

## ABSTRACT

The paper describes a very complex research problem of urban living conditions explored by representatives of many fields of science: economic, social, and technical. In Polish geography, just like in Polish urban sociology, this type of research has relatively short tradition. This is caused, among others, by theoretical and methodological difficulties resulting from the lack of proper resource base.

The paper analyses factors shaping living conditions in Piotrków Trybunalski during the period after the system transformation, taking into account their role in differentiating urban space. While external factors affect the entire urban organism, the internal ones largely determine the differences within urban space. The key exogenous conditions included in the dissertation were the economic changes in the country following the system transformation, while the endogenous ones are as follows: urban spatial policy, and human resources. Both types of factors present in urban space interpenetrate, because of which the assumed division into endo-genous and exogenous factors is relative.

Apart from identifying factors having considerable positive (triggering the development of particular districts of the city) or negative (hampering the development) impact, an attempt has been made to rank them in order to assess the impact of particular factors on living conditions in the city in total, and on its particular aspects. Since the level of satisfaction of city inhabitants' needs (living conditions) is diversified in space and time, the evaluative description of these differentiations has been carried out by means of the standard of living and quality of life indices. The former is of quantitative character, illustrating the degree to which needs are satisfied, and the latter is qualitative in its nature, and is linked to the level of satisfaction with living conditions.

The paper adopted the proprietary concept of measuring living conditions in Piotrków Trybunalski. The analysis employs objective indices used by the Central Statistical Office describing living, housing, working and leisure/recreation conditions in Piotrków Trybunalski. The knowledge about the level of the local community need satisfaction has been gained as a result of a field measurement on a representative (random) sample of Piotrków Trybunalski inhabitants. The administrative area of the city has been divided into 15 districts which has allowed for conducting spatial analyses. The paper employs a host of factors explaining phenomena in the subjective sphere aiming at conducting as comprehensive analysis of living conditions in the city as possible.

The historic development of the special structure of Piotrków has shaped its residential and social infrastructure. The key element affecting the level of satisfaction among inhabitants with their own residential environment is in the light of the work results the availability of social services. What is particularly important for Piotrków inhabitants is the proximity of primary healthcare facilities and public libraries.

Piotrków inhabitants spend their free time actively, utilising public urban spaces for that purpose. But the condition of the Old Town infrastructure does not encourage them to visit it or to recommend it to visitors, and has negative impact on the image and growth potential of the entire Piotrków. This is why the inhabitants would like the appearance and functions of the historic district of the city to be introduced, even if it is to involve deep transformation of its social structure.

The inhabitants of Piotrków appreciate investments carried out by local authorities, aiming at recreating symbolic elements of the urban tissue, which can be considered city success and are the feather in its cap. But the inhabitants expect the intensification of activities focusing on stimulating economic life of the city without which further development will not be possible.