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## Governance as a Remedy for the Process of Shaping Contemporary Urban Spaces: An Empirical Analysis on the Example of the City of Bydgoszcz, Poland

*Governance* jako remedium na kształtowanie współczesnych przestrzeni miejskich.  
Analiza empiryczna na przykładzie Bydgoszczy

### • Abstract •

Dynamic changes in the urban environment oblige us to look for new concepts for shaping city space. The concept of governance is becoming a current trend, often related to the idea of sustainable development, which is the main development tendency of modern agglomerations. Governance is a valuable core for governing the city, an important element of which should be the participation and inclusion of all urban policy entities. Nevertheless, it is a universal concept. Due to the need to take into account specific local conditions, a case study of the city of Bydgoszcz was used. The research hypothesis was that the implementation of urban policy in shaping Bydgoszcz's space is an ineffective implementation of governance assumptions. The author presented the determinants of urban policy in this area. She also conducted surveys on 800 residents of Bydgoszcz aged 18 and over. Their aim was to verify the residents' position on the quality of Bydgoszcz's urban space and the participation of Bydgoszcz residents in the process of shaping it. This led to a confirmation that the implementation of governance in the Bydgoszcz realities, although formally present, does not fully

### • Abstrakt •

Dynamicznie postępujące zmiany w środowisku miejskim obligują do poszukiwania nowych idei kształtowania przestrzeni miast. Aktualnym trendem staje się koncepcja *governance* (współrządzenia), często odnoszona także do idei zrównoważonego rozwoju, która jest główną tendencją rozwojową współczesnych aglomeracji. *Governance* stanowi wartościowy rdzeń dla rządzenia miastami, którego ważnym elementem winny być partycypacja i inkluzja wszystkich podmiotów polityki miejskiej. Niemniej jest to koncepcja uniwersalna. Z uwagi na konieczność uwzględnienia specyficznych warunków lokalnych zastosowano studium przypadku miasta Bydgoszcz. Hipotezą badawczą było założenie, że realizacja polityki miejskiej w zakresie kształtowania przestrzeni Bydgoszczy stanowi nieefektywną implementację wytycznych *governance*. Autorka przybliżyła determinanty polityki miejskiej w tym zakresie. Przeprowadziła też badania sondażowe na 800 mieszkańcach Bydgoszczy, którzy ukończyli 18 lat. Ich celem była weryfikacja stanowiska mieszkańców w zakresie jakości bydgoskiej przestrzeni miejskiej i udziału bydgoszczan w procesie jej kształtowania.

fulfill its functions and does not implement the assumptions effectively. The study is therefore a diagnosis that is a signal for decision-makers and urban practitioners.

**Keywords:** urban policy; urban space; governance; social participation; Bydgoszcz

Badanie pozwoliło potwierdzić, że implementacja *governance* w realiach bydgoskich, choć formalnie obecna, nie do końca spełnia swoje funkcje i nie realizuje założeń w sposób efektywny. Opracowanie stanowi więc diagnozę, będącą sygnałem dla decydentów i praktyków miejskich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka miejska; przestrzeń miejska; *governance*; partycypacja społeczna; Bydgoszcz

## Introduction

The sustainable city model has now become the paradigm for the renewal of modern cities. When choosing this prototype, which is a guide through the meanders of reflection on the issues of shaping urban spaces, it should be noted that it takes into account all issues that constitute the most important barriers and development challenges for the city today. These include social, infrastructural and environmental problems, as well as those related to the method of management and increasing their resistance to negative phenomena. Moreover, the transnational context, especially at the European level, has long postulated the need to pursue sustainable urban development, constituting an important impulse to adapt national urban policies to new challenges and conditions (Lewandowska, 2014; Egger, 2006; Mierzejewska, 2015). However, in the case of Poland, urban issues have for a long time been only a fragmentarily regulated issue, which shows the large scale of negligence in this field. This is mainly evidenced by the fact that the overarching strategic document – the National Urban Policy – was adopted only in 2015 (Ministerstwo Infrastruktury i Rozwoju, 2015; Ustawa z dnia 6 grudnia 2006 r. o zasadach prowadzenia polityki rozwoju, 2006; Matyja, 2015). What is more important, however, is that the shaping of urban space, as a process that should be a long-term strategic cycle, raises criticism and numerous concerns. The regulations in force so far basically did not exist in the sphere of practice. Over the past three decades, as many as three acts have been passed in Poland, the provisions of which effectively reorganized the space regulation system<sup>1</sup>. Its condition was further weakened by other normative acts, including a widely criticized act, the so-called “lex developer” (Ustawa z dnia 5 lipca 2018 r.

<sup>1</sup> These were legal acts such as: Ustawa z dnia 12 lipca 1984 r. o planowaniu przestrzennym, Dz.U. 1984 Nr 35, poz. 185; Ustawa z dnia 7 lipca 1994 r. o zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym, Dz.U. 1994 Nr 89, poz. 415; Ustawa z dnia 27 marca 2003 r. o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym, Dz.U. 2003 Nr 80, poz. 717.

o ułatwieniach w przygotowaniu i realizacji inwestycji mieszkaniowych oraz inwestycji towarzyszących, 2018). For this reason, the urban policy conducted so far in the field of space shaping has not been an effective strategy aimed at its proper creation and protection, thus constituting a pathological dimension of the implementation of urban policy. Moreover, its imperfection, “leakiness” and legal tools, i.e., decisions on building and land development conditions, although generally considered harmful, did not sensitize decision-makers to the importance of the problem. Thus, public spaces in Polish cities were gradually degraded. It is indicated by many problems, i.e., privatization, commercialization and its fragmentation, as well as ghettoization, deepening spatial chaos, visual and aesthetic considerations. Equally important are the increasing processes of suburbanization and sprawl of Polish cities, and thus their ongoing depopulation caused by the movement of townspeople to suburban areas, and the aging of Polish society (Rajek, 2017). Each of these processes generates further challenges and deteriorates the quality of life in urban spaces, questioning their attractiveness and calling for urgent corrective actions.

The remedy for the above seems to be governance as a response to the need to change thinking about urban space and the resource for generating profits. This concept, called Public Governance or Good Governance, means the process of decision-making, their implementation, as well as the search for appropriate instruments to disseminate the idea of deliberative democracy, i.e., one that enables citizens to participate in the exercise of power. In the Polish reality, it is co-governance, which, due to its interdisciplinarity, is still an ambiguously defined concept (Elander, 2002; Kooiman, 2000; Stone, 1993; Izdebski, 2010). It is usually understood as a style of decision-making based on cooperation between the centers of power and citizens, both in the political network and in the form of unofficial arrangements. Above all, co-governance means certain rules for the functioning of institutions that operate effectively and responsibly. The essence here is the active participation of civil society, characterized by the ability to create a system of representation, structures or organizations in order to strive to achieve specific goals (Wiktorska-Świąćka, 2016). Governance is therefore an idea that takes into account all the values of the public sector. These include democracy, openness of public debate, participation of citizens as decision-makers, attention to social cohesion, transparency, rule of law, inclusion, and equality.

The contemporary governance paradigm should therefore serve residents who are increasingly bold in articulating their needs and consciously fighting for the most valued qualities of cities. Perhaps that is why the increasingly important dimension of residents’ right to diverse space and its values is becoming a response to the difficult adaptation of space to the interests of townspeople and urban environments

(Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2012). Without a doubt, making transparent decisions based on broad social consensus can contribute to better consideration of the diverse needs of residents. This should also lead to sustainable urban development. As Agnieszka Pawłowska notes: “assuming that governance emerged as a result of the growing number of public policy actors, the dispersion of resources used to achieve its goals and the demonopolization of state power, it is difficult to understand it differently than a network of interdependence, cooperation and partnership relations” (2016, pp. 10–11). However, it is difficult to admit that the implementation of Polish urban policy in the field of space shaping takes into account the principles of this concept. Basically, it depends on the specificity of a given city and its rulers. It is true that an increasing number of strategic documents raise the issue of participation and social inclusion, but in most cases their implementation depends solely on the will of decision-makers. The reason for this is the still optional nature of participation tools. On that account, the concept of governance in Polish cities was often trivialized, which most often resulted in the implementation of only obligatory social participation tools (not necessarily reliable and effective) or the complete impossibility of co-governance (Dąbrowska, 2024; Zielińska & Kraszewski, 2019). However, each city is a specific cluster, characterized by a specific structure of systems, flows and processes with different scales of impact. Therefore, the analysis of urban policy requires focusing on the local specificity of activities, legal regulations, conditions of a given city or the worldview of its rulers. For this reason, the author decided to use a case study, which serves as the overarching framework for the research.

The aim of the article is to verify the degree of implementation of governance assumptions in the process of shaping the urban space of Bydgoszcz and to identify barriers and limitations that affect the effectiveness of the implementation of this concept. The research hypothesis is the presumption that the implementation of urban policy in shaping Bydgoszcz's space is an ineffective implementation of governance assumptions. In order to verify it, the results of empirical research were presented, the methodology of which is presented in the content of the study. In addition, a review and criticism of the city's strategic documents was used (it supplements content analysis by critically assessing the adequacy, coherence, and comprehensiveness of Bydgoszcz's urban strategies and policies in the context of governance), as well as content analysis and the method of analyzing existing data (core methods for examining and interpreting the information provided in strategic urban planning documents of Bydgoszcz and using already available datasets to analyze trends and evaluate the extent to which governance objectives are being met in urban space management). This methodological structure ensures a multi-faceted

approach to the research problem, addressing both theoretical and practical dimensions of governance in shaping urban spaces of the city of Bydgoszcz.

### **Conditions of Bydgoszcz's urban policy in terms of space shaping**

Currently, the most important strategic document of the city is “Bydgoszcz 2030 – Development Strategy”, which is an update of the “Bydgoszcz Development Strategy until 2030”, in force since 2013. The contemporary vision of Bydgoszcz's development, presented by Development Strategy, is based on the assumptions of the smart city model. However, urban space is not a clearly distinguished resource in this document. It was included in one of the areas where, among the four operational objectives, there is spatial order. The only indicator shown to regulate it is the percentage of the city's area covered by local spatial development plans, which would increase to 50% or more by 2030. It should be noted, however, that currently local development plans cover over 40% of the city's total area, so the goal set in the strategy is not overly ambitious (Urząd Miasta Bydgoszczy, 2021; Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna Bydgoszcz, 2024). Moreover, for a long time Bydgoszcz had an outdated “Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Bydgoszcz”, which was adopted in 2009. It was only updated in 2022 (Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna Bydgoszcz, 2022).

It is also worth noting that the city has only one sectoral tool, which is optional, i.e., local urban planning standards for newly constructed residential buildings. However, tools of a strategic nature include the already mentioned Development Strategy, as well as the “Municipal Revitalization Program of the City of Bydgoszcz”. The latter was adopted in 2018. The assumptions of the document assume the implementation of both investment and social projects, the implementation of which should contribute to the revival of degraded urban spaces in the selected revitalization area (Miasto Bydgoszcz, 2018).

The Bydgoszcz dimension of social participation is also important. In recent years, those in power have undertaken many actions aimed at popularizing participatory management. Progress should also be noticed in the implementation of activities aimed at increasing the citizenship of Bydgoszcz residents. First of all, it should be emphasized that the city has its own guide – Information Material of the City of Bydgoszcz “Bydgoszcz Informuje”, which in addition to performing traditional communication functions, also serves to promote participatory tools, encouraging the initiation of activities for the urban space (Miasto Bydgoszcz, n.d.). In turn, one of the first examples of the use of inclusive tools was the inaugural edition of the

Bydgoszcz Participatory Budget in 2013. Only 6.5 thousand residents took part in the vote. Nevertheless, each subsequent edition was subject to improvements and a systematic increase in voters was observed (Bydgoski Budżet Obywatelski, 2024).

Another initiative enabling every resident to express their opinion is public consultations. In addition to the traditional paper form as well as numerous meetings, since 2017, consultations have also been conducted in an electronic version, via the portal used for this purpose: [www.bydgoskiekonsultacje.pl](http://www.bydgoskiekonsultacje.pl). This solution allows you to reach more people and is a more innovative tool. However, despite such convenience and reliable promotion, consultations are still not very popular. Only a few hundred Bydgoszcz residents take part in the opinion polls. The exception are city-wide votes, although also in this case approximately 1% of the residents take part in the consultations (Bydgoskie Konsultacje Społeczne, 2024).

Moreover, since 2013, the city has been able to submit applications for investments under local initiatives – the “25/75” Program. In 2017, the Bydgoszcz Council of Seniors and the Council for Social Participation were also established as an advisory and consultative body to the President. In 2018, the Bydgoszcz Center for Non-Governmental Organizations and Volunteering was opened, aimed at promoting cooperation between local organizations and informal groups.

What is equally important, so far Bydgoszcz has lacked urban movements that effectively work to improve the quality of public space and fight against official arbitrariness. This type of function was performed only by associations with different ideological manifestos, i.e., the Social Ombudsman for Pedestrians Association, the Stary Fordon Lovers Association, the Bydgoszcz Smog Alert Association, or the MODrzew Citizen Monitoring of Trees. It was until the Bydgoszcz Urban Movement was established in 2022<sup>2</sup>. Recently, various types of protest movements have also been forming. Examples include, among others: “Fordon Resistance Movement”, established to fight the cutting of trees for housing development in Fordon, or the creation of the informal initiative “Stop Demolitions! Let’s Save the Tenement Houses in Bydgoszcz”.

The above indicates that shaping urban space in a planned manner has not been a development priority for the city so far. In turn, in terms of participatory activities, changes are undoubtedly noticeable both in the context of the dynamism of initiatives undertaken by decision-makers, the growing determination of social organizations, and the increasingly vocal opposition from unaffiliated residents. However, what remains unchanged is the low turnout of Bydgoszcz residents in the

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<sup>2</sup> The Bydgoszcz Urban Movement was established as a result of the increasing number of members and the expanding scope of activities of the Social Ombudsman for Pedestrians Association.

implemented participatory initiatives, which undoubtedly distances the city from implementing the governance assumptions.

## Research methodology

The aim of the empirical research is to verify the residents' position on the quality of Bydgoszcz urban space and the participation of Bydgoszcz residents in the process of shaping it<sup>3</sup>. The collection and analysis of empirical material was subordinated to the search for answers to the questions: (1) what is the condition of the urban space of Bydgoszcz and the conditions prevailing in it in the opinion of residents?, (2) what is the stage of declared participation of residents in the process of shaping the space?, and (3) what is the level of the sense of subjectivity of Bydgoszcz residents? The empirical material was collected in the city of Bydgoszcz. The trial lasted from October 2020 to December 2021<sup>4</sup>. The group of respondents consisted of 800 residents of Bydgoszcz aged 18 and over. The inhabitants of Bydgoszcz included in the study were selected according to age, gender, and type of education – adequate to the demographic and population structure of the city at that time<sup>5</sup>.

The measurements were carried out by the author herself. Most of the empirical material (71%) was collected via the Internet. The link to the questionnaire was shared mainly in virtual discussion groups co-created by Bydgoszcz residents. The survey was shared by individuals, associations and estate councils on the Facebook social networking site. It was also sent, among others, to the Chairmen of Housing Estate Councils, the Bydgoszcz Council of Seniors, the Bydgoszcz Senior Citizens'

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<sup>3</sup> This is just a part of the research project the aim of which was to examine the level of political subjectivity of Bydgoszcz residents and the declared level of participation of the urban community and other political entities in decision-making processes. Quantitative and qualitative research was carried out as part of the project. The collection of empirical material was divided into three stages. In this article, the author presents only a fragment of the first stage, and due to the space limitations of the article, she presents generalized results. A detailed analysis of the results for the entire project will be published in the author's monograph entitled *Kształtowanie przestrzeni publicznej jako wymiar polityki miejskiej. Studium przypadku Bydgoszczy* [Shaping Public Space as a Dimension of Urban Policy: A Case Study of Bydgoszcz].

<sup>4</sup> The research project was carried out during the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which constituted a significant barrier in collecting empirical material in a short period of time.

<sup>5</sup> An additional criterion was the type of Bydgoszcz housing estate they lived in, which ensured the diversity of respondents in terms of using different urban spaces, perceiving and experiencing various problems in the city, perhaps having a different assessments of living conditions in Bydgoszcz or concerning the level of co-decision-making about the city.



Office, various institutions, post-secondary and vocational schools. However, paper questionnaires were completed mainly at universities, workplaces and housing estates in Bydgoszcz.

In order to measure the variables, the author applied the diagnostic survey method using a survey research technique with a self-constructed questionnaire. The tool consisted of four parts. The essence of the issue of this article is its second part. It concerned the verification of the position of Bydgoszcz residents regarding the condition of urban space and preferences for the direction of the city's development. It contains 16 open and closed questions. One of them was the question about the general condition of Bydgoszcz's urban space. An equally important question was the assessment of living conditions in this space in relation to specific categories strictly related to urban space. This question was based on the Likertian model. The overall assessment was based on the sum of the answers. The third part of the questionnaire concerned the sense of political agency of Bydgoszcz residents and their declared participation in the process of shaping urban space. It comprised of 10 questions, including whether the respondents were involved in activities for the benefit of the city and what was the reason for it, whether they knew the tools enabling active participation in deciding on the shape of urban space, and the degree of belief in whether they felt real influence on the activities of the Bydgoszcz authorities. An important question was to respond to statements regarding participation in activities for the city by choosing one of two answer options, i.e., "yes" or "no". The overall level of participation was indicated by the sum of the responses.

## Results of empirical research

The results obtained indicate that more than half of the respondents assessed the general condition of urban space positively. Specifically, 51.5% of the respondents marked the answer "rather good", and 3.5% – "very good". However, as many as 37.5% of the respondents assessed the condition of the space as "average", and 7.5% gave negative answers (Chart 1).

In order to detail the above, the study participants also assessed the living conditions in the urban space of Bydgoszcz in terms of individual aspects<sup>6</sup>. On their

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<sup>6</sup> The respondents assessed the living conditions in Bydgoszcz in 16 categories: the level of safety of residents, cleanliness and aesthetics of the city, condition and availability of green areas, condition of the natural environment, conditions for traveling on foot, conditions for traveling by bicycle, conditions for traveling by car, condition of urban development, quality and availability of public transport, degree of participation of residents in public life, availability of a diversified network of



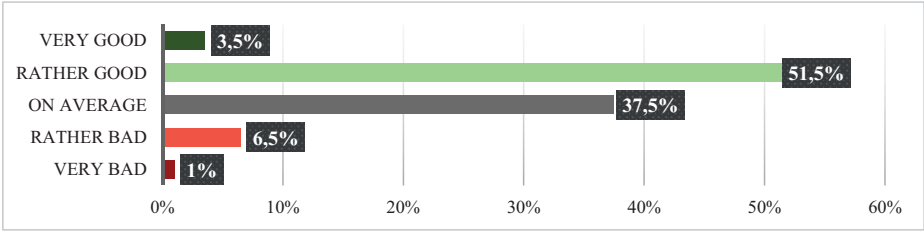


Chart 1. Assessment of the General Condition of the Urban Space of Bydgoszcz

Source: Author's own study.

basis, raw points were recorded on an ordinal scale, which allowed to obtain a general assessment of living conditions in Bydgoszcz. The vast majority of study participants assessed their living conditions as good (73.5%), 8.4% of the respondents received a “very good” rating, an average rating – 16.5%, and a bad rating – only 1.5% (Chart 2). Only one respondent received the number of points corresponding to a very poor rating.

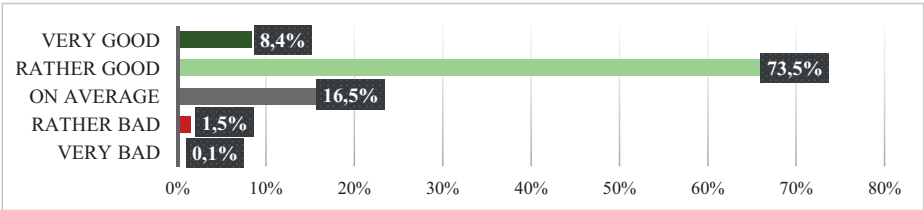


Chart 2. General Living Conditions in the Urban Space of Bydgoszcz as Assessed by the Respondents

Source: Author's own study.

Less positive are the research results related to the sense of political agency and the declared participation of residents in the creation of urban space. It turns out that only 22% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in activities for the city, while as many as 78% of them gave a negative answer (Chart 3).

What is equally important, only 30% of the respondents declared knowledge of tools thanks to which they can actively participate in decision-making processes. In turn, as many as 70% of the respondents admitted to being unfamiliar with participation tools (Chart 4).

shops and services, access to educational services and higher education, access to medical services, access to services in offices and institutions, access to the offer of cultural services, access to sports and recreational facilities and areas. Due to the topic of the article and space limitations of the text, only the overall assessment is presented after recoding the points on an ordinal scale.

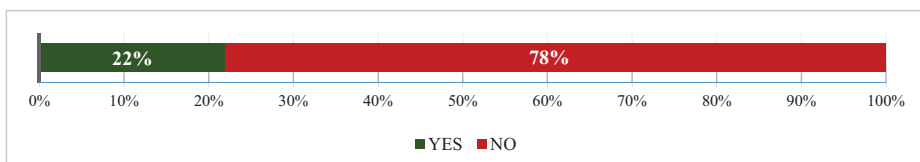


Chart 3. The Degree of Respondents' Involvement in Activities for the City

Source: Author's own study.

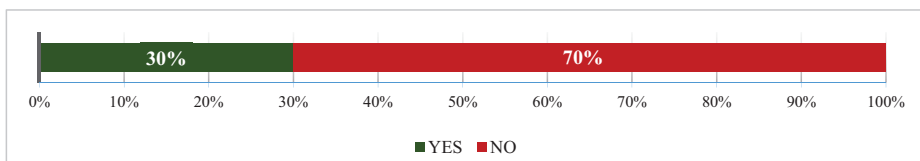


Chart 4. Level of Knowledge of Participation Tools

Source: Author's own study.

It is also worth noting that the study participants who declared knowledge of participatory tools were asked in an open question to provide the methods they knew. The respondents indicated a total of 352 participatory tools (220 respondents responded, and some provided more than one answer). Due to the diverse terminology used by the respondents, the author of the research grouped the answers obtained into sixteen categories (Chart 5). The first of them, in terms of respondents' indications, was the citizen budget. This answer was provided by as many as 129

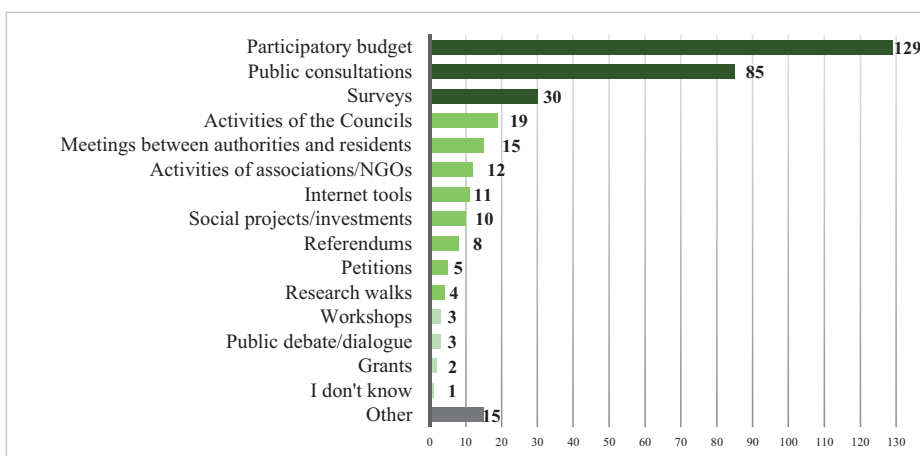


Chart 5. Social Participation Tools Known to the Respondents

Source: Author's own study.

respondents, i.e., 57% of the respondents declaring knowledge of the tools. The second category was social consultations, indicated by 85 respondents. The third category of responses in terms of the frequency of its indication were surveys. This tool was provided by 30 respondents. The remaining tools received significantly fewer responses, as shown in the chart below.

Particularly noteworthy is the question aimed at examining the declared participation in the process of shaping urban space, and thus measuring the activity of Bydgoszcz residents (Chart 6). Most positive answers were given to the question regarding participation in the last local government elections. In this case, 64% of the respondents declared their real participation. This was followed by two statements to which more than 50% of the respondents answered affirmatively. They concerned the so-called passive participation. This was systematic monitoring of information on city events, declared by 55% of the respondents, and frequent monitoring of authorities' activities and investments, which was confirmed by 53% of the respondents. Next came the declaration of frequent participation in events organized in the city, made by 44% of the respondents. Moreover, 41% of the respondents declared their

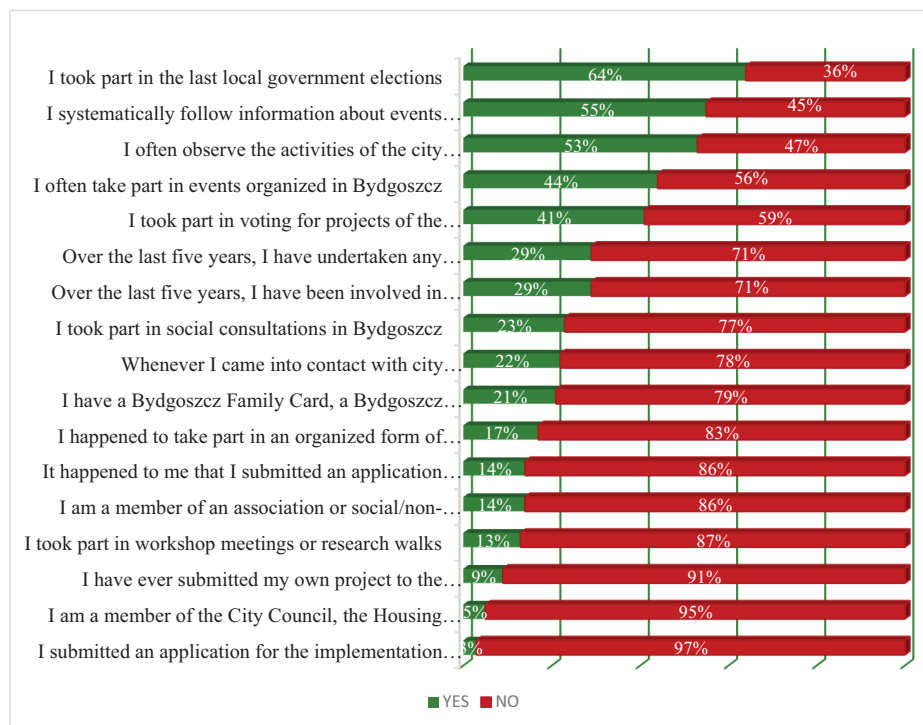


Chart 6. Declared Participation in the Process of Shaping the Urban Space of Bydgoszcz

Source: Author's own study.

participation in voting for projects of the Bydgoszcz Participatory Budget. Subsequent activities included in this question gained less than 30% confirmation, and with each subsequent one, the declarations submitted gradually decreased. Similarly, 29% of the respondents indicated involvement in the community and joint activities with other residents for the benefit of the housing estate or city they live in. In turn, 23% of the respondents confirmed their participation in social consultations, 22% declared contact with city decision-makers, and 21% of the participants indicated that they had a Bydgoszcz Family Card, a Bydgoszcz Senior Card, or a Bydgoszcz Youth Card. Moreover, participation in an organized form of protest regarding city issues was declared by 17% of the respondents, submitting an application or petition to the authorities and confirming membership in an association or social/non-governmental organization – 14%, and a declaration of participation in workshop meetings or research walks was submitted by 13% of the respondents. However, less than 10% of the participants responded affirmatively to the remaining statements.

When measuring activity, recoding of raw scores onto an ordinal scale was also performed. The analysis confirmed that 47% of the surveyed inhabitants of Bydgoszcz were inactive, and 23% of them showed low activity. Importantly, only 1.5% of the respondents are characterized by very high activity, and 10.5% by high activity. In addition, 18% of the respondents achieved the number of points assigned to the average level of activity (Chart 7).

Another important question was the one aimed at verifying the degree of subjectivity of Bydgoszcz residents (Chart 8).

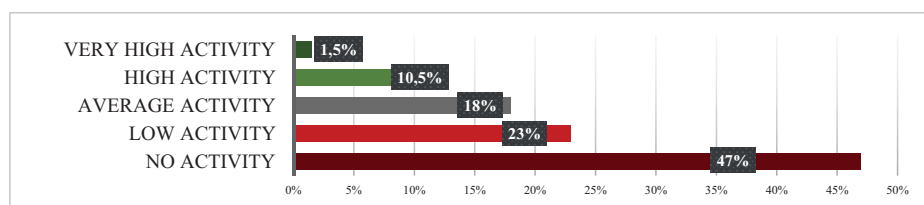


Chart 7. General Level of Respondents' Activity

Source: Author's own study.

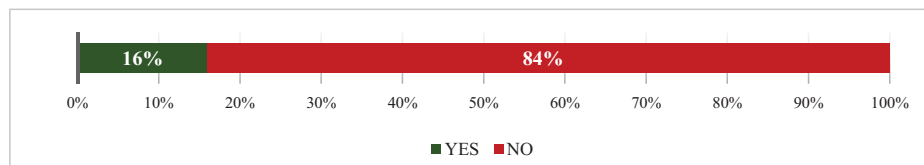


Chart 8. The Respondents' Sense of Political Subjectivity

Source: Author's own study.

It turns out that only 16% of the respondents declared a real influence on the actions of the city authorities, and as many as 84% of them showed no sense of political agency.

## Conclusions

The intensification of the development of modern cities and the related dilemmas make it necessary to improve the quality of functioning of agglomerations. In order to eliminate the main barriers that stand in the way of ensuring sustainable development, it is necessary to realize the future effects of a number of trends and better understand current challenges. Therefore, nowadays, a strategic approach to city management is becoming essential, and the condition for the effective shaping of their space is the real functioning of city government as an emanation of the community of residents. It is the social dimension of urban policy and the ability to implement it in practice that is today the most desirable or commonly required method of city management. Therefore, the assumptions of the governance concept have become a trend. The socialization of the process of shaping urban public spaces results from the need to involve residents in the process of not only co-deciding about the reality surrounding them, but also co-responsibility for the space in which they live (Rajek-Kwiatek, 2020).

In the conditions of Polish cities, the current lack of coherence and the absence of a long-term development strategy on a national scale were responsible for the deficit of comprehensive thinking and integrated action for urban spaces. This resulted in the neglect or downplaying of this issue at the local level, as demonstrated by the example of the city of Bydgoszcz. It turns out that until recently, the urban policy implemented in terms of shaping space in this city was highly dysfunctional. Only in recent years has there been significant improvement in this area. This is evidenced by the updating of strategic and planning documents and the dynamism of activities for the participation and inclusion of residents. This may result from the growing awareness of urban decision-makers, the increasingly decisive involvement of residents or simply the increasing number of legal acts recommending and ordering the implementation of participatory tools, thus striving to achieve the intended co-governance of Polish cities.

However, the presented results of empirical research showed other barriers and limitations. It turns out that residents generally evaluate the quality of Bydgoszcz's urban space and living conditions as good. Namely, the respondents rated the condition of urban space as "rather good" (51.5%) or "average" (37.5%). They

scored better in terms of living conditions – as many as 73.5% of the respondents achieved a good rating. Therefore, it can be concluded that the surveyed residents mostly accept the current quality of urban space. The results regarding the stage of residents' declared participation in the space shaping process are definitely more disturbing. Research has shown that the participation of residents in the processes of shaping urban space is low – only 22% of the respondents are involved in activities for the city, and only 30% know participatory tools. Moreover, knowledge of these tools is limited to the most common ones, i.e., citizen budget and public consultations. Thus, limited activity in actions related to urban space emphasizes the challenge of activating the local community. What is equally important, only 16% of the respondents declared a sense of real influence on decisions made by the city authorities. This is clear evidence of a marginal sense of subjectivity among the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz.

Based on the above, it should be concluded that the implementation of the urban policy in shaping Bydgoszcz's space is, at least partially, an ineffective implementation of the governance assumptions. Although the formal framework of this concept is present, its functionality is limited by the low level of social participation, lack of sufficient knowledge of residents about available tools, and the lack of a sense of real influence on the decision-making process. Despite the visible progress and initiatives of Bydgoszcz's decision-makers, there is still a significant need to intensify activities in this area. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify integration and activation actions of Bydgoszcz residents, increase their awareness of this type of activities and participatory tools through educational campaigns, as well as implement mechanisms to increase the transparency of decision-making processes. The implementation of the above activities can bring the city of Bydgoszcz closer to more effective implementation of governance assumptions, increasing the quality of life of residents and their sense of influence on the surrounding space.

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