related to this phenomenon.

The first hypothesis concerns the filling of the urban network in order to level the interregional disparities. It is assumed that the process of creating new towns is associated with the following:

1. urban network density (lower density → more new towns – expected negative correlation),
2. saturation of urban settlement network (lower percentage of urban gminas → more new towns – expected negative correlation).

The second hypothesis relates to the 'supply' of former towns, which are particularly suited to a formal-legal promotion. Creating new towns is associated with the following:

3. number (density) of former towns (higher density of former towns network → higher density of new towns – expected positive correlation).

Ad. 1. The coefficient of linear correlation between the urban network density (7) in the initial year (1978) and the increase in its density $r = -0.211$. In a small number of units ($N = 16$) this value is not statistically significant, but the trend seems to support the hypothesis. Additionally, the degree of differentiation of the urban network density in the set of regions was assessed. The coefficient of variation (ratio of standard deviation and arithmetic mean) for 1978 was 39.1%, while for 2013, 34.1%. Bridging the interregional disproportions confirms the correctness of the hypothesis.

It is worth noting that the largest increase in the urban network density was reported in Małopolskie and Świętokrzyskie voivodship (0.85-0.86 on 1,000 km²), and, taking into account the dynamics of change, also in Lubelskie and Podlaskie voivodship (25% or more). So far, a small density of towns is still recorded in eastern voivodships: Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie (1.67-2.03 towns on 1,000 km²), while the Świętokrzyskie voivodship has left the group (density increased from 1.79 to 2.65), approaching the national average (2.90 on 1,000 km²).

Ad. 2 Saturation of the settlement network with towns (8) in 1978 (Table 3) negatively correlates with the growth of this index over the period 1978-2013, expressed in percentage points: $r = -0.434$. Demonstrating that in the less saturated voivodships more new towns appear confirms the hypothesis. More-

over, the corresponding reduction in interregional disparities has been reported: the coefficient of var-

iation of the ratio declined between 1978 and 2013 from 33.1 to 27. 6%.

Table 2. Data used to verify hypothesis 1

Voivodship	A	B	C	D		E	
				a	b	c	d
Dolnośląskie	19,947	91	6	4.26	4.56	0.30	107
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	17,971	52	2	2.78	2.89	0.11	104
Lubelskie	25,122	42	9	1.31	1.67	0.36	127
Lubuskie	13,988	42	3	2.79	3.00	0.21	108
Łódzkie	18,219	44	5	2.14	2.42	0.27	113
Małopolskie	15,183	61	13	3.16	4.02	0.86	127
Mazowieckie	35,558	85	9	2.14	2.39	0.25	112
Opolskie	9,412	35	2	3.51	3.72	0.21	106
Podkarpackie	17,846	50	7	2.41	2.80	0.39	116
Podlaskie	20,187	40	8	1.59	1.98	0.40	125
Pomorskie	18,310	42	4	2.08	2.29	0.22	111
Śląskie	12,333	71	3 ^a	5.51	5.76	0.24	104
Świętokrzyskie	11,711	31	10	1.79	2.65	0.85	148
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	24,173	49	6	1.78	2.03	0.25	114
Wielkopolskie	29,827	109	2	3.59	3.65	0.07	102
Zachodniopomorskie	22,892	64	5 ^a	2.58	2.80	0.22	108

Explanation: ^a without the S group cities; A – area km²; B – cities and towns (2013); C – new towns (1978-2013); D – urban network density on 1000 km²; E – urban network density increase (1978-2013); a – 1978; b – 2013; c – on 1000 km²; d – 1978=100

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 3. Data used to verify hypotheses 2 and 3

Voivodship	A		B	C		D	E	
	1978	2013		1978	2013		number	on 1000 km ²
Dolnośląskie	85	91	78	50.3	53.8	3.6	8	0.40
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	50	52	92	34.7	36.1	1.4	7	0.39
Lubelskie	33	42	171	15.5	19.7	4.2	49	1.95
Lubuskie	39	42	41	47.0	50.6	3.6	10	0.71
Łódzkie	39	44	133	22.0	24.9	2.8	24	1.32
Małopolskie	48	61	121	26.4	33.5	7.1	20	1.32
Mazowieckie	76	85	229	24.2	27.1	2.9	36	1.01
Opolskie	33	35	36	46.5	49.3	2.8	3	0.32
Podkarpackie	43	50	110	26.9	31.3	4.4	25	1.40
Podlaskie	32	40	78	27.1	33.9	6.8	24	1.19
Pomorskie	38	42	81	30.9	34.1	3.3	1	0.05
Śląskie	68 ^a	71	96	40.7	42.5	1.8	7	0.57
Świętokrzyskie	21	31	71	20.6	30.4	9.8	25	2.13
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	43	49	67	37.1	42.2	5.2	11	0.46
Wielkopolskie	107	109	117	47.3	48.2	0.9	28	0.94
Zachodniopomorskie	59 ^a	64	50	51.8	56.1	4.4	3	0.13

Explanation: ^a without the S group cities; A – gminas with towns (urban and urban-rural); B – rural gminas (2013); C – participation of gminas with towns in the total number of gminas (%); D – increase in percentage points (1978-2013); E – degraded towns with gmina rank, >1,000 inhabitants (1978)

Source: Compiled by the author

Based on the data from Table 3 a group of voivodships with highly dynamic changes can be distinguished: Świętokrzyskie, Małopolskie and Podlaskie, where the share of gminas with towns increased by 6.8-9.8 percentage points in the years 1978-2013. In all these voivodships the percentage of *gminas* was the lowest in 1978 (below 30%).

Ad. 3 According to the hypothesis 3 new towns arise primarily in the areas of the 'supply-side', i.e. where the number of degraded towns is the greatest. Since the majority of new towns are recruited from this category, we are entitled to conclude that it is a group of settlements with special prerequisites for promotion. Table 3 includes former towns which have at least 1,000 inhabitants, and at the same time are the seats of gminas. The correlation between the density of the network of degraded towns and the density of the network of the settlements promoted to the rank of town is positive and high: $r = 0.652$. This allows the positive verification of the hypothesis of a positive impact of the 'supply-side' factor on the process of creating new towns in Poland.

5. Summary

The Polish settlement pattern is characterised by a formal-legal dichotomy, despite the strong variation of settlements along the rural-urban continuum scale. Some settlements, after reaching a certain level of development of urban characteristics, achieve town status. As applying for this status to the government is a grass-root initiative, it should be regarded primarily as a sign of the ambitions of local communities. Justification of the urban network expansion to some extent stems from the variation in the density of the network of towns and involves aligning regional disparities – which was verified above. This is related to another factor, defined as the 'supply-side'. This is due to the fact that in the regions where a large number of units were deprived of town status in the past, currently the urban network is less dense, and – at the same time – there is a significant number of potential towns.

In subsequent years, the urban network will continue growing. The list of potential candidates to obtain municipal privileges is long (cf. e.g. Drobek,

1999; Sokołowski, 1999, 2008; Heffner, 2008). Former towns (type R), by virtue of their origin, urban development and functions, have the best chance for a change of status. The process of granting municipal privileges must be slowed down with time due to the limited capacity of the settlement network. Such a situation already exists in some areas: for example, in the southern part of the Wielkopolskie voivodship the seats of almost all gminas are towns.

The second group of candidates for municipal privileges are significant centres of agricultural services or specialised centres (industry, tourism) performing the functions of small towns to the areas deprived of degraded towns (type N). Their assets include a relatively strong economic base and a significant population – on average they are almost twice as large as those promoted from the previous group (Łomianki and Jelcz-Laskowice from this group have more than 15,000 inhabitants). The weakness of these settlements is the lack of urban planning system and weak links with their hinterland. This group also includes holiday or spa resorts, such as the recently promoted Dziwnów and Krynica Morska. The number of such candidates is small and is limited to a few coastal towns (e.g. Mielno, Ustronie Morskie), or those lying in the lake districts (9) (e.g. Sierakowice, Wydminy).

Notes

- (1) The significant role of the historic factor needs to be stressed here.
- (2) Wesoła was the only town incorporated to Warsaw in 2002.
- (3) The Law of the gmina self-government, as of 8 March 1990 (Chapter 1, Art. 4, Par. 4), formulates the criteria very generally: 'Granting a gmina or a settlement town status, delimiting its borders and their changes takes into consideration social and technical infrastructure as well as the urban layout and the character of the buildings.'
- (4) This includes three towns which had municipal privileges before the incorporation (Sławków, Bieruń and Miasteczko Śląskie).
- (5) Borne Sulinowo and Krynica Morska are exceptions to this rule.

- (6) Concluded based on interviews.
- (7) The calculations did not consider the towns delimited from larger urban units (group S) motivated by other conditions. Eleven out of 12 cases of such towns are concentrated in the strongly urbanised Upper Silesian Industrial Region (Fig. 2).
- (8) Calculated as a percentage of *gminas* with towns (i.e. urban and urban-rural *gminas*) in the total number of *gminas*.
- (9) Potentially the towns in mountainous regions generally represent the type R.

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