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## FUNCTIONING CONDITIONS, ACTIVITY AND CITIZENS' APPRAISAL OF THE TERRITORIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN A CITY WITH COUNTY RIGHTS ILLUSTRATED WITH THE EXAMPLE OF PRZEMYŚL

### Abstract

*The subject of the present article is the activity of the territorial self-government in a town with county rights. We will aim to present the conditions in which Polish self-government was formed and how it functions at present, focusing particularly on the functioning conditions of a city with county rights in Eastern Poland, so-called Poland B. We will consider both the functioning conditions of self-government which may be characteristic to self-governments throughout Poland, its eastern part as well as the conditions specific to the self-government of Przemyśl. This will involve examining economic conditions as well as historical, geopolitical, legal and social ones. We will begin with a brief analysis of the concept of self-governance and the long way Polish democracy has come from the beginning of its existence until the present system. Then, we will present the functioning conditions of one of the cities with county rights in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and discuss its activity, citizens' appraisal as well as the initiatives undertaken by its citizens and by the citizens of its surrounding areas. The suggested categories of conditions include both internal and external ones. They are all interdependent. As the analyses presented in this article indicate, the formation and functioning of Przemyśl self-government were influenced not only by its geopolitical location but also by Austrian Partition, Polish Peoples' Republic, administrative reform of 1999 and its multinational character. What is more, currently, the funds obtained from the European Union have a significant influence on the development of self-government in Przemyśl, and also throughout Poland. However, the way they are used must be constantly monitored and adopted to local conditions and needs. In the analyses we have used i.a. the results of surveys conducted in 2010 for the purposes of a project entitled "Przemyśl in Public Opinion", and also Polish nationwide study on communes carried out in 2013 by Grzegorz Gorzelak and Bohdan Jałowiecki's team. Moreover, data included in the strategic documents on the development of Przemyśl has also been used.*

**Key words:** self-governance, local activity, functioning conditions, development factors, European Union fund, city with county rights.

### **The idea of self-governance**

The main assumption behind democracy as a political system is the power of the people. It is the rule of the majority of citizens that should decide on the actions to be undertaken. Exercising democratic authority on a local level is facilitated by a territorial self-government. The concept of the territorial self-government results from a conviction that the people living close to and ingrained in a given community know best what is good for them. It was stressed by the authors of the European Charter of Territorial Self-Government<sup>1</sup>. According to E. Ochendowski, *"A territorial self-government is the union of local community, distinguished in the structure of a state and organized under the law, which has been appointed with a view to executing public administration and equipped with financial means allowing for fulfilling the tasks allotted"*<sup>2</sup>. Self-governance is thus based on an independent management of public affairs by the people directly concerned. It is an element of decentralization of public authority, since the central government transfers some of its authority over an area to its residents. The basis for the present self-government operation in Poland is the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997<sup>3</sup>. Residents exercise power over a given area in two ways. Firstly, in a direct way, by electing their representatives in the local authorities (representative democracy); secondly, by means of a referendum through which they decide, by a majority vote, on certain matters (direct democracy). It should be noted that the self-government fulfils tasks in its own stead and responsibility, obeying the principles of subsidiarity, self-reliance and competence presumption of a territorial self-government. What should be stressed is the fact that a three-tier structure of a territorial self-government has been in effect in Poland since 1999. It divides the country into voivodeships (provinces), powiats (counties) and communes (gminas). The principle of subsidiarity takes the form of help to a lower level unit from a higher level unit while accomplishing tasks which cannot be realized by the former due to their scope. Therefore, the county authorities fulfil the tasks encompassing more than one commune, and a voivodeship the tasks of more than one county.<sup>4</sup>

### **The history of self-governance in Poland**

The tradition of self-governance in Poland dates back to 16th century, the time of Nobles' Democracy and nobles' territorial self-governments. The Nobles' Democracy, however, differed significantly from modern self-governance. It was rather, as described by Hubert Izdebski, "feudal non-centralization," since only the nobles were given the right to vote. Only the Constitution of 3 May, 1791 extended liberties onto different social groups.<sup>5</sup> A modern Polish self-government has its roots in the period of Partitions. After 1918 the self-government solutions were

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<sup>1</sup> Europejska Karta Samorządu Terytorialnego, sporządzona w Strasburgu 15 października 1985 r. (Dz.U. 1994 nr 124, poz. 607), s. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Tarno, M. Sieniuc, J. Sulimierski, J. Wyporska, *Samorząd terytorialny w Polsce*, LexisNexis, Warszawa 2004, s. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r.* (Dz.U. nr 78, poz. 483), s. 37-39.

<sup>4</sup> J. P. Tarno i in., *Samorząd terytorialny...*, op. cit., s. 31.

<sup>5</sup> H. Izdebski, *Samorząd terytorialny. Podstawy ustroju i działalności*, LexisNexis, Warszawa 2006, s. 53-54.

adopted after each partitioner, but it was standardised as early as in 1921 by the March Constitution of Poland. Unfortunately, after the World War II and the advent of People's Republic of Poland, the power in the country was strictly centralized and territorial self-governments were replaced by National Councils. Only unprecedented events of 1989, initiated by the decisions made at Magdalenka and the subsequent Round Table Talks, reinstated self-governance by means of the Commune Self-government Act of 1990.<sup>6</sup>

### **25 years of Polish self-government**

25 years have passed since the first post-communist self-government reform. Poland is still a relatively young democracy, whose political system is now beginning to take form. It is reflected by the reforms carried out after the change of the political system. Since passing the amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997 and the introduction of a three-tier self-government in 1999 the most important changes related to self-governance in Poland were the enactment of the Act on Direct election of Commune Head / Administrator and Mayor in 2002 and the introduction of the act that transfers a substantial part of former authority from a provincial governor to self-governments. The Act has been in effect since 1 January, 2006. It is necessary to point out that not only young democratic countries undergo constant reforms. Hubert Izdebski claims that western democracies, considered by many mature states, reform their territorial administrations while constantly struggling with various problems. According to Izdebski the conditions for self-government functioning are modified by three major factors: politicisation of territorial self-government involved in national political struggles; capital concentration, both on a national and global scale, which limits the possibility of communes to control economical activities conducted within their areas; and the technological progress, which on the one hand enables offices to have better contact with citizens and, on the other hand, favours centralisation of power.<sup>7</sup> Surely such problems can be noticed in the functioning of Polish territorial self-governments. The problems of self-government in Przemyśl are good examples, which will be described in the present article.

The European self-governments function in the face of ageing population and disappearing of cities. As pointed out by Andrzej Majer, the phenomenon is slowly reversing itself and foreshadows the revival of cities which are "generators" of development<sup>8</sup> and, as Gorzelak shows, they allow proper functioning of local systems (counties).<sup>9</sup> By means of analysing French Communes Magdalena Górczyńska claims that not always the solutions which performed well in other countries can be easily adapted, for example, in Polish conditions. They can be nevertheless applied as an inspiration, adapting their elements to one's own

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<sup>6</sup> Ibidem., s. 63.

<sup>7</sup> H. Izdebski, *Samorząd terytorialny...*, op.cit., s. 51-52.

<sup>8</sup> A. Majer, *Odrodzenie miast*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Łódź-Warszawa 2014, s. 7-13.

<sup>9</sup> E. Bendyk, *Sorry, taki mamy model. Rozmowa z profesorem Grzegorzem Gorzelakiem*, 2014, nr 10, *Polityka. Niezbędnik inteligenta. Miasta i ludzie*, s. 61.

situation and conditions in which given societies function.<sup>10</sup> This is worth remembering when preparing and implementing a development plan for communes. Currently, the European Union funds are the chance for the development of Polish self-governments as well as their main source of financing. However, as highlighted by Tomasz Szkica and Agnieszka Bem, Polish self-governments have so far used the acquired funds with the view to developing technical and communications infrastructure within their communes<sup>11</sup>.

### **The functioning conditions of a self-government in Przemyśl**

As mentioned earlier, changes connected to civilisation cause self-government administration to require constant reforms. However, every local community is unique; so as to understand the functioning specificity of territorial self-government in Przemyśl and the problems related to it, it is necessary to start with its functioning conditions. G. Gorzelak and B. Jałowiecki, by describing historical functioning conditions of Polish self-governments, distinguish internal and external factors. The former include i.a. historical determinants resulting from the division into large geographical areas, divided in terms of their previous affiliation to the partitioner (western and northern lands, Greater Poland, Congress Poland, and Galicia). The latter comprise European funds, which have become a basic source of financing for Poland's development, as claimed by the above mentioned authors.<sup>12</sup> The problems with the financing of local authorities' operation in Europe expressed before also concern Polish ones. The results of the research conducted by Gorzelak and Jałowiecki show that the growth of local budget is the first and foremost postulate. Regular responsibilities of communes resulting from the tasks allotted as well as limited means in the form of government subsidies make the local authorities display relatively little freedom in budget management.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, as Gorzelak points out, the problem of Polish self-governments is the fact that programmes and projects are devised to fit the financial means available; there is no will to create a consistent programme and to look for funds with that idea in mind.<sup>14</sup>

The division into internal and external factors may be problematic depending on the level of problem analysis (for example, the influence of political parties). That is why in the present paper the conditions have been divided in a more detailed way, into economical, geopolitical, legal, historical and social; nevertheless, every category can consist of both internal and external factors.

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<sup>10</sup> M. Górczyńska, *Odnowa miejska a la française: Społeczny wymiar programów rewitalizacji*, 2014, nr 4, *Studia Regionalne i lokalne*, s. 85.

<sup>11</sup> T. Szkica, A. Bem, *Rola samorządu terytorialnego w procesach stymulowania przedsiębiorczości*, 2014, nr 1, *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, s. 83-84.

<sup>12</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Kontynkтура w Polsce lokalnej 2013*, 2014, nr 4, *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, s. 5-24.

<sup>13</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Kontynkтура w Polsce lokalnej...*, op. cit., s. 12-19.

<sup>14</sup> E. Bendyk, *Sorry, taki mamy model...*, op. cit., s. 60.

### **Economic conditions**

The tendency to allocate acquired EU funds for technical infrastructure mentioned above is also visible in Przemyśl. The analysis of expenditure spent on the activities included in the local revitalization programme for the city shows that more than 93% of all the funds were allotted to spatial planning and activities (infrastructural investments, buildings renovation, etc.). However, the activities in the public sphere were given less than 5% of the funds. Going into further detail, one may notice that the actions geared towards human resources development were allotted only 1/3 of the 5% mentioned above. The rest of the resources were applied to the prevention of pathology and social exclusion.<sup>15</sup> The projects currently under way indicate such a tendency. Among four investments, three of them concern infrastructure, environment and quality of life (further bypass road building, low carbon economy, the development of a functional urban area) and only one is related to social capital (digital divide prevention).<sup>16</sup> Such investments improve the conditions and quality of life in the city, which is a positive phenomenon. It is worth remembering, however, that the public sphere should be invested into as well. In the words of Piotr Lorens, who analysed some examples from Western Europe, technical infrastructure will not function properly without it.<sup>17</sup>

Another problem faced by the local authorities in Przemyśl is a decrease in the number of companies. Gorzelak and Jałowiecki also point to this issue, further noting that in former Galicia the biggest number of businesses have recently been closed down in comparison with other regions<sup>18</sup>. This fact has also been confirmed in the case of Przemyśl (in the years 2003-2012 the number of registered business entities decreased from 6581 to 6014, whereby the last year taken into account an increase of 113 entities compared to 2011 was recorded). It is worth noting that in the whole period analysed the most numerous are companies functioning in trade sector and repairs (between 30% and 40%) as well as real estate, corporate and education services (between 16% and 18%).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, according to the national research results, it is the enterprise of businessmen that is one of the most significant factors behind local development<sup>20</sup>.

### **Geopolitical conditions**

Among geopolitical conditions one can enumerate environmental and spatial factors, such as clean air, big number of green, picturesque areas around the city and the location in the valley of the river San. Apart from that, Przemyśl has found

<sup>15</sup> M. Sowiński, *Spoleczny wymiar rewitalizacji na przykładzie przemysla* [w:] *Miasta Polski na początku XXI wieku. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, rozwój*, T. Dziechciarz, A. Krawczyk-Sawicka (red.), Wyd. KUL, Stalowa Wola 2013, s. 372.

<sup>16</sup> *Projekty w trakcie realizacji*, <[http://www.przemyśl.pl/gospodarka/inwestycje/UE/projekty\\_w\\_trakcie\\_realizacji/](http://www.przemyśl.pl/gospodarka/inwestycje/UE/projekty_w_trakcie_realizacji/)>, [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>17</sup> P. Lorens, *Rewitalizacja miast. Planowanie i realizacja*, Politechnika Gdańska Wydział Architektury, Gdańsk 2010, s. 11.

<sup>18</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Kontunktura w Polsce lokalnej...*, op. cit., s. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Raport o stanie miasta Przemyśla*, Przemyśl 2007, s. 92; Przemyśl 2014, s. 118, <[http://www.przemyśl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/346/650/19853.html](http://www.przemyśl.pl/nasze_miasto/346/650/19853.html)>, [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>20</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Kontunktura w Polsce lokalnej...*, op. cit., s. 10.

itself within the influence of Poland, Ruthenia and Hungary since its beginnings, at the intersection of the main trading router, which conditioned the functioning of the city as early as in the Middle Ages<sup>21</sup>. In our times, the city lies in the borderland of not only Poland, but also the European Union itself. In a certain way, such a geopolitical location defines the direction of development policy of Przemyśl, that is investment strategies applied by the local authorities. Agnieszka Sobala-Gwosdz states that Przemyśl is one of "gateway cities" which, because of its location, performs the function of a gate and an interchange between two adjacent regions. This fact predestines the city to the development of trade, transportation and services (especially in catering and accommodation).<sup>22</sup> The natural values mentioned above, as well as its rich history, big number of monuments and cultural uniqueness resulting from the location near the border create good conditions for the development of tourism. At the same time, some feel discouraged from locating industrial companies in the city and its vicinity, especially heavy and chemical industry, being more inclined towards ecological production (for example food). The research conducted by Gorzelak and Jałowiecki show that, apart from western and northern areas, it is the former Galicia that contains the biggest number of tourist trade companies<sup>23</sup>. The situation of Przemyśl is also favourable towards the cooperation on the supranational level. Nowadays, Przemyśl is cooperating with one district and seven foreign cities. The first cooperation agreements were signed as early as in 1993 with Paderborn in Germany and South Kesteven in the Great Britain. Next, the city authorities established cooperation with cities in Ukraine. In 1995 the agreement with Lviv was signed, in 1997 with Kamianets-Podilskyi, in 2004 with Truskavets, in 2008 with Mostyska. Since 2003 Przemyśl has also collaborated with a Hungarian city called Eger, and since 2010 with Humenn in Slovakia.<sup>24</sup>

When writing about geopolitical conditions, Przemyśl's location in the so-called "Poland B" should also be mentioned. Even in the times of the Second Polish Republic there were written remarks concerning the distinction between the modern and rich western Poland and the backward and poor eastern part, which is further confirmed by the contemporary studies. Researchers even think that the gap is growing and, since the accession to the European Union, Subcarpathia has become pocket of poverty.<sup>25</sup> The research conducted by Gorzelak and Jałowiecki show that the south-eastern Poland (the former Galicia) has nevertheless narrowed the gap that separates it from the northern and western regions, leaving behind the former

<sup>21</sup> A. Kunysz, *Przemyśl w starożytności i wczesnym średniowieczu* [w:] *Przemyśl w starożytności i średniowieczu (Od czasów najdawniejszych do roku 1340)*, A. Kunysz, F. Persowski, TPN, Rzeszów-Przemyśl 1966, s. 29-30.

<sup>22</sup> A. Sobala-Gwosdz, *Przemyśl jako miasto-wrota* [w:] S. Solecki (red.), T. XLIV, 2008, *Rocznik Przemyski*, s. 187-190.

<sup>23</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Konjunktura w Polsce lokalnej...*, op. cit., s. 8.

<sup>24</sup> *Miasta partnerskie*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/miasta\\_partnerskie/](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/miasta_partnerskie/)>, [dostęp: 24 stycznia 2015].

<sup>25</sup> P. Długosz, *Zmiany społeczno-ekonomiczne w regionie podkarpackim na przełomie wieków* [w:] *Społeczeństwo Podkarpacia po wstąpieniu Polski do Unii Europejskiej*, M. Malikowski (red.), Wyd. UR, Rzeszów 2008, s.19.

Congress Poland. The authors claim, however, that despite a significant progress owing to EU funds, historical divisions resulting from partitions are still visible.<sup>26</sup> A question remains how well Subcarpathia compares with other eastern voivodeships. Rzeszów, the capital of the voivodeship, is often considered one of the best examples of well-developing cities not only in Subcarpathia, but all of Poland<sup>27</sup>. In spite of this, as shown in the analyses performed by Jacek Strojny and Maciej Ropa-Roborzyński, Subcarpathia compares badly with regard to the number of business entities (11<sup>th</sup> out of 16) and business entities with foreign capital (12<sup>th</sup>). In other aspects (i.a. capital expenditures, research and development expenditures) it fares well in comparison with eastern voivodeships, eventually having been classified as a ninth one. Moreover, the above mentioned authors confirm that generally eastern voivodeships are still developing much slower than the western ones on the grounds of development and investment.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, Przemyśl County along with the city in recent years has increased the disparity in relation to the voivodeship leaders. The analyses of human development index (Z. Hellwig's measure) performed by Magdalena Łęcznar support this fact. According to the analyses, Przemyśl along with the county have fallen from the second position, just behind Rzeszów, in 1996 to the sixth place (out of 21 counties), having been classified behind Rzeszów, Krosno, Tarnobrzeg, Łańcut and Jarosław.<sup>29</sup> The internal division of Poland is also often mentioned by the participants in the "Przemyśl in the Public Opinion" survey. Both the respondents during the interviews and the students completing the survey forms recognized the city location in "Poland B" as one of the disadvantages.<sup>30</sup>

### Legal conditions

What influences the functioning of the territorial self-government in Przemyśl is the consequences of the Administrative Reform of 1999, which degraded the city from the voivodeship centre to the role of county capital by reducing the number of voivodeships. Apart from the legal consequences of the reform, there are also other ones. Firstly, the reform meant reducing the importance of Przemyśl in the region and its influence on regional policy as well as decreasing population base for the city. Secondly, transferring the voivodeship administrative bodies also entailed reducing the amount of workplace. The further issue is the functioning of Przemyśl as a city with county rights. Jan Paweł Tarno and his associates claim that this construction is not a very successful one since such a city has the tasks of both a commune and a county. The mayor and the city council, as commune authorities, perform the functions of county authorities as well. This is a problematic solution, because a situation may occur when there is a conflict of interests between the

<sup>26</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Kontynkura w Polsce lokalnej*, op. cit., s. 23-24.

<sup>27</sup> E. Bendyk, *O polskich miastach przed wyborami. Ranking jakości miejskiego życia*, 2014, nr 46, Polityka, s. 14-18.

<sup>28</sup> J. Strojny, M. Pompa-Roborzyński, *Mechanizm koncentracji kapitału – Podkarpacie na tle innych regionów*, Humanities and Social Sciences, 2013, vol. XVIII, nr 2, s. 173-186.

<sup>29</sup> M. Łęcznar, *Poziom rozwoju przygranicznych powiatów województwa podkarpackiego*, <<https://www.ur.edu.pl/file/6547/12-Lecznar.pdf> [dostęp: 11 grudnia 2014]>, s. 153.

<sup>30</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemyśl w opinii społecznej*, [msp z archiwum autora], s. 85.

county and commune. For instance, such a situation takes place during the restitution of expropriated property, which is owned by the city. The mayor, as the representative of the city and the district governor must be excluded from such administrative proceedings. This, in turn, leads to impediments and lowering the local administration efficiency when dealing with citizens' matters.<sup>31</sup> Another impediment is the fact that Przemyśl is the only city with county rights in the Subcarpathian voivodeship which possesses both urban and rural commune. On the grounds of that, a conflict on extending the city borders between the representatives of the city and the commune has appeared. The conflict inhibits spatial development of Przemyśl. Among the communes that are planned to be incorporated into the city limits the only area that has been successfully included is Kruhel Wielki.<sup>32</sup>

### Historical Conditions

Democratic institutions, such as self-governments, are shaped by history. This fact was already shown by Robert D. Putnam in his book entitled "Making democracy work" by describing the operation of democratic institutions in contemporary Italy<sup>33</sup>. That is why it is also crucial to present historical conditions in which the territorial self-government was taking form in Przemyśl. As mentioned above, the contemporary self-government in Poland was developing in the period of Partitions. Przemyśl was then placed under Austrian partition, so local administration was taking form under the influence of that partitioner. Hubert Izdebski writes that in Austrian partition self-governments developed as a part of "the autonomy of crown lands." One of such crown lands was Galicia, which contained Przemyśl. Each and every crown land had its own Sejm of the Land, which issued new acts on national matters. In Galicia there were a commune and county self-government. The characteristic of the Galician commune self-government was lack of differentiation between municipal communes and one-village rural communes, which was rare in Europe of the time. Elections to the authorities of Galician self-governments at that time were scarcely democratic.<sup>34</sup>

This could have been favourable towards forcing officials by the partitioner's authorities. In Przemyśl during the Galician period most of them were either of German or Austrian nationality (especially in the early time, before introducing the act on Galician autonomy)<sup>35</sup>. It did not have a positive influence on the way the city was run and on the public trust towards the officials. The later period, namely the time of People's Republic of Poland, could also have had impact on the way the

<sup>31</sup> J. P. Tarno i in., *Samorząd terytorialny...*, op. cit., s. 302.

<sup>32</sup> W. Wolczyk, *Odpowiedź Prezydenta na propozycje Wójta w sprawie zmiany granic*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/12483.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/12483.html), [14 grudnia 2014]>; Witold Wolczyk, *List otwarty Prezydenta Miasta Przemyśla do Wójta Gminy Przemyśl*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/12547.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/12547.html), [14 grudnia 2014]>; Witold Wolczyk, *Wyniki konsultacji w sprawie zmiany granic miasta*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/12593.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/12593.html), [14 grudnia 2014]>; *Historia zmian terytorialnych oraz podstawy prawne poszerzenia*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/poszerzeniegranicy/516/](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/poszerzeniegranicy/516/), [14 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>33</sup> R. D. Putnam, *Demokracja w działaniu*, Znak, Warszawa 1995, s. 184-250.

<sup>34</sup> H. Izdebski, *Samorząd terytorialny. Podstawy...*, op. cit., s. 56.

<sup>35</sup> F. Persowski, *Przemyśl pod rządami austriackimi 1772-1918 [w:] Tysiąc lat Przemyśla. Zarys historyczny. Część druga*, F. Persowski, A. Kunysz, J. Olszak (red.), PWN, Kraków 1974, s. 39.



contemporary self-government functions not only in Przemyśl, but also in entire country. The replacement of local authorities with national councils, which were by and large local apparatus of central government, resulted in a deeper aversion to the authorities. Lack of trust to any type of power can be visible even now, especially among older citizens bearing in mind the period of socialist realism. This is also strengthened by an acquired demanding attitude. Compulsory work for every citizen in socialism as well as total control of almost every aspect of life gave rise to such an attitude in a considerable part of society. Of course, it is not conducive to the formation of civil society, the foundation of which is trust. This, in turn, hinders the activity of local authorities and hampers public actions. In this way, we move towards further, social conditions of a self-government operation.

### **Social conditions**

Social conditions are connected to historical experiences, because it is the common history that shapes local consciousness. Those relations are broadly analysed by, for example, Barbara Lewicka<sup>36</sup>. With reference to the above mentioned period of Polish People's Republic Piotr Długosz points out a "mental mismatch" of Subcarpathian inhabitants to the cultural realities of a democratic order. In his opinion such a sudden "change in the rules of the game" causes trauma, which has a destructive effect on the chance to adapt. Apathy and pessimism are the psychosocial consequences. However, it is the older generation that is burdened with the trauma and the chance to modernize our society is seen in the youth that is growing up in a new political system.<sup>37</sup>

As mentioned in the "Przemyśl in the Public Opinion" survey, the residents of the city highlighted multi-ethnicity as a factor that has long been shaping their consciousness. On the one hand it can favour openness and tolerance, that is the features attributed by those interviewed to the people of Przemyśl<sup>38</sup>, on the other hand, it may lead to divisions within the society and lack of trust and, as a result, to various disputes. This, in turn, can affect the functioning of local administration and non-governmental organizations, which are vital elements of democracy. The opinions of the people polled show that the relations between two biggest ethnic groups (the Poles and the Ukrainians) are positive on private and interpersonal level<sup>39</sup>. But on the institutional level there are occasional problems. One can mention a conflict about the Carmelite Church, in which the Pope John Paul II himself intervened<sup>40</sup>, or the question of bequeathing the Ukrainian People's Centre in Przemyśl to the Ukrainian community<sup>41</sup>. However, it is worth adding that up to now the contentious issues have been resolved constructively. The opening of The

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<sup>36</sup> M. Lewicka, *Psychologia miejsca*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2012, s. 405-451.

<sup>37</sup> P. Długosz, *Zmiany społeczno-ekonomiczne...*, op. cit., s. 13-42.

<sup>38</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemyśl w opinii społecznej...*, op. cit., s. 84-85.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem., s. 112.

<sup>40</sup> *Historia - Karmelici Bosi – Przemyśl*, <[http://karmel.przemysl.pl/?page\\_id=15](http://karmel.przemysl.pl/?page_id=15)>, [dostęp: 10 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>41</sup> *Historia*, <<http://narodnyjdim.pl/#/history/pl>>, [dostęp: 10 stycznia 2015]>.

Honorary Consulate of Ukraine in 2012 can prove the existence of dialogue between the two nations<sup>42</sup>.

Taking the before mentioned divisions between Poland A and B, their social aspect is also worth highlighting. The respondents during the interviews for "Przemysł in the Public Opinion" survey emphasized that not only the location of the city but also the perception of Przemysł as a city without prospects and development carries a number of negative results. A statement made by one of the respondents illustrates this point well: "[...] *the mentality that here nothing will turn out well, that here is Poland B and nobody will help us. Blaming everybody and everything, but this is generally characteristic for small towns which young people want to leave, [...] people think that here they will not be successful and that is why it's better to leave*"<sup>43</sup>. However, attempts to overcome the stereotype and various activities to change the state of the matters are already visible, which will be described in the next part of the article.

### **The activity of the self-government and cooperation with the citizens**

When observing the community of Przemysł one can notice more and less optimistic signs (both in case of citizens and the local authorities) concerning the functioning of democracy and public actions. Below, the activities of both local authorities, citizens and non-governmental organisations in Przemysł and its county will be presented.

According to Przemysł's strategy for success the city authorities count on a dynamic tourist development based on historical and natural values. Because of the location they also want to tap into the gateway function by developing trade, transportation and cross-border cooperation.<sup>44</sup> The construction of a ski slope, which was put into operation in 2006, has been the biggest investment so far. Then, it comprised two pistes, two chairlifts and a beginners' slope for learning how to ski.<sup>45</sup> Through the project co-financed by the European Union the second stage of construction was completed: a leisure park, a snowpark next to the ski slope and a luge track.<sup>46</sup> The opinions on the ski slope among the respondents of the "Przemysł in the Public Opinion" survey were both positive and negative. The increased tourist attraction and a bigger scope for private investors' activity were considered positive aspect of the investment. Among the negative aspects were: seasonal nature of the facility, its poor technical and service infrastructure as well as dependence on atmospheric conditions, which are not always favourable to doing winter sports in Przemysł even in December.<sup>47</sup> It is shown by the fact that in the recent years the ski

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<sup>42</sup> W Przemyslu otwarto Konsulat Honorowy Ukrainy, <<http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/rzeszow/w-przemyslu-otwarto-konsulat-honorowy-ukrainy/q193w>, [dostęp: 12 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>43</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemysł w opinii społecznej...*, op. cit., s.85.

<sup>44</sup> *Strategia sukcesu Miasta Przemysla*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/bip/prawo/strategia\\_rozwoju/1367.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/bip/prawo/strategia_rozwoju/1367.html) [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>, s.19.

<sup>45</sup> *Stok*, <<http://www.przemysl.pl/stok/>, [dostęp: 5 listopada 2014]>.

<sup>46</sup> *Projekty zrealizowane*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/gospodarka/inwestycje/UE/projekty\\_zrealizowane/](http://www.przemysl.pl/gospodarka/inwestycje/UE/projekty_zrealizowane/), [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>47</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemysł w opinii społecznej...*, op. cit., s. 104-105.

slope has been the most loss-making facility within the structure of the Sports and Leisure Centre in Przemyśl<sup>48</sup>.

Another issue concerns the location of large-format stores in the city. Their price competitiveness makes it difficult for small grocery stores to stay in the market. The construction of the shopping centre close to the bypass road also hit local tradesmen. Nevertheless, it is typical of our times. As numerous authors point out, so-called shopping malls are remarkably more attractive spheres for the citizens than traditional public places (squares, parks, outdoor markets, etc.)<sup>49</sup>. It is also visible, however, that some small-scale tradesmen have found a solution to those problems by joining the supermarket chains such as "Nasz Sklep" or "ABC." Moreover, they have another opportunity in offering additional services (such as fast-food products, lottery coupons), which is still seized by few. As reported by the president of Przemyśl branch of Merchant Congregation of Cracow, the biggest competition for small-scale tradesmen is the presence of discount stores (i.a. Biedronka, Lidl)<sup>50</sup>.

Przemyśl also struggles with problems concerning communications infrastructure. The authorities plan to encompass the city with a network of bypass roads. As shown by the traffic intensity research results included in the report on the city of Przemyśl condition, the eastern bypass road already in use has relieved the congestion in the city centre<sup>51</sup>. The south-eastern bypass road that is nearing completion will surely contribute to the phenomenon. The communications infrastructure repairs taking place since 2005 have significantly improved the quality of life in Przemyśl.

A very low voter turnout during the referendum on the revitalisation of the market square in Przemyśl can prove weak citizen's involvement in the self-governmental activity. The referendum itself was a grass-roots initiative, initiated by the citizens, which is a positive thing.<sup>52</sup> The voter turnout of 19,4%<sup>53</sup>, however, shows little involvement in the matter as well as yet insufficient awareness regarding the possibility of taking part in public life or even continuous distrust towards the public authorities. Katarzyna Dzieniszewska-Naroska shows that a low voter turnout in referenda is quite a common phenomenon in Poland. The author relates this fact to the practice of referenda on commune council dismissals and adds that it is the supporters of the dismissal that take part in the referendum, not the opponents.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, in referendum on Przemyśl's market square, most

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<sup>48</sup> M. Godos, *Nie śpię przez stok narciarski. Rozmowa z dyrektorem Przemyśkiego Ośrodka Sportu i Rekreacji Mariuszem Zamirskim*, 2015, nr 5, *Życie Podkarpackie*, s. 12.

<sup>49</sup> K. Bierwaczonok, B. Lewicka, T. Nawrocki, *Rynki, malle i cmentarze. Przestrzeń publiczna miast śląskich w ujęciu socjologicznym*, NOMOS, Kraków 2012, s. 72-79.

<sup>50</sup> N. Ziętał, *To będzie ciężki rok dla małych sklepów*, 2014, nr 7, *Nowiny*, s. 9.

<sup>51</sup> *Raport o stanie miasta Przemyśla 2014...*, op. cit., s. 99.

<sup>52</sup> D. Delmanowicz, *6322 podpisy pod wnioskiem o referendum w sprawie Rynku w Przemyślu*, <<http://www.nowiny24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090205/PRZEMYSL/685120461>, [dostęp: 14 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>53</sup> R. Porada, *Wyniki referendum gminnego w sprawie drzew i nowej architektury na przemyskim Rynku*, <[http://www.przemyśl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/629/archiwum\\_aktualnosci\\_2009/10485.html](http://www.przemyśl.pl/nasze_miasto/629/archiwum_aktualnosci_2009/10485.html), [dostęp: 14 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>54</sup> K. Dzieniszewska-Naroska, *Radny – sąsiad i polityk. Reprezentacja polityczna na szczeblu*

participants were against the changes suggested by the city authorities.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the results of the research conducted in 2010 show that such an attitude is also displayed by most people participating in interviews and surveys. Despite the organisation of a public debate on the future appearance of the market square<sup>56</sup>, a little progress has been made in the matter so far. The realisation of the underground tourist route project, giving visitors the access to the so called "Przemyśl Royal Route" and leading through the underground corridors and cellars under the Old Town and the market square, is coming to an end<sup>57</sup>.

Small effectiveness and insufficient reach of the social consultations concerning the realization of the Local Revitalization Program of Przemyśl also constitute another problem. Only four remarks were reported during the consultations. Three of them concerned the formal adjustments of one project, and the latter pertained to the already mentioned revitalization project of the main square area<sup>58</sup>.

The fact that the inhabitants of Przemyśl did not settle for the sole criticism of the revitalization project proposed by the self-government can be regarded as a positive, reinvigorating stimulus. The group of inhabitants associated in the Przemyśl Development Forum (FRP) proposed their own transformation project, which was based on the surveys conducted in the city<sup>59</sup>. FRP activists did not confine themselves to that one project as they also proposed various projects of bike lanes or urban railway. They are currently monitoring the course of the investments implemented by the local government, too.<sup>60</sup>

The formation of the Fortified Communes Union of Przemyśl Fortress (ZGFTP) in 2008 is the sign of the development of self-governing bodies in Przemyśl and its surrounding areas. Such an association is one of the forms of cooperation possibly undertaken by those communes which want to cooperate on projects, the implementation of which would be impossible by a single commune. These unions are therefore purposeful formations which are brought into being in order to carry out particular public tasks.<sup>61</sup> ZGFTP is comprised of: urban and rural communes of Przemyśl and the communes of Bircza, Krasiczyn, Krzywcz, Medyka, Orły, Stubno and Żurawica. The Union was created in order to protect and promote not only the historic fortifications of Przemyśl Fortress but also all the other

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*lokalnym*, Trio, Warszawa 2004, s. 235-236.

<sup>55</sup> R. Porada, *Wyniki referendum gminnego...*, op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> *Co z rynkiem?*,

<[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/nasze\\_miasto/629/archiwum\\_aktualnosci\\_2009/10764.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/nasze_miasto/629/archiwum_aktualnosci_2009/10764.html), [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>57</sup> *Coraz bliżej otwarcia podziemi*, <[http://www.gazetaprzemyska.pl/artykul-coraz\\_blizej\\_otwarcia\\_podziemi-1373](http://www.gazetaprzemyska.pl/artykul-coraz_blizej_otwarcia_podziemi-1373), [dostęp: 12 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>58</sup> M. Sowiński, *Spoleczny wymiar rewitalizacji...*, op. cit., s. 373-374.

<sup>59</sup> *Nasza wizja rewitalizacji Rynku Starego Miasta w Przemyślu*, <<http://frp.com.pl/rewitalizacja-rynku,a-73.html>, [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>60</sup> *Śródmiejska ścieżka pieszo-rowerowa*, <<http://frp.com.pl/artykuly-srodmiejska-sciezka-pieszo-rowerowa,k-9.html>, [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>; *Szybka kolej miejska w Przemyślu*, <<http://frp.com.pl/szybka-kolej-miejska-w-przemyslu,a-33.html>, [dostęp: 31 stycznia 2015]>.

<sup>61</sup> J. P. Tamo i in., *Samorząd terytorialny...*, op. cit., s. 159-162.

monuments located in the area of communes constituting the Union.<sup>62</sup> ZGFTP is currently implementing the project, co-financed by the European Union, which aims at the revitalization of bunkers, formerly constituting the part of the Fortress, and adapting them for the needs of tourism<sup>63</sup>. The creation of such an initiative shows the rising awareness among the regional civil servants as well as the crucial role of cooperation and the benefits that it brings.

### **The opinion of the inhabitants of Przemyśl on the functioning of self-government**

Significant indications concerning the accurate description of the functioning of local self-government can be also provided by the analyses of the inhabitants' opinions. The results of the research conducted in 2006 indicate that the President's political activity during the 2002-2006 tenure was evaluated positively whereas the activity of City Council was assessed as average<sup>64</sup>. Another study was conducted year later by the employees of the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów. During the survey concerning the social attitudes towards the extension of city borders, the subjects were also asked for the evaluation of the activity of Przemyśl's self-government. The evaluation was interpreted collectively. 45% of the examined evaluated the activity of Przemyśl's self-government as satisfactory while 31% of the examined regarded it as good. 12% of the examined assessed the regional civil servants as very good while 9% considered them as unsatisfactory.<sup>65</sup> The results show that in 2007 the appraisal of the activity of Przemyśl's self-government amongst the inhabitants was predominantly average. Similarly, in the survey called „Przemyśl in the Public Opinion”, the activity of the municipalities was evaluated as average. The latter research also shows remarkable differences between the assessments of the President and the City Council. Those of the examined who participated in the interviews were the most frequent to evaluate the President positively and, simultaneously, to judge the City Council negatively or to evaluate it averagely<sup>66</sup>. The findings of various studies indicate that the President enjoys the trust and huge social support whereas the City Council is considered as ineffective and set at loggerheads. Positive appraisals of the President prove his popularity. The current President of Przemyśl was elected in November 2014 in local elections. However, he did not become successful until the second ballot which was an unprecedented phenomenon.<sup>67</sup> As Gorzelak and Jałowiecki

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<sup>62</sup> Pierwsze Posiedzenie Związku Gmin Fortecznych Twierdzy Przemyśl, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/nasze\\_miasto/629/707/7661.html](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/nasze_miasto/629/707/7661.html), [dostęp: 14 grudnia 2014]>.

<sup>63</sup> *Realizowany projekt*, <<http://www.fortytwierdzyprzemysl.pl/realizowany-projekt.html>, [dostęp: 11 lutego 2015]>.

<sup>64</sup> S. Solecki, *Z przemyskich badań socjologicznych. Przegląd problematyki z lat 2006–2007* [w:] *Spółeczeństwo Podkarpacia po wstąpieniu Polski do Unii Europejskiej*. M. Malikowski (red.), Wyd. UR, Rzeszów 2008, s. 152-168.

<sup>65</sup> P. Grygiel, G. Humenny, P. Klimczak: *Raport z badań: Postawy społeczne wobec poszerzenia granic miasta Przemyśla*, <[http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze\\_miasto/poszerzeniegranic/569/](http://www.przemysl.pl/nasze_miasto/poszerzeniegranic/569/), [dostęp: 14 grudnia 2014]>, s. 18.

<sup>66</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemyśl w opinii społecznej...*, op. cit., s. 144-146.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Choma *Prezydentem po raz czwarty*, 2014, nr 49, *Życie Podkarpackie*, s. 14.

point out, the stable governance fosters the realization of the long-term politics concerning the development of the commune. However, it may also pose danger consisting of the emergence of unhealthy relations and “pathological network of codependence”.<sup>68</sup>

Directions of the city development determined by Przemyśl local government are accepted by the respondents taking part in the studies “Przemyśl in Public opinion,” but the method of their implementation is not so readily accepted. This is clearly illustrated not only by the declarations of the people examined but also by the opinions of East European State Higher School students. Students also believe that there is a lack of elaborate and applied development project for Przemyśl’s development. This was the opinion of 45% of the examined students. Almost 35% of the interviewed students chose the local government’s inaccurate politics as one of the Przemyśl’s drawbacks. According to their opinion, improper promotion of the city, the lack of adequate communication, sport and recreational infrastructure are amongst the tasks which demand the most immediate action. These findings are also consistent with the interviewees’ opinions. Students’ representing more negative standpoint may stem from the fact that they regard both the local labour market and the cultural and entertaining offer as unattractive for the young people. These are therefore the most frequent causes of young people’s emigration from the city.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> G. Gorzelak, B. Jałowiecki, *Konjunktura w Polsce lokalnej...*, op. cit., s. 13.

<sup>69</sup> M. Sowiński, *Przemyśl w opinii społecznej...*, op. cit., s. 125-126.