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CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL TOWN SQUARES IN THE POZNAŃ AGGLOMERATION – EXAMPLES AND ANALOGIES

CHARAKTERYSTYKA RYNKÓW W AGLOMERACJI POZNAŃSKIEJ – PRZYKŁADY I ANALOGIE MIĘDZY REALIZACJAMI HISTORYCZNYMI I WSPÓŁCZESNYMI

Abstract

Market squares are important places, deeply rooted in the structure of the city and in the consciousness of its inhabitants, due to their functional and compositional values, as well as importance in shaping social relations. Since ancient times they have been central spaces of cities and in the majority of preserved examples they still play their unique role.

In recent years traditional urban functions have been split up, as a result of dynamic transformations of Polish cities and intensive suburbanisation. ‘Bedroom communities’ are not only excessively distant from the central city core, but are often deprived of the potential to create proper social and spatial relations.

The paper presents an analysis of new town squares created in the Poznań agglomeration. Particular attention was paid to their references to historical layouts and to their role in shaping the spatial cohesion of suburban areas.

Keywords: market square, town square, urban structure, Poznań agglomeration

Streszczenie

Rynki to ugruntowane w świadomości mieszkańców i w strukturze miasta miejsca ważne ze względu na walory funkcjonalne, kompozycyjne i znaczenie w kształtowaniu relacji społecznych. Od starożytności stanowiły centralne przestrzenie miast i w przeważającej liczbie zachowanych przykładów swoją wyjątkową rolę pełnią po dziś dzień.

W ostatnich latach, w wyniku dynamicznych przekształceń polskich miast oraz intensywnej suburbanizacji tradycyjne funkcje miejskie ulegają rozszepieniu. Żywiolowa rozbudowa osiedli mieszkaniowych powoduje zaburzenie historycznych struktur urbanistycznych. „Podmiejskie sypialnie” są nie tylko nadmiernie oddalone od „miejskiego salonu”, ale wielokrotnie pozbawione potencjału kształtowania właściwych relacji społecznych i przestrzennych.

W artykule podjęto próbę analizy nowych rynków powstałych na obszarze aglomeracji poznańskiej. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na cechy tych realizacji w odniesieniu do układów historycznych, a także na ich rolę w kształtowaniu spójności przestrzennej terenów podmiejskich.

Słowa kluczowe: rynek, plac miejski, struktura urbanistyczna, aglomeracja poznańska

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1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of urban planning, contemporary market squares are representative, undeveloped squares set in historically and functionally important areas of cities. Due to their importance and central location, they serve as the stage for a rich urban life, including social, cultural and national events. Such places require a suitable architectural setting. In cities with a long history, building frontages in market squares reflect the changes that have taken place over the years, caused not only by the evolution of epochs and architectural styles, but also by transformation of political systems and accumulation of cultural heritage of the residents. Such spaces, due to their visual characteristics, but also their social and cultural value, become an element which shapes the identity of a city or even a region.

The authors of this article wonder whether the artificial incorporation of new market squares into the disorderly urban tissue, observed in the recent years in the Poznań agglomeration, contributes to solving functional and structural problems in places which had been deprived of such central spaces.

In the face of spontaneous suburbanization, which results in ubiquitous spatial disarray and deterioration of the urban landscape, the authors seek a remedy for neglect in the area of spatial planning.

2. SUBJECT MATTER JUSTIFICATION

The dynamics of changes taking place in cities gained momentum in the second half of the 20th century due to the damage caused during World War II. The architecture and urban planning of the socialist era was not devoid of serious flaws, but it had its own principles and objectives. Usually they depended on centrally adopted general plans³.

The turn of the 20th and 21st century brought a new chapter in the history of transformations of existing urban structures. Demographic changes and systemic reforms caused an increase in demand not only for new buildings, but also a change in human needs and requirements concerning broadly-defined living space. The disappearance of spatial planning combined with uncontrolled spatial development of cities and 'spilling-over' suburban zones⁴ caused the scale of transformations to overwhelm and degrade the role of existing urban structures. Spontaneous development of residential construction has led to a disturbance of the existing scale and form of the city and a devaluation of its significance for its residents.

The Poznań agglomeration, consisting of the city of Poznań and 22 neighbouring counties and municipalities⁵ is no exception in terms of the size and dynamics of the transfor-

³ Kowalewski A., Nowak M. J., *Chaos przestrzenny i prawo: uwarunkowania, procesy, skutki, rekomendacje*, Komitet Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju PAN, Warszawa 2018, p. 30–34.

⁴ Spatial disarray in suburban areas is caused by a lack of spatial development strategies of Polish municipalities. They were unable to cope with the consequences of political transformations, as a result of which the burden of space organization was transferred to local government units: Jędraszko A., *Gospodarka przestrzenna w Polsce wobec standardów europejskich*, Urbanistyka, Warszawa 2008; Kajdanek K., *Suburbanizacja po polsku*, Nomos, Kraków 2012, p. 15.

⁵ It is assumed that the Poznań agglomeration covers the area of Poznań and 22 counties and municipalities comprising – on the basis of agreements signed in 2007 and 2008 – the Poznań Agglomeration

mations taking place. The dynamically developing capital of Wielkopolska for many years has been attracting students and employees, who settle down permanently in the city and on its outskirts. The beginning of the political transformation was a time when the process of depopulation of the centre of Poznań and migration of residents to the peripheral and suburban area began. This increased relocation of people causes many adverse economic, environmental, infrastructural and spatial effects.

The dream of having a house with a garden in a quiet area forced city residents to move outside the city centre⁶. So-called bedrooms have been established in the suburban area, located far from workplaces, cultural centres, recreation and entertainment. Traffic generated in this way, mainly involving passenger cars, made it difficult and time-consuming to get to one's place of residence. In this situation, measures have been taken to recreate some of the urban functions within the new residential zones. In this way, the basic needs of people accustomed to the attractions of the big city were satisfied. However, they do not seem to be sufficient to ensure proper functioning of such localities. Upon public initiative attempts have been made in some areas to repair the structure of towns that have lost their original form and functionality as a result of their chaotic and unplanned expansion. The solution to these problems, which has the potential to restore order in the disorderly urban structure, introduce missing functions and integrate the local community may be a market square.

In the Poznań agglomeration, apart from Poznań, 13 cities⁷ have market squares that are historically linked to their urban structure. In the 21st century, this number has increased by another 4 towns and cities, which have enriched their space with structures assumed to serve as a market square. Interestingly, as a result of these activities, public spaces have ceased to be only characteristic of cities, but they also started to appear in villages near Poznań, such as Przeźmierowo or Plewiska. The final result of these projects can now be assessed from the perspective of similar historical initiatives, by comparing the objectives set and the effect achieved.

3. METHOD AND TEST SAMPLE

The aim of the study is to evaluate the results of the activities of local authorities which have decided to improve the values of their localities by introducing market squares. It can be assumed that the intention of the investors was to repair the disorderly structure of towns and villages, to increase the rank of the space, to diversify/separate functional areas and to provide the residents of the public space with a possibility to hold cultural events. The study focused on an assessment of the architectural and urban value of newly emerging market squares based on the characteristics of historical assumptions. Literature research was carried out to determine what design parameters determined their shape and location. A case study was then carried out to identify the contemporary characteristics of historical

Council. Another equivalent concept limits the territory of the agglomeration to the area of Poznań and 17 municipalities of the Poznań County.

⁶ KajdaneK K., *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁷ Bnin was a private noble town which received its urban charter in 1935. It retained its urban rights until 1934, when it became a village again in the newly established municipality of Bnin. After the war, Bnin was not separated as a separate territorial unit and now constitutes the southern district of Kórnik.

and recent structures. A critical analysis of the parameters will make it possible to assess the results of the transformations carried out in the various localities and to determine the possibility of repairing the urban fabric by introducing new public spaces.

The study included 18 market squares in the Poznań agglomeration, 13 of which are historical structures. One example dates back to the twentieth century and is the central element of 'large panel' housing developments. The latest designs come from the 21st century and have been added to the developing structures of cities and villages. Due to a small number of such examples, no other sample selection criteria were adopted than the city's/town's location within the Poznań agglomeration.

4. GENESIS OF THE EMERGENCE OF TOWN/MARKET SQUARES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE SHAPING THE URBAN STRUCTURE

The first town squares were established in ancient times. Their earliest form was a temple courtyard connected to processional streets as a tribute to worshiped deities. An orderly urban structure with a space for social activities and services was introduced by the Greek culture. In town squares from that period, the agora was an open space for all residents. *The place in the very heart of Athens was built in such a way that it reflected the Greek philosophy of good life. Surrounded by temples, monuments, court buildings and government offices, the agora was a real public space where both commercial goods and ideas were freely exchanged*⁸.

The development of Greek cities has influenced the specific character, transformation and addition of new public spaces within them. The Romans also adopted the geometric urban planning grid. Squares built in cities based on a Roman-camp plan were located at the intersection of the main axes, oriented towards specific directions of the world. The purpose of the Roman Forum was to ensure that the authorities were properly represented.

In modern times, the establishment of urban units was a result of the development of smaller settlements or was connected with existing trade routes. Finally the boom in the Middle Ages caused a revolution in the rules of constructing cities by introducing rigorous laws of their location. Due to the often chaotic shape of the existing structures, the granting of city rights was connected with a need to establish new settlements on so-called 'raw roots' and to relocate the population to that area. In the Middle Ages, the main element of such structures was a square – or rectangular-shaped market square. Its location was linked to the location of the main roads, in particular those of a high commercial importance. Connections between a town and trade routes were the basis for the town's further development and generated income for both the ruler and the residents. The town square was surrounded by structural blocks forming its urban walls. The ground floor of the buildings housed stalls and workshops with arcades to conduct business in adverse weather conditions. As it was the case in the developing cities of ancient times, the flourishing trade and services led to the creation of new spaces for specialized use, but also resulted in the formation of mid-market-

⁸ Montgomery Ch., *Miasto szczęśliwe. Jak zmienić nasze życie, zmieniając nasze miasta*, Wysoki Zamek, Kraków 2015, p. 38.



1a.



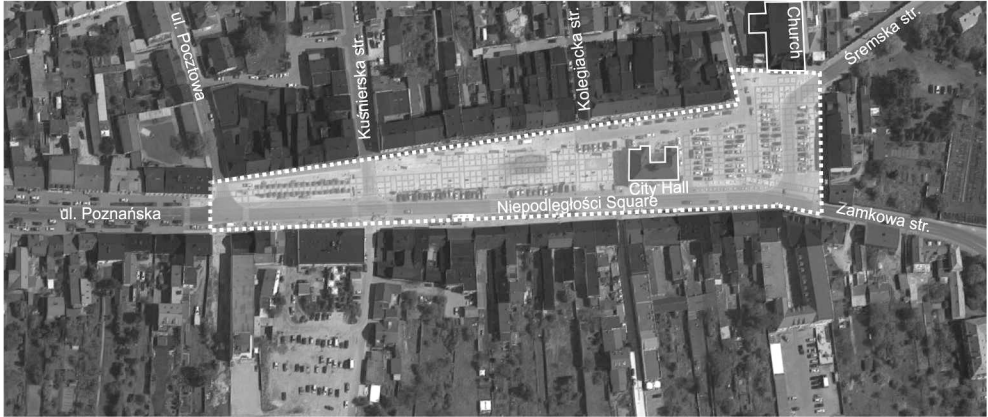
2a.



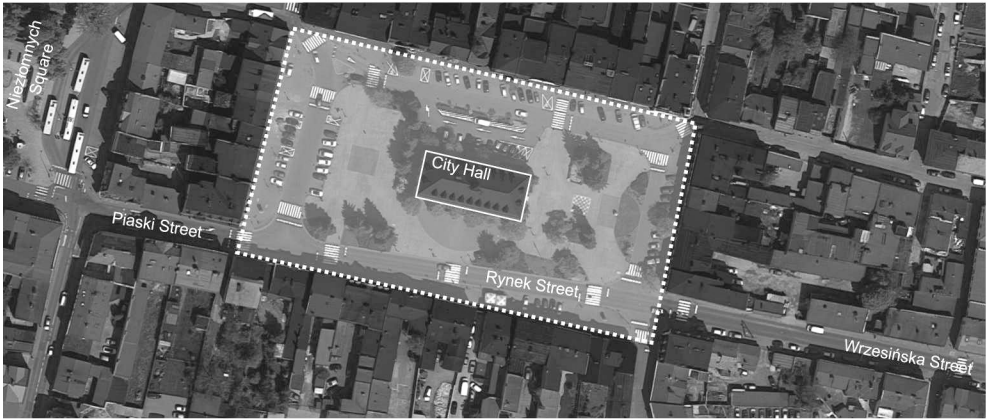
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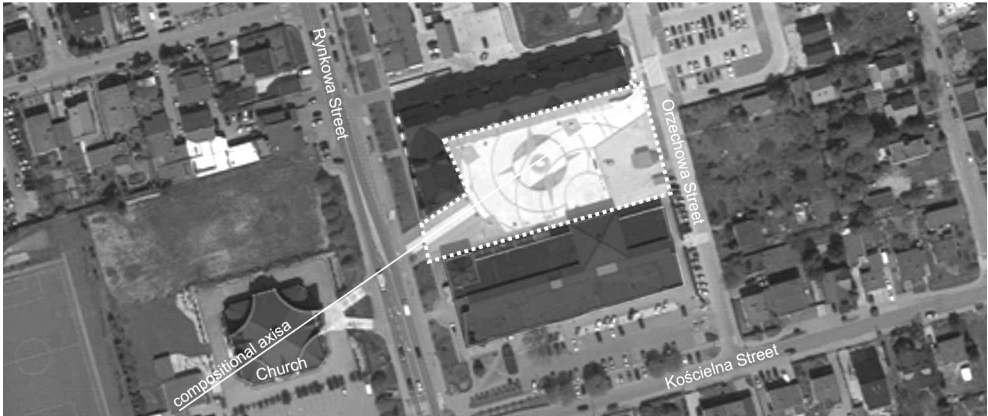
- III. 1a. Niepodległości Square in Kórnik, photo J. Kołata
- III. 2a. Town Square in Swarzędz, photo J. Kołata
- III. 3a. Town Square in Przeźmierowo, photo J. Kołata



1b.



2b.



3b.

III. 1b. Niepodległości Square in Kórnik, studies based on google.pl

III. 2b. Town Square in Swarzędz studies based on google.pl

III. 3b. Town Square in Przeźmierowo, studies based on google.pl

square buildings in the form of stalls and cloth drying rooms. The orthogonal street layout allowed for easy parcelling of urban quarters and joining of structures. From an urban point of view, a medieval city was supposed to be small in size and its most important space was the market square. Its importance was increased by representative buildings located within its boundaries, such as: a church, a town hall, scales, cloth halls, as well as warehouses for goods and granaries. All these elements made the market vibrant and full of life and thus stimulating further spatial, economic and social development.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MARKET SQUARES WITHIN THE POZNAŃ AGGLOMERATION ON THE BASIS OF HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

The Poznań⁹ agglomeration consists of 23 territorial units located in the central part of Wielkopolska. It is a highly urbanised area, centred around Poznań – the core city and the largest city, currently inhabited by about 538,000 residents, which constitutes half of the entire area's population.

Among the towns and cities of the agglomeration, urban structures based on centrally located market squares can be found, apart from Poznań, in Bnin, Buk, Kostrzyn, Kórnik, Murowana Goślina, Oborniki, Pobiedziska, Skoki, Stęszew, Swarzędz, Szamotuły and Śrem. With the exception of Bnin, these are towns and cities which are municipal administrative centres. All these structures are based on a historical urban layout, around which buildings were gradually erected. Moreover, all the market squares are easily recognizable on the city plan and readable as a spatial layout.

Poznań has the biggest market square. Established around 1253, the square with a side length of 141 m is surrounded by tenement houses, which originally there were 16 of in each row. Three streets perpendicularly, one in the middle and one in the corners at the ends of each wall of the market square. On the square there is a mid-market-square quarter, which was used for service, trade and administrative functions due to the trade halls, stalls, workshops and the town hall with scales situated here. The damage caused at the end of World War II affected 60% of the surrounding buildings. The reconstruction of the market square lasted until the 1960's. In the second half of the twentieth century, traffic in this area was gradually reduced and in 1970 it was completely closed to road traffic and the whole area was designated for pedestrians. The rich history of this structure is reflected in the varied styles and architectural forms that make up today's Old Market Square, which serves as the city's lounge.

Markets of a medieval origin can also be found in: Bnin, Buk, Kostrzyn, Kórnik, Murowana Goślina, Oborniki, Pobiedziska, Skoki, Stęszew, Swarzędz, Szamotuły and Śrem. In each case, the usually square-shaped market square (8 out of 12 examples) is surrounded by a line of dense developments separated from the square with streets and pavements. Seven

⁹ A broad analysis of the area forming the Poznań agglomeration, its condition and changes predicted for the future was carried out as part of a collective paper: Kaczmarek T., Mizgajski A. (eds.), *Powiat poznański. Jakość przestrzeni i jakość życia*, praca zbiorowa, Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznań 2008.

of them are undeveloped with elements of greenery and small street structures. The fittings in these spaces allow for their daily use by the residents. Works of art such as monuments, sculptures and decorative fountains create a unique atmosphere of these places and undoubtedly add value.

Mid-market-square developments seriously limit the usability of the space. The market square in Szamotuły offers the least space for the residents' activities, as the square which is completely filled with tenement houses and road infrastructure. The reconstruction works to be performed on the structure, planned for the coming years (until 2022), are to bring about significant changes to reduce car traffic and introduce a public space in the area of the southern and western walls of the internal quarter.

Offices, public buildings and churches located within the market square undoubtedly raise the importance of space, but also generate increased car traffic. Such a situation occurs in 6 cities where additional parking zones are provided in the vicinity of the buildings mentioned above. They have a negative impact on aesthetic appearance and restrict the market square space.

Around the market squares mentioned above, there is a predominance of low buildings, mostly two-storey ones, with a raised roof or attic. In rare cases these are lower, single-storey buildings with a high sloping roof. Six market squares are dominated by a high structure such as an office building or a church. The horizontal dimensions of the structures range from 65 m (the shorter side of the market square in Stęszew) to 122 m (the longer wall of the market square in Murowana Goślina) in case of market squares based on a square-shaped plan. These market squares have a small mid-angle of 15–20° on both axes, which means that the interiors seem spacious. Due to the three-dimensional character of these structures, they constitute examples of simple interiors¹⁰. Market squares based on an elongated plan in Kórnik and Skoki are also characterized by a small middle angle of the shorter side. The markets in Swarzędz and Oborniki, on the other hand, despite their rectangular shape, are divided into smaller interiors, one of which is based on a square plan. The two coupled interiors¹¹ created as a result of the division make it possible to differentiate the space in terms of style and functionality.

Market squares are mainly filled with buildings serving residential functions, possibly with service units on the ground floor. In contrast to the Middle Ages, modern trade and service operations are carried out by people who do not live in the given building. The vicinity of the square to private residences is a source of mutual discomfort. For the residents, the reason is usually excessive noise, whereas people using the public space are watched and observed. Separation of such buildings from the market square with a street and a sidewalk prevents mutual penetration of these spheres, but causes nuisance connected to car traffic.

Undoubtedly, the comfort of using market squares and living in their vicinity is improved by tall greenery, especially along the street line, as is the case in Buk, Kostrzyn, Kórnik, Oborniki, Pobiedziska, Skoki, Stęszew and partially in Swarzędz. The presence of greenery is very important for the improvement of acoustics and microclimate of market squares. The plateau area varies from 0.5 ha in Skoki to 1.2 ha in Murowana Goślina. Such a large area, usually covered with dense stone flooring, accumulates heat, which in the summer

¹⁰ Wejchert K., *Elementy kompozycji urbanistycznej*, Arkady, Warszawa 1984, p. 126.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, s. 146.



4a.



5a.



6a.

- III. 4a. Town Square in Puszczykowo, photo R. Kielbasa, J. Papierz, A. Florkowska (archive WA PP)
- III. 5a. New Town Square in Murowana Goślina on Zielone Wzgórza estate, photo J. Walczuk, P. Michalak (archive WA PP)
- III. 6a. Town Square in Plewiska, photo M. Jakubowska (archive WA PP)

months adversely affects the comfort of use. A frequent solution, introduced especially during modernization works performed on market squares, is to plant diversified greenery, creating sections of permeable flooring and water-based elements. In order to improve the acoustics, some surfaces and details are also given a coarse-texture finish.

The abovementioned spontaneous urbanisation in suburban areas and satellite cities mean that the area occupied by some settlements grew extensively. This process also caused the blurring of boundaries of functional areas in towns and villages. The portioning of 'reclassified' areas of land was carried out without compliance with urban planning rules, which meant that newly built areas were usually deprived of an adequate number of public places. In vast majority of housing estates built at the turn of the 20th and 21st century, public space is only made up of streets, often without pavements. In recent years, Plewiska, Przeźmierowo, Puszczykowo and Suchy Las have attempted to correct planning errors by building market squares. The new structures were supposed to help clarify the spatial layout, separate a functional centre and create space for meetings for the residents.

The new market square in Przeźmierowo is the most similar to historical structures in terms of the plan. It was completed in 2016, when a 0.3 ha square located in the central part of the village was made available to the residents. Inspired by geographical and astronomical motifs, the project was intended to become a space for holding cultural events and a background for social life. The market square is located by the main street, but is not accessible by road. Its functional connections to the surrounding space is only visible in the plan where the compositional axis connecting the square to the church located on the other side of Rynkowa Street is marked out. The frontage consists of a one – and two-storey service building on one side and a four-storey residential block with a high roof and service units on the ground floor on the other. The residential building, although it is an integral part of the market project, has a negative impact on the interior. The high elevation (the only building in Przeźmierowo that is higher is the church located on the opposite side of the street) adjacent to the market square has numerous balconies and loggias overlooking the square of only 45 m in width, which creates a negative relationship between the public and private space. There is no permanent greenery on the square, only seasonally placed flower pots. Small street structures also do not help make the space more comfortable, although they were carefully selected, and the sculptures were inspired by the planets of the solar system. The benches, like the pots, are set up randomly. The square does not have any specific function and in the foreground there is an axis which creates a wide communication route. In fact, the market square is more like a housing estate square than a town square of a high importance for the whole town.

A comprehensive investment project consisting in the construction of a new market square with surrounding buildings was also carried out in Puszczykowo¹². The legitimate intention of the authorities was to create a space to integrate the residents and a representative square raising the prestige of the city. The works on design selected by way of a competition were completed in 2010. The structure was situated outside the historical centre of the city by one of the main streets. However, the market space has been separated from the transport route with a series of tenement houses, which means that the square is cut off

¹² Zierke P., *Odwolania do tradycji we współczesnej architekturze aglomeracji poznańskiej jako szansa na poprawę jakości przestrzeni*, Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Geographica Socio-Oeconomica, 2015, no. 19, p. 24.

from the urban life that could be introduced by Poznańska Street. In this case, traffic within the square has not been prohibited, but only a narrow one-way street leads to the square. The square features streets running along the frontage and one running through the middle, which divides it into two parts. The northern market square space is dedicated to parking, the southern to pedestrians. The part used by the residents was also divided into a representative square and a smaller area serving a rest function, equipped with benches. Few items of street furniture have been supplemented with small greenery and small trees planted in the flower beds around the representative and rest leisure part. The buildings surrounding the market square are residential buildings with service units on the ground floor with two or three storeys topped with a high roof. The style of these structures is varied and significantly differs from the surrounding buildings, and does not make any references to the wonderful examples of historical buildings in Puszczykowo. This structure is not integrated into the surroundings, neither architecturally or in terms of urban planning.

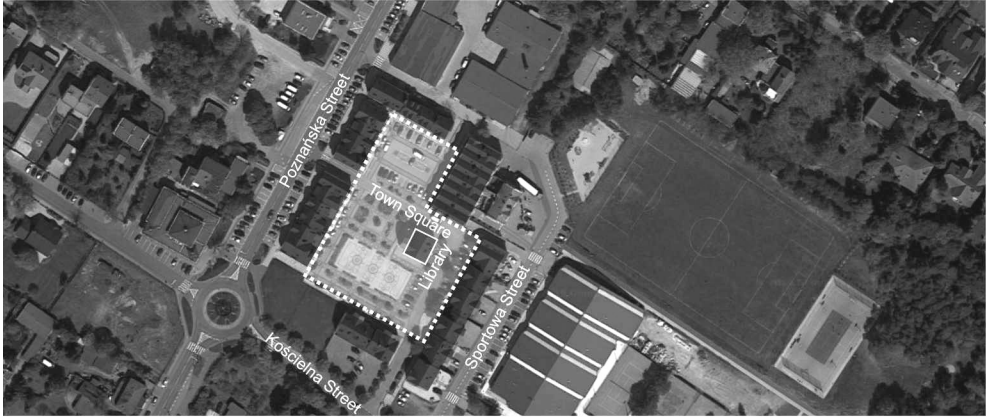
The market square in Plewiska has no space at all that could contribute to integration of residents or provide a background for cultural events. This structure, fully based on the developer's design, is made up of two-storey, adjacent residential buildings with high roofs and commercial premises on the ground floor. The space called the New Market Square is actually a street with a parking zone on both sides. At the present stage of development of this area there is no intention to create a space that could serve as the city lounge.

A similar, fully developed project called 'Nowy Rynek' was built in the central part of Suchy Las. At the junction of Leśna, Bogusławskiego and Stara Droga Streets, a complex of commercial and service units has been created. Compact, two – and three-storey buildings with a sloping roof surround the small space usually occupied by parked cars. The construction and equipment standard of these interiors is very low. The unattractive buildings made even uglier with pushy advertising signs surround the styleless square. The square is filled with uniform paving stones. It also spreads out onto a narrow street called 'Nowy Rynek', which runs around the square. Few items of street furnishings are also random and do not improve the quality of the space. As a result, a developed quarter was created here rather than a space that could be called a market square.

The most interesting, relatively new market square can be found in Murowana Goślina. In the 1980's, a square called 'Nowy Rynek' (New Market) was opened to the public. It is located in the southern part of the city and was built as the centre of a housing estate designed for the employees of 'Presta' Pressed Products Factory. Prof. Jerzy Buszkiewicz was responsible for the design of the estate called 'Zielone Wzgórza'¹³. The complex of multi-family buildings built using the large panel technology surrounds the rectangular square of dimensions 76 m by 97 m, which creates a total area of 0.74 ha. The market square frontages were inspired by 19th century tenement houses. Different in terms of scale, details and roof geometry, the five – and six-storey buildings create a clearly defined interior. Service and trade units are located on the ground floor, while the upper floors are occupied by flats. The ratio of the height of the buildings to the width of the square creates a central angle of 22°, which affects the high spatial and architectural value of this place¹⁴. The dominant spatial feature is the town hall building embedded into the northern front-

¹³ Bonenberg W., Zierke P., *Dobra kultury współczesnej jako element krajobrazu powiatu poznańskiego*, Wydawnictwo Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2014, pp. 150–151.

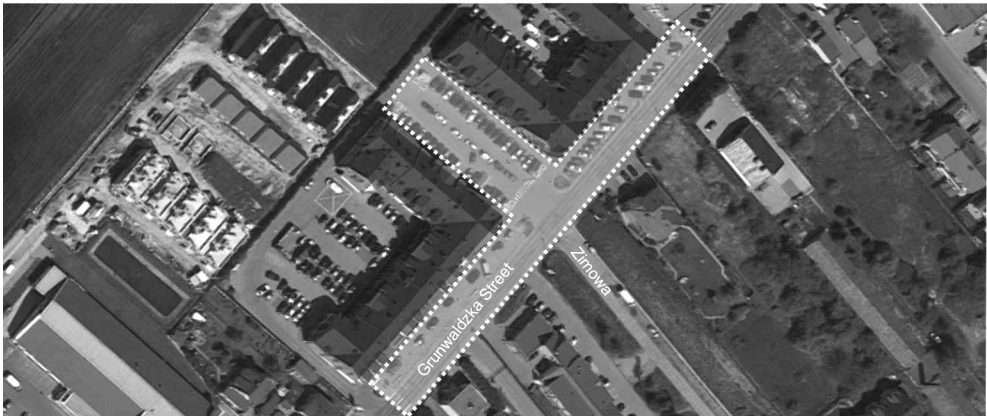
¹⁴ Wejchert K., *op. cit.*, pp. 141–144.



4b.



5b.



6b.

III. 4b. Town Square in Puszczykowo, studies based on google.pl

III. 5b. New Town Square in Murowana Goślina on Zielone Wzgórza estate, studies based on google.pl

III. 6b. Town Square in Plewiska, studies based on google.pl

age¹⁵. Its high elevation is covered with yellow brick and crowned with a decorative brown attic with details. The baroque tower and the wide passage on the axis of the street dividing the square into two parts add to the importance of the building. The western, larger square is the main representative space of the market square diversified by a green square with a fountain and benches. In the eastern part, in a small depression, there is a more intimate, narrow square separated from the street by a row of trees shading a bench set along the wall. The comfort of the neighbourhood of the public and private spaces is enhanced by the deliberate location of greenery, arcades in the ground floors of the buildings, as well as the location of the sitting area away from the building elevations. Despite its age, 'Nowy Rynek' still looks very well and fulfils its function for the continuously growing 'Zielone Wzgórze' housing estate.

6. CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF MARKET SQUARES FOR THE URBAN STRUCTURE

The market square, as a relic of the Middle Ages, has survived years of changes and now reflects the rich history of the given place. Despite the dynamic development of cities and radical transformations of many aspects of their operation, this space has retained its unique character in most cases.

Today's market squares are for the most part elements of the urban plan, around which urban structures have been erected over the years. Due to the historical reasons for creating town squares (urban rights law, trade routes), they are an important part of the urban fabric of the city. The main features of these structures are:

- mostly square or rectangular in shape,
- location along the most important communication routes while simultaneously moving away transit transport,
- frontage development for residential purposes with commercial and service units on the ground floor open to the market square,
- traffic and functional links to the most important structures in the city.

From a theoretical point of view, market squares can be considered the main points which determine the order of the urban plan. Among the seven elements of urban composition specified by K. Wejchert¹⁶, four can be applied to structures which set out the structure of the city. They are the dominant feature of the spatial layout, and no other element should compete with them. Due to their transport links, they are a nodal point. Their rich history makes them special components of the urban space.

According to T. Jastrząb¹⁷, the characteristics which determine the value of market squares are primarily:

- architectural and urban qualities,
- functional qualities,

¹⁵ Bonenberg W., Zierke P., *op. cit.*, p. 152.

¹⁶ Jastrząb T., *Place i rynki, jako zagadnienie urbanistyczne*, Wyd. Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2002, p. 33–34.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

- location in the city structure,
- car and pedestrian traffic links.

An assessment form prepared on that basis allows for an evaluation of individual market square examples presented in this paper (Table 1).

Table 1: Quality assessment of market squares in the Poznań agglomeration (based on the expert assessment form by T. Jastrząb¹⁸)

Name	Sub-assessments (grade scale from 1 to 4 points)				Total assessment
	architectural and urban qualities	functional qualities	location	traffic links	
Poznań – the Old Market Square	4	4	4	4	16
Bnin – town square	4	2	2	2	10
Buk – town square	3	3	4	4	14
Kostrzyn – town square	3	4	4	4	15
Kórnik – Niepodległości Sq.	4	4	4	4	16
Murowana Goślina – Powstańców Wielkopolskich Sq. (market square)	4	4	4	4	16
Oborniki – Rynek	3	4	4	4	15
Pobiedziska – Rynek	3	4	4	4	15
Skoki – Powstańców Wielkopolskich Sq. (market square)	3	2	2	2	9
Słeszew – town square	2	4	4	3	13
Swarzędz – town square	4	4	4	4	16
Szamotuły – town square	3	3	4	1	11
Śrem – Pl. 20 Października (market square)	4	4	4	4	16
Przeźmierowo – town square	3	2	4	4	13
Puszczykowo – town square	4	4	2	4	14
Plewiska – ‘Nowy Rynek’	2	1	4	2	9
Suchy Las – ‘Nowy Rynek’	1	2	4	2	9
‘Zielone Wzgórza’ – Murowana Goślina – ‘Nowy Rynek’	4	4	4	4	16

The results obtained allow us to conclude that the lowest scores for the criteria used were given to market squares whose space is dominated by car traffic and car parks. The dominance of this form of development affects the functional qualities, disturbs the perception of the space, and also reduces its aesthetic value. In few cases, the location was a factor

¹⁸ Jastrząb T., *op. cit.*, p. 153–154.

influencing the assessment of the quality of the market square. It should be noted that, although market squares are generally situated in the very centre of individual localities, they are not usually in the geometric centre of the urban developments due to the extensive dispersion of new housing. The example of Plewiska and Suchy Las shows that a mere central location in relation to the urban structure of the city does not necessarily mean high quality of the market square.

The development of cities, as well as technological progress, have resulted in a significant increase in the scale of cities. As a result of that process, some of the characteristics attributed to the market square have been lost. This is particularly evident in the case of large cities, where transport has been shifted to the peripheries and trade has been accumulated in shopping centres. Smaller towns have maintained the original function of the market square, where commercial and service operations are still carried out on the ground floors of buildings, although on a smaller scale than before World War II. At present, market squares, due to their historical and cultural value, are often subject to strict conservation protection. For this reason, attempts are often made nowadays to revitalize them in order to preserve their unique character while adapting their form and function to contemporary needs¹⁹.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis showed that in the Poznań agglomeration there are many examples of well-preserved urban market squares. The most valuable of these are the architectural gems of the capital of Wielkopolska – the Old Market Square in Poznań, but also the markets in Kórnik, Murowana Goślina, Swarzędz, Śrem and ‘Zielone Wzgórze’.

With regard to historical market squares, the spatial structures that have been developed over the years around the main square are still visible. Despite the technological progress and significant changes in the way the city functions, this medieval form of space organization still fulfils its original purpose. Traffic restrictions in market squares and adjacent areas help reduce noise and traffic. In addition, they allow for a comfortable experience of this space, especially for pedestrians – as originally planned. Most of the surveyed squares changed their function from a commercial to a representative one. Fairs are rarely organised there as a special attraction. Today, the market square is the lounge of the city – a place for social meetings and cultural events.

Despite the long history of these urban forms and many studies on market squares conducted over the years, the examples of new projects cited in the paper show that attempts to implement market squares into existing urban structures are not always successful. The lowest rated designs were characterised by a low level of attention paid to such key features as: the size and shape of the square, links with the most important transport route, as well as the size and function of the buildings. As a result, such places are only called market squares on paper. However, there should be no room for error or neglect in spatial planning and urban planning. The example of the New Market Square (Nowy Rynek) in Murowana Goślina shows that the construction of such a structure can be successful. The quality and value of that square is

¹⁹ Gawryluk D., *Wpływ modernizacji rynków na kształtowanie kulturowej tożsamości wybranych miast północno-wschodniej Polski*, Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej, Seria Architektura i Urbanistyka, 2014, no. 30, p. 13.

determined by the fact that it was built as a central and integral part of the ‘Zielone Wzgórza’ estate. Its location, shape, architectural and urban qualities were planned and implemented in accordance with well-established theory and practice.

The most unfavourable phenomenon nowadays, from the point of view of the authors of the article, is not securing areas to be allocated as a public space within newly emerging residential areas²⁰. By expanding on Rem Koolhaas’s thought²¹ one can say that in such situations urban planning not only disappeared as a discipline, but there is also no point for it to return. Once everything has been built, it seems impossible to carry out repairs, which would require radical steps such as demolishing building quarters or laying out new transport routes.

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²⁰ Siewczyński B., *Jakość środowiska mieszkaniowego w aspekcie planowego urządzania przestrzeni publicznych*, Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej, Seria Architektura i Urbanistyka, 2005, no. 5, p. 61–67.

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