

## ATTEMPTS AT INTRODUCING ORDER TO ADVERTISEMENTS IN POLISH TOWNS AND CITIES

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**Abstract:** The inspiration to raise the topic and present the attempts at introducing order to the advertising chaos present in Polish towns and cities came from the current needs and experiences of Polish local government units in that respect, as well as a field study carried out in 2018 in cooperation with the Pabianice Town Hall. The aim of the so-called Landscape Act introduced in 2015 was to clarify the notions related to advertisements, and define the role and scope of influence of local government units on the process of creating and placing advertisements within communes. However, it seems that the practical aspect of that is quite difficult, both when diagnosing the starting state, and when preparing the provisions of local advertising regulations and seeking compromises and implementing them later on. The intention was to discuss the methodology and the results of a field study conducted in Pabianice. The study consisted of a detailed urban inventory, i.e. listing all advertisements present within the studied area and recording their locations, types, sizes, and technical condition. Additionally, the study indicated locations which featured the highest saturation with advertisements, and where they clashed with their surroundings the most. The results of the study could serve as a stepping stone for a broader discussion on urban advertising chaos, and for planning a successful utilisation of both the economic and visual potential of the high street. The inventory and the related conclusions could inspire other towns and cities, particularly those which are preparing to approach the aesthetically viable problem, and to develop efficient instruments for protecting urban space.

**Keywords:** urban space, urban inventory, outdoor advertisements, Poland, Pabianice

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Despite an undeniable wealth of cultural qualities, spatial organisation of Polish towns and cities has for many years been the topic of discussions of urban developers, geographers, sociologists, economists and social activists (Lorens, 2005; Polska polityka architektoniczna, 2011; Chmielewski et al., 2018; Dutkowski, 2018 and others). Most controversy has arisen from unsightly buildings: their locations, forms, and technical condition, technical infrastructure facilities and street furniture,

and since three decades back also outdoor advertisements. Advertising content is invading *en masse*, often illegally, using not only purpose-developed media but also walls and windows of buildings, fences, public transport stops, vehicles, street lamps, trees, etc. (Czyński and Ostrowski, 2011). Researchers often list as the reasons for such disturbances in the organisation of public space such issues as, e.g. historical considerations, insufficient social trust, the attitude towards the law and legal institutions, deficiencies in general and specialist education, and the peculiar approach to law within public space (Sepioł, 2015).

In 2015, due to an increasing social pressure, new legislative solutions, the so-called Landscape Act, were introduced in Poland with an aim to limit the distortions in the visual order, in particular those caused by outdoor advertisements. The document was intended to clarify the notions related to advertisements, and to define the role and scope of influence of local government units on the process of creating and placing advertisements within communes. Some local government units undertook the toilsome task of introducing order to the advertising space, especially in central areas, while other have been monitoring the effects of the actions of those pioneers and considering how to transfer that difficult topic to the reality of their communes.

What is clear, though, is the fact that in order to even begin thinking about any changes in that respect, it is necessary to first conduct an in-depth diagnosis of the starting condition, secondly to list all the advertisements present within the cityscape, and, finally, to indicate locations which are the most problematic in that respect. Apart from seeking deficiencies it is also worth noticing the good examples of advertisements present within specific communes, i.e. those which fulfil their roles and match their surroundings. Only based on the results of diagnostic works will it be possible to attempt to develop the assumptions of a local cityscape resolution.

Since 2016 the Faculty of Geographical Sciences, University of Lodz, has been cooperating with Pabianice, and has tried to raise and fulfil in its research topics with practical applications. Advertisements in the high street have become one such issue. Therefore, in June 2018, the Institute of the Built Environment and Spatial Policy, a unit of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences, fulfilled in Pabianice a field study the aim of which was to develop the basis for a discussion of the advertising chaos within the town's high street, and to recommend the necessary changes in that respect.

The aim of this article is to discuss the methodology and the results of the field study conducted in Pabianice which constitute a stepping stone for a broader discussion on urban advertising chaos, and for planning a successful utilisation of both the economic and visual potential of Pabianice's high street. It may inspire other towns and cities, particularly those which are preparing to approach the aesthetically viable problem, and to develop efficient instruments for protecting urban space.

Towards the end, it was also necessary to make a reference to a broader backdrop of the issues identified in Pabianice. Therefore, the first part of the article serves as an opportunity to offer a general overview of the causes, forms and scale of the invasion of advertising into contemporary Polish cities and towns. On that

basis it was possible to discuss the legal and extra-legal means of introducing order to the advertising chaos, and attempt to evaluate their efficiency.

## **2 MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The first part of the article was developed based on a review of literature, mainly related to architecture and urban development, land management, social and economic geography, and urban sociology. Legal acts passed at the central level of state administration, as well as local documents, i.e. resolutions by local government units constituted an important group of source material. We mainly focussed in that respect on larger urban centres subject to the most emphatic invasions of outdoor advertisements.

The second part of the article is empirical in nature, and was created based on the field study conducted by students in June 2018 in Pabianice. It was conducted by first-year students of full-time master's studies of the Land Management course as part of their specialisation field training under the academic supervision of Edyta Masierek and Paweł Nowicki.

During their field study, the students utilised a study tool in the form of an inventory sheet developed prior by their academic supervisors. Developing it was no easy task as there are no established standards for such a tool. Even if inventory is taken in some towns, the details regarding the methods and the tools used for that are not usually made public; the methods of studying the saturation with advertisements was discussed in a limited extent by, e.g. Chmielewski and Chmielewski (2013) or Grobelny and Goska (2017).

During the field study in Pabianice, the researchers' task was to fill out 12 points of the inventory sheet. First, it was necessary to specify the address and the legal status of the plot where an advertisement was located. Next, the researchers had to analyse the saturation with advertisements at specific properties. It was decided that while evaluating that aspect, the researchers should focus on the total number of advertisements within a plot or the total area they occupy. The researchers used a five-point scale where 0 meant no advertisements present, 1 meant a small number of advertisements or a small area occupied, 2 meant a medium number of advertisements or a medium area occupied, 3 meant a large number of advertisements or a large area occupied, and 4 meant a very large number of advertisement or a very large area occupied.

Another subjectively evaluated matter was the harmony or a lack thereof between advertisements and the space of the high street. The evaluation was based on a three-point scale where the first point indicated an advertisement which fitted the urban reality well, while the second and third points meant advertisements which fitted it poorly. Next, the researchers listed all the advertisements located within the study area. They were identified according to their kinds, locations, sizes, types, technical conditions, aesthetics, and the industry they represented. The researchers

also verified whether the advertisements were related to a business operating within the same plot.

In terms of the kind of advertisements, the following categories were indicated in the inventory sheet: signboard, foil on a window pane, banner, sheet of paper, advertising board, poster, billboard, advertising case, A-board, citylight, LED advertisement, megaboard, and totem. The advertisements were divided into single and double-sided advertisements. For the purposes of the study, they were further divided into four types based on their sizes, i.e.:

- A – small advertisements, i.e. small advertising boards (with an area up to 1 sq. m);
- B – medium advertisements, mainly advertising banners hang on fences (1-9 sq. m);
- C – large advertisements, usually 6×3 media systems (9-18 sq. m);
- D – oversized advertisements, large-area media usually placed on building façades.

The visibility of an advertisement is often related to its location, thus another element analysed by the researchers were the locations of advertisements, e.g. on buildings, fences, poles/announcement boards, street lamps, trees, pavement, etc.

The next two characteristics considered are largely interdependent, i.e. the technical condition of an advertisement and its aesthetics. The technical condition was evaluated as either good, average or bad, while aesthetics within a 1-5 scale, where 1 was the worst evaluation.

In order to define the industry to which a given advertisement was related, the researchers used the Polish Classification of Businesses introduced in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 2007 closely related to the Eurostat NACE Classification.

### **3 ORIGINS AND CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF INVASION OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN URBAN SPACE**

The use of a visual mode for communicating commercial information within public space has been known since antiquity. Sources mention, e.g. notices of papyrus, road signs and other signs carved in stone found in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and prototype graffiti and murals in Roman towns (Taylor and Change, 1995). In mediaeval Europe, advertising was, initially, a specific manner of displaying goods on a specific seller's stall or by a specialist workshop. In time, urban space began to include other elements the aim of which was to draw the attention of potential clients: signs and announcement poles entering deeper into and above pedestrian routes and roads (Larwood and Camden Hotten, 1908).

As European towns and cities developed socially and economically, they began to experience the harsh reality of an uncontrolled invasion of advertisements, which, apart from disturbing the cityscape, also posed a safety threat, and interfered with pedestrian and road traffic within the urban space. Sometimes advertising media

would block passageways or collapse due to their large mass and negligent installation. Therefore, some cities introduced legal regulations restricting the distribution of advertising media. That was the case, e.g. in Paris (1761) and London (1762) (Larwood and Camden Hotten, 1908).

The initially limited choice of media and the forms of advertisements continued to expand to include printed leaflets and posters. That was possible thanks to a systematic fight against illiteracy, the introduction of the printing press (in Europe in the 15th c.), and, finally, the improvements in large-format printing achieved in the early-19th c. At the same time entrepreneurs began to realise the impact of advertising, and started occupying, sometimes illegally, public space. The United States were a pioneer in that respect. After the Civil War the dynamic invasion of commercial communication was visible, on the one hand, in wide-spread installation of new media, and, on the other, it assumed more extensive forms of occupying already existing structures: barns, stacks, church towers, bridges, or even valuable natural landmarks. One example of that was the use of the rock cliffs by Niagara Falls as an advertisement medium, which caused public outcry, and resulted in a discussion on regulating the market of outdoor advertisements in the US. As a result, since the late-19th c. there began to appear associations of advertisers which, in principle, were supposed to ensure the quality of advertising communications (Taylor and Chang, 1995).

Today, by utilising spatial planning and cultural landscape protection tools Western countries seem to generally fulfil the obligation to safeguard themselves against the chaos of the past. That does not, however, solve all dilemmas, e.g. the legitimacy of placing advertisements on the elements of urban infrastructure or within public space as part of public and private *package deals* (Iveson, 2012). A different situation could be observed in some Eastern European states (Poposki, 2011; Suditu et al., 2016; Evseeva, 2017), including Poland, where the emphatic invasion of advertisements was caused by a different course of social and economic development after World War II.

In Poland, outdoor advertising was developing rather harmoniously all until the second half of the 20th c. The specificity of the period of the command economy (1945-1989), mainly in terms of the nature of the market, private entrepreneurship, and competition, was the reason why the invasion of visual information typical for free-market states was limited in terms of its nature and extent. The 1990s were a breakthrough moment in that respect. Poland witnessed an influx of foreign investors, a dynamic development of domestic entrepreneurship, and a growth in the population's purchasing power and in internal demand. Poles began to view the freedom of placing outdoor advertisements as a sign of economic freedom, so desirable after decades of restrictions. As a result, with no efficient legal regulations in place, cities, towns and attractive undeveloped lands (e.g. zones along traffic routes, high-value tourist areas) were aggressively invaded by advertising. Only the most valuable areas in terms of culture and nature were subject to protection.

From that moment on it became common for the topsy-turvy sea of colour and format creeping onto buildings, elements of the infrastructure, fences, etc. Bill-

boards, banners, neon signs, totems, A-boards, and cars and tow trucks taped over with advertisements mar historic sites, obstruct pedestrian traffic, distract drivers, unnecessarily occupy parking spaces, or even limit access to sunlight and views from apartment windows (Figure 1a, 1b, 1c). As a result of the multitude of stimuli, advertisements cannot fulfil their original function, i.e. to highlight the location where a certain service is being offered. The visual *noise* is the reason why if one wishes to be noticed in the overflow of colour, one must use even more aggressive means of communication.



**Figure 1a** Advertisements in Łódź: obscured dominant feature of the landscape.  
Source: Iwona Pielesiak, 2018

Moreover, not all such structures are installed legally. According to a 2017 report of the Supreme Audit Office – NIK (*Kształtowanie krajobrazu...*, 2017), over 50% of the advertisements in the inspected areas were introduced within the right of way in violation of applicable regulations. Faced with the failings of the authorities when it comes to advertising content lawlessly introduced into public space, some citizens began fighting the problem on their own. On the one hand, both community organisations and individuals filed official motions for better space organisation, and, on the other, throughout Poland people personally removed illegal advertisements from fences, elements of the infrastructure, etc. Those persons were referred to as *adbusters* “reconquering the space” (Nawrocki, 2011).



**Figure 1b** Advertisements in Łódź: residential building. Source: Iwona Pielesiak, 2018



**Figure 1c** Advertisements in Łódź: *cluttered* suburbs. Source: Iwona Pielesiak, 2018

## 4 INTRODUCING ORDER TO POLISH ADVERTISING SPACE

For many years central and local authorities have had at their disposal tools for fighting the advertising chaos, yet the success rate in using those has been questionable. Valuable cultural sites are covered by the 2003 Act on protecting landmarks and historic sites. On its basis any alterations in the structure of a protected site require a permit from the applicable Voivodship Landmarks Conservator. In theory, that should prevent valuable landmarks from being obscured by advertisements. However, in reality, despite a registration in the register of historic sites is an efficient tool, the problem may lie in some of the decisions made by authorised bodies, and the long-drawn procedures (Kształtowanie krajobrazu..., 2017) additionally extended by the *delay tactics* used by entities accused of illegal practices in terms of installing advertisements, e.g. repeated appeals to decisions (Sławomirska, 2005), sometimes even problems with identifying the *originators*.

The Act offers another tool for introducing order to urban space, which in theory should be very efficient yet it is seldom used (Pielesiak, 2015), i.e. the establishing of a culture park, which is done by commune councils. A commune resolution defines the borders of the protected area, regulates its functions and development (protection plan), and requires the local authorities to develop a local land utilisation plan (a detailed act of local law). Those rules are defined specifically for each individual culture park, and may possess various degrees of detailing, which, paradoxically, is both an advantage and a disadvantage of the tool. On the one hand, a protection plan tailored to local conditions seems a better solution than a catalogue of dos and don'ts enforced at the central level. On the other, local authorities may introduce a fairly limited protection plan which would improve the landscape assets of the area ever so slightly.

Consistency in implementing the protection rules is a much bigger problem. Successful actions in that respect were conducted in, e.g. Wrocław, Cracow, and Łódź, where the authorities monitored not only the observance of the new rules, but also they encouraged good practices by remaining in direct contact with property lessees/owners. Not always, however, the results of creating a culture park are positive. That is usually due to a failure to follow procedures or to the deficiencies of legal regulations, e.g. despite a legal requirement a city or town council does not establish either a protection plan or a local land development plan. Sometimes, the provisions of a protection plan do not correspond to the regulations included in land development plans, or local plans within a park are not uniform. Moreover, it is sometimes the case that the authorities responsible for supervising roads do not respect the rules established in the land development plan. Finally, there is a problem with fragmented conservator supervision over the parks due to inadequate authority (Kształtowanie krajobrazu..., 2017).

Conservator protection is applied in the case of areas featuring important historic qualities. But how can the advertising chaos be managed in other areas? The provisions of local land development plans may prove helpful to some extent. Pursu-

ant to the Act on planning and land development (2003), those plans may define, e.g. the rules for distributing street furniture (e.g. by introducing the obligation to acquire an installation permit). However, local plans are not obligatory, and they are expensive to develop, while the procedure for passing them takes time and effort. That is why the percentage of land development plans throughout Poland is not satisfactory: according to Śleszyński et al. (2018) in 2016 it amounted to only 30.2% of the total area of the country. Moreover, authorities do not always establish plans for areas which feature the most intensive land or cityscape disturbances. Furthermore, some are fragmented, spatially incoherent, and their provisions may be outdated in relation to the current needs. On top of that, there are the previously-mentioned problems with observing regulations, both by citizens and some officials. All that means that in order to introduce order to the advertising chaos it would be necessary to possess a more efficient tool, which was emphasized i.a. by Kiepas-Kokot and Nowak (2015).

The gap in the array of tools for fighting the visual cluttering of public space in Poland was filled in 2015 with the so-called *Landscape Act* or more precisely: the Act amending certain acts in relation to strengthening the tools for landscape protection. It introduced the ability to establish specific rules regarding the placement of outdoor advertisements, define what forms of advertisements are legal and which are not, and the size of advertisements, offering authorities the ability to introduce fees for structures used for outdoor advertisements. The document has been long awaited, but when it finally came into force its impact was not all positive. Spurred by initial enthusiasm, many communes started passing the so-called *advertising codes* or *landscape regulations* only to meet a strong opposition, not only local (residents and entrepreneurs), but also originating from voivodes (regional supervisory bodies of central administration).

As of the status in September 2018, out of 2,478 Polish communes over 300 passed resolutions of intent to begin work on advertising codes. Pioneers among those included Cichanow, a town of almost 45,000 inhabitants (it was the first to undertake ordering actions and has been the most successful), and the biggest cities: Lodz, Gdansk, Cracow, Warsaw, and Poznan (Table 1).

As of today, apart from Ciechanow, Lodz, Gdansk, Opole, Lubin, and Sopot, advertising regulations were passed in smaller communes: Wyszkw, Kolbaskowo, Kobylnica, Baranow, and Koronowo.

Voivodes reported reservations to the regulations in Lodz, Opole, and Gdansk issuing supervisory decisions repealing those regulations in part or in their entirety; reservations were also reported by entrepreneurs. Based on legal regulations, the provisions of existing resolutions are not sufficiently precise, which enables free interpretation (e.g. “appropriate proportions”, “proper exposure”), they violate the competences of other administrative bodies, they wrongfully copied obligations stated in other documents (including legal acts), and some provisions are retrospective in nature (Rozczyński, 2017). Entrepreneurs would also indicate the limiting of the freedom of business activity, and a complete lack of adaptation period or that the duration of the period was too short.

**Table 1** Progress in works on advertisement regulations in major Polish cities (September 2018).

City / population [ths]	Formal initiation	Urban inventory / social survey	Draft resolution	Open debate	Resolution passed	Resolution appealed against
Warsaw / 1764.6	x	x	x	x		
Cracow / 767.3	x	x	x	x		
Lodz / 690.4	x	x	x	x	x	Voivodship Administrative Court recognised the resolution to be invalid; municipal authorities made an appeal to Supreme Administrative Court – process in progress
Wroclaw / 638.6	x	x				
Poznan / 538.6	x	x	x			
Gdansk / 538.7	x	x	x	x	x	Municipal authorities made an appeal to Voivodship Administrative Court – the resolution was sustained
Szczecin / 403.9	x	x	x	x		
Bydgoszcz / 352.3	x	x	x	x		
Lublin / 339.9	x	x	x			
Bialystok / 297.3	x					
Katowice / 296.3	x	x	x	x		
Gdynia / 246.4						
Czestochowa / 224.4	x	x	x	x		
Radom / 214.6	x					
Sosnowiec / 204.0	x					
Torun / 202.6	x	x	x	x		
Opole / 118.7	x	x	x	x	x	Voivodship Administrative Court recognised the resolution to be invalid; municipal authorities made an appeal to Supreme Administrative Court – process in progress

Source: developed based on local government websites and Central Base of Administrative Decisions and Demographic yearbook of Poland (2018)

In Lodz, the resolution was repealed by the Voivodship Administrative Court, but the city appealed the decision to the Supreme Administrative Court. In Gdansk,

the repealed code was restored by the Voivodship Administrative Court. In Opole, the situation remains unsettled, while in Ciechanow the code was amended once the voivode issued a supervisory order.

The Polish Landscape Act is voluntary in nature. It indicates the desired direction of the necessary changes to the supervision and protection of public space against the advertising chaos, and the instruments that can be prepared for that end. It does not, however, require communes to prepare local advertising codes. Furthermore, the above-mentioned problems pro-active local governments have in passing the resolutions are not encouraging others to raise that difficult and often controversial topic. That was one of the reasons for the field study in Pabianice, as the town has not yet undertaken any work on an advertising resolution but has already noticed the problem pestering its space.

## **5 ADVERTISEMENTS WITHIN THE HIGH STREET OF PABIANICE. PRELIMINARY STUDY**

### **5.1. Study area**

Pabianice is a medium-sized (66,000 inhabitants, area of 33 sq. km) town experiencing continued depopulation located in central Poland, in the Lodzkie Voivodship. It borders Lodz, the third largest city in Poland, and it is the seat of the sub-regional level of government.

The history of Pabianice probably dates back to the 10th or 11th c., when it was a small forest settlement on the Dobrzynka. Pabianice received its town rights in the mid-14th c. Since the late-16th c. it was a church town of the Cracow cathedral chapter. That was when the town's most valuable Renaissance sites were built, e.g. the fortified manor of Pabianice starostes (1565-71), which today houses the Pabianice Town Museum (Figure 2) (Adamczyk, 2007).

In the 19th c., Pabianice was included in the government list of towns which were supposed to become hotspots of the textile industry. As a result of favourable tax and duty conditions the town started attracting factory owners, e.g. the families of Krusche, Baruch, and Karol Ender. The town's population spiked, and a large portion of it consisted Germans and Jews. In 1823-24, the Old Town regulation plan was implemented. The New Town with a town square was established on the left bank of the Dobrzynka (Adamczyk, 2007). Today, it is the area near Pabianice's landmark Trzy Korony department store (Figure 3).

In the mid-19th c., Pabianice was already an industrial town with a textile focus. Approx. 26% of the population earned their living in the textile industry. In 1850, Benjamin Krusche introduced the first steam engine thus initiating the technical revolution. It resulted in a period of capital mergers, which in turn resulted in the creation of industrial bourgeoisie in Pabianice. In the late-19th c., its core consisted the assets of such companies as Krusche and Ender, Kindler, and the CIBA Chemical Factory. Pabianice constituted an important production centre of cotton, wool and mixed fabrics (Saładaj, 2018).



**Figure 2** The former fortified manor (nowadays the seat of the Pabianice Town Museum). Source: Edyta Masierek, 2018



**Figure 3** Trzy Korony department store. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2018

The way Pabianice appears today was largely the result of the industrial boom it experienced. The town still features many interesting structures from the industrial period, which determine its historical identity. Many of them, having undergone intensive economic transformation which began in Poland in 1989 due to the political transformation, have deteriorated, while some have been perfectly adapted to serve new functions without losing their post-industrial style (Figures 4, 5, 6).

Today, the economy of Pabianice is based on the pharmaceutical, clothing, and food industries; the services' sector is developing less dynamically. The spatial-functional structure of the town features a clearly defined historical town centre, which serves administration functions. South of it, there are residential areas, and there are industrial areas north of it (Program rewitalizacji Pabianic, 2017).

The area of Pabianice selected for the study of the advertising chaos was a section of the town's thoroughfare called Trakt Kapituły Krakowskiej, measuring approx. 2.3 km. The area included such streets as: Łaska, Zamkowa, Stary Rynek, and Warszawska. In some cases, the researchers also considered sections of streets entering 50 m into city blocks (Figure 7).



**Figure 4** Hotel Fabryka Wełny, exterior design from the rear side of the hotel.  
Source: Edyta Masierek, 2018

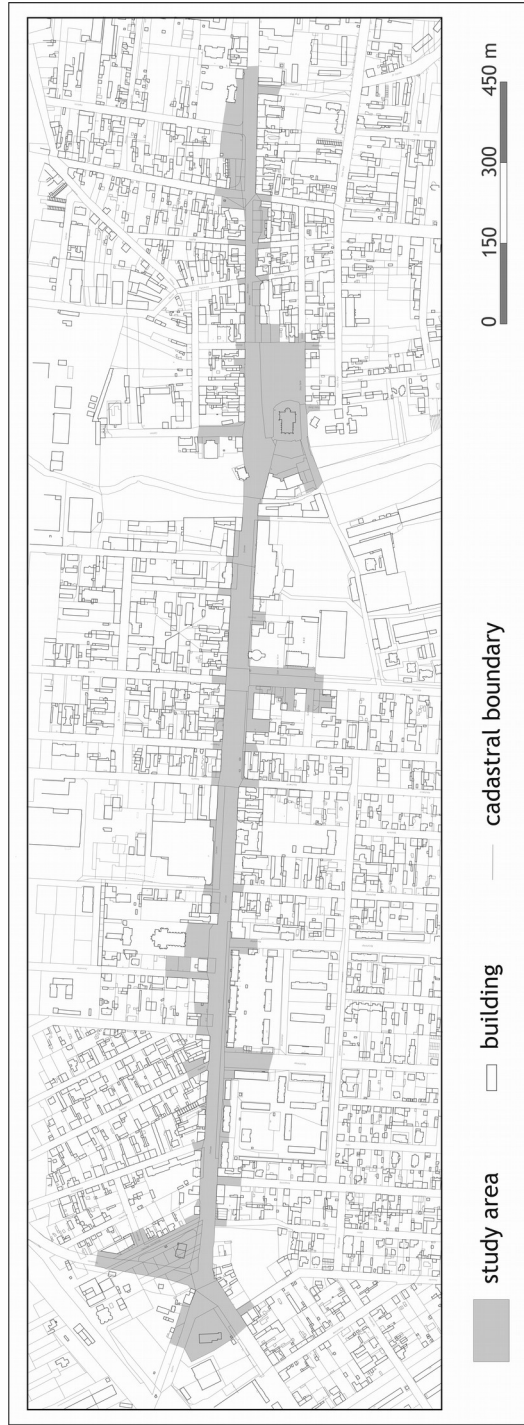
The selected area is the town's showpiece, and it refers to the town's industrial traditions. It includes buildings and offers functions associated with the development of the city, including the Old Market Square (Figures 8, 9) which lost much of its significance once the New Town was established, something which is clearly visible both in the town's spatial structure, and how its inhabitants perceive the Square



**Figure 5** The former Baruch factory converted into a sports and recreational centre with a Spa Hotel called Fabryka Welny (the Wool Factory) with a restaurant, a gym, a bowling alley, and conference rooms. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2018



**Figure 6** Hotel Fabryka Welny, a pedestrian zone around the hotel. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2018



**Figure 7** Study area. Source: material by Pabianice Town Hall, adapted by Iwona Pielesiak

today. That became most apparent when a 2016 survey among Pabianice inhabitants entitled ‘How to change the Old Market Square in Pabianice?’ had to include a map indicating the Square’s location because otherwise they had trouble locating it at all (Jak zmienić..., 2016).



**Figure 8** Old Market Square in Pabianice; view of an older building in the area objects. Source: Magdalena Gmur, 2016



**Figure 9** Old Market Square in Pabianice; view of cultural and historical objects. Source: Magdalena Gmur, 2016

## 5.2. Study results

Based on the analysis of the study results it can be stated that the study area of Pabianice, which is the heart of the town, is heavily saturated with advertisements. It must be stated, though, that there is the infrequent plot free of any advertisements, mainly because on those plots no businesses operate. The advertisements often clash with their surroundings and distract the users of the space, which only proves the need to introduce order and unify the matter in Pabianice, presumably by starting with the area of the town's high street.

A total of 1,609 advertisements were listed within the study area. The majority of those were signboards constituting 30% of the total number of advertisements, and foil on window panes, which constituted 22.1% of the listed media. What is worth mentioning is a relatively large number of the so-called paper sheets (8.1%) glued to trees or lamp posts, which usually carry job offers or advertisements of smaller single-person services, e.g. carpet cleaners. The *Other* open category included, e.g. advertisements on vehicles or sunshades in café and bar gardens.

The majority of the listed advertisements, i.e. 93%, were related to businesses operating at the same locations as the advertisements. Most of the advertisements, when applying the study categories, were small measuring under 1 sq. m, while advertisements with an area in excess of 9 sq. m were the least frequent. Most advertisements were installed on buildings (87.6% of the total number). In general, the condition of the advertisements was evaluated as good, with only a small percentage evaluated as poor. Then, when it comes to aesthetics, the largest number of advertisements was evaluated at 3, while almost a third of the total number was evaluated the lowest.

Based on the classification of businesses used in the study, most media advertised wholesale and retail trade outlets, and car repair stations not servicing motor-cycles. Smaller groups included advertisements of financial or insurance agencies, and restaurants. A significant number of advertisements were related to services (e.g. electronics, watch, jewellery or footwear repair shops, hairstylists or beauty salons). That indicates a services-focussed nature of Pabianice's high street.

Based on the inventory taken and the analysis of the resulting data it was concluded that the studied area is oversaturated with advertisements which create an advertising chaos. The advertisements are often of poor aesthetic quality, some are neglected, garish, and obscure the façades of historical tenement houses or religious structures (Figures 10, 11, 12). Advertising media disrupting the visual order and the aesthetics of the high street.

The following elements should be considered as the area's weaknesses:

- excessive saturation with advertisements on façades of buildings and their negative impact on the townscape,
- recurring signboards and other media with the same content,
- aggressive colour schemes of advertisements,
- no colour scheme matching with the façades of buildings,
- advertisement sizes disproportionate in relation to the sizes of buildings, inappropriate placement of advertisements (e.g. on balconies, fences),

- advertisements covering entire store/building windows,
- dominance of advertisements the aesthetic qualities of which are medium (27%) and low (22%) (Masierek and Kurzyk, 2018).



**Figure 10** Negative examples of advertisements present within the high street of Pabianice; great ad close to the church. Source: Edyta Masierek, Krzysztof Bednarek, 2016



**Figure 11** Negative examples of advertisements present within the high street of Pabianice; cluster of ads on street stalls and company house. Source: Edyta Masierek, Krzysztof Bednarek, 2016



**Figure 12** Negative examples of advertisements present within the high street of Pabianice; ad right on the wall of the house. Source: Edyta Masierek, Krzysztof Bednarek, 2016

The strengths include a high percentage of advertisements present in the urban landscape that are related to it, which means they usually refer to the businesses operating within the studied area. Moreover, few advertisements were classified as large or very large. Also, 60% of the listed media were found to be in a good technical condition. Finally, one should emphasise the high service potential of the studied area, and the fact that it included good examples of advertising (Figures 13, 14, 15), which could serve as inspiration for future changes, and developing guidelines and standards for protecting Pabianice against advertising chaos.



**Figure 13** Positive examples of advertisements within the high street of Pabianice; fitness ad in the hotel window. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2016



**Figure 14** Positive examples of advertisements within the high street of Pabianice; ads on the wall just to the entrance. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2016



**Figure 15** Positive examples of advertisements within the high street of Pabianice; a small popping ad on the wall of the building. Source: Edyta Masierek, 2016

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite various modern tools for limiting advertising chaos are available, disturbances to the urban landscape are still common within Polish urban space. In theory, the most successful tools include registering a structure or an area in a register of historical sites, and establishing culture parks. The former to be successful would require a much stronger conservator supervision than the one that is currently in place, while the latter would require authorities to develop and consistently implement detailed guidelines for advertising within newly-established culture parks. Introducing order into the visual aspect of public space can be also supported by the recently passed Landscape Act. The Act, as in the case of a culture park, entails the problem of proper wording of the provisions of local resolutions. Those should enable ordering of the space without violating any property rights which might serve as basis for appealing them, and they should be carefully structured to minimise misuse in interpreting their provisions.

Within that spirit, we recommend that the discussed town of Pabianice should develop an advertising resolution, made available by the Landscape Act, which would include optimal exact parameters for the placement and appearances of advertisements. The document must list actions which can result in decreasing the number of advertisements of any kind, and in adjusting their colour scheme to the façades of related buildings.

The town authorities should start educating the inhabitants and other users in order to draw their attention to the need to engage in a fight against the advertising chaos surrounding them. It would be worth supporting and publicising good examples outdoor advertisements, which could be found within the townscape. The results of the 2018 study of Pabianice's high street could become a stepping stone or an inspiration for a local discussion on the topic, and support the development of, most of all, an advertising resolution for the study area. The aims of the principles which must be included in such a document should be to:

- eliminate advertisements in poor technical condition,
- minimise the content (by including only basic information about a business) and the form of an advertisement,
- define the dimensions of advertisements and their proportions in relation to the size of the structure on which are supposed to be installed,
- limit the available colour scheme,
- ban installing advertisements on balconies, roofs, architectural details,
- ensure care for the quality, appearance, and secure installation of advertisements,
- ensure proper selection of materials used for constructing the advertisements,
- avoid recurring advertisements within a single plot (Szmygin, 2015; Masierek and Kurzyk, 2018).

Finally, it should be stressed that legal regulations should not constitute the sole method for solving the problem of distorting the appearances of urban landscape. That is because formal requirements should be supported by one basic issue, i.e.

people's awareness and readiness to engage in a dialogue, to cooperate to improve the quality of public space. Despite the situation seems to be improving as the years pass, basic education is still essential. Polish schools do not offer periodic inspiring classes on the role of public space and that it should be respected as a common value, while the development of knowledge and abilities in children's and young adults' critical approach in combination with original art education should have much better results in the future than simply using a system of compulsion and repression. It is, however, a difficult task, especially now when all levels of the Polish system of education are subject to never-ending reforms.

Yet systemic difficulties do not preclude other forms of engagement, particularly those which do not impose such high organisational and financial strains. Promoting good practices is key, e.g. through close cooperation, based on good will and not just compulsion, between local authorities cooperating closely with building lessees and owners and other entities who actually decide about the appearances of the space we all live in.

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## **Pokus o zavedenie poriadku pri umiestňovaní reklamy v poľských mestách**

### **Súhrn**

Výsledky predloženej štúdie by mohli slúžiť ako základ, resp. odrazový mostík pre širšiu diskusiu o chaos, ktorý vytvára mestská reklama v poľských mestách a do určitej miery aj pre plánovanie úspešného využívania ekonomického a vizuálneho potenciálu hlavných ulíc vo veľkých mestách. Získané poznatky a s nimi súvisiace závery by mohli inšpirovať poľské mestá, najmä však tie, ktoré sa pripravujú pristúpiť k vytváraniu esteticky životaschopného prostredia v mestách a takisto chcú vyvinúť účinné nástroje na ochranu široko chápaného mestského priestoru.

Napriek rôznym moderným prístupom a nástrojom na obmedzenie reklamného chaosu sú pomerne výrazne rušivé estetické i architektonické situácie s umiestňovaním reklám v mestskej krajine ešte stále bežné v poľskom mestskom priestore. Teoreticky, medzi najúspešnejšie nástroje riešenia týchto problémov patrí registrácia mestských oblastí, prípadne individuálnych objektov, v registri historických pamiatok a zriaďovanie „mestských kultúrnych parkov“.

Výsledky štúdie z roku 2018, ktorá bola realizovaná na hlavnej ulici v Pabianiciach, by mohli byť nielen odrazovým mostíkom, ale aj inšpiráciou pre miestnu diskusiu na túto tému a následne podporovať riešenie problému reklamného smogu pre študijnú oblasť.

Ciele zásad, ktoré by mali byť zahrnuté do takého dokumentu, by mali byť:

- odstrániť reklamy v zlom technickom stave,
- minimalizovať obsah (zahrnutím iba základných informácií o podniku) a formu reklamy,
- definovať rozmery reklamy a jej pomer vo vzťahu k veľkosti konštrukcie, na ktorej sa majú inštalovať,
- obmedziť prezentovanú farebnú kombináciu,
- zákaz inštalácie reklamy na balkónoch, strechách a iných architektonických „detailoch“,
- zabezpečiť starostlivosť o kvalitu, vzhľad a bezpečnú inštaláciu reklám,
- zabezpečiť správny výber materiálov použitých na zostavovanie reklamy,
- vyhnúť sa opakujúcej sa reklame v rámci jedného pozemku.

Nakoniec je potrebné upozorniť, že prijaté právne predpisy by nemali predstavovať jediný nespochybniteľný dokument riešenia problému narušenia vzhľadu mestskej krajiny. Je to preto, lebo formálne požiadavky na umiestňovanie reklamy v mestách by mali byť podporované jednou zo základných otázok, ktorou je podľa nášho názoru informovanosť a ochota zainteresovaných ľudí zapojiť sa do dialógu a spolupracovať na zlepšení kvality verejného priestoru. Napriek kritickým pripomienkam vysloveným v príspevku môžeme konštatovať, že sa zdá, že situácia v poľských mestách sa v priebehu uplynulých 10 – 15 rokov zlepšuje aj vďaka sústavnému vzdelávaniu v jednotlivých oblastiach práce s reklamou v mestách.