
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF THE HOUSING
SITUATION IN THE TOWNS WITH THE STATUS
OF COUNTIES IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE
VOIVODSHIP DURING THE YEARS 2005–2008**

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Key words: housing situation, eastern wall, housing policy, Warmia and Mazury, county.

A b s t r a c t

The aim of the paper is to present the changes in housing resources and conditions in urban counties of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship during the years 2005–2008 considering the demographic context of those changes. Specification of indicators characterizing the towns with the status of county in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship was presented against the background of Poland and the voivodship. The studies revealed the diversified situation of the analyzed towns. Olsztyn and Elbląg have significant housing resources as compared to the voivodship but the dynamics of changes and structure of those resources are not identical. Considering the increase in the number of marriages solemnized, positive increase of population and negative balance of migrations it must be concluded that the capital of the voivodship is characterized by positive changes that influence significantly the level of living of its population. Elbląg is below the average and the structure of housing supplied for use differed significantly from the expectations of the community.

**DEMOGRAFICZNE DETERMINANTY ZMIAN SYTUACJI MIESZKANIOWEJ
W MIASTACH NA PRAWACH POWIATU W WOJEWÓDZTWIE
WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIM W LATACH 2005–2008**

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Słowa kluczowe: sytuacja mieszkaniowa, ściana wschodnia, polityka mieszkaniowa, Warmia i Mazury, powiat.

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest określenie zmian w zasobach i warunkach mieszkaniowych powiatów grodzkich w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim w latach 2005–2008, z uwzględnieniem ich kontekstu demograficznego. Zestawiono wskaźniki charakteryzujące miasta na prawach powiatu w warmińsko-mazurskim na tle Polski i województwa. Badania wykazały zróżnicowaną sytuację analizowanych miast. Olsztyn i Elbląg mają znaczne zasoby mieszkaniowe na tle województwa, jednak dynamika zmian i struktura tych zasobów nie jest jednakowa. Uwzględniając wzrost liczby zawieranych małżeństw, dodatni przyrost naturalny oraz ujemne saldo migracji, należy stwierdzić, że stolicę województwa cechują korzystne zmiany, które w znacznym stopniu wpływają na poziom życia zamieszkałej tam ludności. Elbląg plasuje się poniżej przeciętnej i jego struktura mieszkań oddanych do użytku znacznie odbiega od oczekiwań społeczeństwa.

Introduction

Housing development is an important element in the development of the country. It contributes to improvement of the living standards of the society (ANDRZEJEWSKI 1987, p. 46), increase of mobility of the society (WERNER 2008, p. 73), prevents unemployment and boosts the economy of the country or region (FRĄCKIEWICZ 1995, p. 38). The housing situation in Poland is generally viewed as difficult. The key factors of the housing problem are, first of all, the chronic statistical deficit of housing units understood as the difference between the number of households and the number of housing units in the existing resource, high level of technical wear of a part of the housing resource, a significant percentage of housing units qualified as substandard and lack of the reserve of available housing units (ZAPART 1999, p. 27). The housing problem has not emerged in Poland suddenly. It is a consequence of numerous processes and events of historical nature (NIECIUŃSKI 2005, p. 113, CESARSKI 2007, p. 95). It is also diversified geographically (ANDRZEJEWSKI 1987, p. 219).

In the studies on the housing situation – according to ANDRZEJEWSKI (1987, p. 223) – two trends are encountered. First, the specificity of housing conditions imposes the postulate of the strongest possible highlighting the local characteristics differentiating the population selected for the study either in time, or in territorial or social specification. Second, because of the general character of housing issues and their social role attempts are made at presenting the detailed elements allowing comparison of the housing situation in a specific community with the situation in Poland.

As a consequence, the aim of the study is the analysis of changes in housing resources and conditions in urban counties of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship during the years 2005–2008 considering the demographic analysis against the background of Poland. For the purpose of the publication basic

average and structural indicators characterizing the demographic situation of the voivodship and urban counties (including the natural increase of population, number of solemnized marriages and migrations) as well as indicators such as, e.g. the usable area of housing units and rooms or intensity of housing construction, characterizing the subject and scope of studies on the housing policy were presented (ANDRZEJEWSKI 1987, p. 221, FRĄCKIEWICZ 1995, p. 7), and availability of statistical materials was the selection criterion.

Demographic factors of housing needs in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship

The demographic processes are among major factors shaping and determining the volume of housing needs, their distribution and development trends. Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship is populated by just under 1.5 million people representing 3.7% of the population of the country and ranks the voivodship 12 among 16 voivodships of Poland. The two urban counties (towns with the status of a county) are jointly populated by 21% of the population of the voivodship (Tab. 1). Those are the centers with the major enterprises offering employment, modernized infrastructure and housing resources, which translates into the most favorable living conditions in the region. At the same time the two urban counties in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship are the leading centers of population concentration as more than a half of the counties in the voivodship are twice less populated than the towns with the status of counties.

In the Polish society young people, who want to become independent, present the highest demand for housing units. Independent residence is one of the manifestations of that independence. People aged 20–34 years represented 25% of the population of Poland and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship during the years 2005–2008 (Tab. 2). That percentage increases slightly in urban counties (in Olsztyn it was 28% in 2008). This also translates into the diversified demand for housing type. The beginning of the adult life involves, in some cases, education at the tertiary level, which in most cases involves search for a housing unit for rent. After completing the education and starting a job the graduates start searching for own housing units at both the primary and the secondary market. The intensification of the independent residence of households is particularly important in those circumstances.

Table 1
Population of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship counties in 2008

County	Population
Węgorzewo	23 395
Goldap	26 441
Nidzica	33 605
Olecko	34 194
Lidzbark	42 602
Braniewo	43 168
Nowe Miasto	43 673
Mragowo	50 184
Elbląg	56 410
Giżycko	56 652
Pisz	57 306
Bartoszyce	60 427
Działdowo	65 150
Kętrzyn	65 327
Szczytno	69 309
Ełk	85 857
Ława	90 312
Ostróda	104 658
Olsztyn	115 822
Elbląg City County	126 439
Olsztyn City County	176 142
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	1 427 073

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych GUS, 2009 (Regional Data Bank, Central Statistical Office)

Table 2
Population, total and aged 20–34 years in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, in urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008 ('000)

Item	Year							
	2005, including:		2006, including:		2007, including:		2008, including:	
	total	20–34	total	20–34	total	20–34	total	20–34
Poland	38 157	9 178	38 125	9 253	38 115	9 284	38 135	9 291
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	1 428	345	1 426	349	1 426	351	1 427	354
Elbląg City County	127.2	31.1	126.9	31.3	126.7	31.3	126.4	31.0
Olsztyn City County	174.4	48.2	174.9	48.6	175.7	48.8	176.1	48.9

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS 2009.

Despite the higher age at which marriages are solemnized and the age at which the family decides for having children, the number of marriages solemnized during the years 2005–2008 increased continually (Tab. 3). This is related to the generation that represents the echo of the demographic peak, which during those years was taking the marital and reproductive decisions. In the voivodship the number of solemnized marriages in 2008 increased, as compared to 2005 by over 2000. In Olsztyn, during the years 2007–2008, it exceeded 1000. Favorable dynamics can also be found in Elbląg, where the number of marriages solemnized during the period of 2005–2008 increased by over 150.

Table 3
Number of marriages solemnized in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, in urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Poland	206 916	226 181	248 702	257 744
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	7 810	8 401	9 534	10 009
Elbląg City County	645	737	855	809
Olsztyn City County	929	903	1 057	1 094

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS 2009.

The natural population increase is another demographic factor providing the picture of social transformations and the consequential implications. During the years 2006–2008 the number of live births in Poland again exceeded the number of deaths (Tab. 4). This was a consequence of reversing the negative trend of decrease in the number of births, which still has socioeconomic consequences for the future generations¹.

Table 4
Natural increase of population in selected territorial units during the years 2005–2008

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Poland	-3902	4558	10 647	35 100
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	2355	2494	2696	3528
Elbląg City County	-98	-62	-58	-5
Olsztyn City County	206	362	398	470

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

¹ Increasingly often critical opinions concerning the leading role of the natural increase of population in shaping the demand for housing, mainly in urban agglomerations can be encountered. For wider discussion see: Śleszyński P., 2007. *Możliwości prognozowania popytu mieszkaniowego w świetle dostępnych danych*. Problemy Rozwoju Miast, 3: p. 29.

During the period covered, growing natural increase of population was recorded in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship. This applies in particular to Olsztyn, which systematically records positive results in the number of births. The town of Elbląg should be positioned in one of the last places in the ranking covering the voivodship. Despite the increasing trend, however, the higher number of deaths than births continued there, which positions that county in one of the lowest positions in the voivodship. Analyzing the above data it should be assumed that the following years will represent a breakthrough for that town and that they will allow recording a surplus of births.

The problem of availability of housing units is closely linked to the mobility of population that can be estimated on the base of the values for the internal and external (emigration) migration. The causes of migration that can be related to the statistical data confirm also the observations from many decades concerning movement of the population from rural to urban areas, particularly in slower developing voivodships, both within the country and in the form of movement abroad. The internal migrations are linked, first of all, to the decrease in profitability of agricultural production, movement in search for a job (appearance of new labor markets) and the fact that graduates of tertiary and secondary schools stay in towns (Tab. 5) to use opportunities not available in the earlier places of residence (WERNER 2008 p. 73).

Table 5
People working in the main place of employment in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008 (natural numbers)

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Poland	7 835 758	8 038 145	8 372 169	8 624 189
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	262 599	268 085	277 461	276 642
Elbląg City County	29 338	29 313	30 996	28 626
Olsztyn City County	58 874	60 431	62 974	63 279

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS 2009.

The region of Warmia and Mazury fits those characteristics. During the period covered the balance of migrations, both internal and external, for the voivodship was negative (Tab. 6). The relatively most favorable image in that aspect is obtained for the Olsztyn City County. The prospects for improving the living standards of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship seem in those circumstances the leading argument for mobility. Migrations stimulate the demand for housing. The balance of migrations is the effect of the strong inflow of residents – particularly in the suburban zones of the largest towns,

which is linked to the phenomenon of suburbanization – and the level of wages. From that perspective the position of Elbląg City County is surprising. Continually high negative balance of migrations might be the reason for conducting in depth analyses.

Table 6
Emigration and immigration of the residents in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008 (natural numbers)

Item	Year							
	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	emigra- tion	immigra- tion	emigra- tion	immigra- tion	emigra- tion	immigra- tion	emigra- tion	immigra- tion
Poland	422 779	422 779	473 548	473 548	511 254	511254	405474	405474
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	19 316	17 055	21 906	18 778	23 158	20 417	19 310	16 950
Elbląg City County	1 075	720	1 160	847	1 248	952	1 096	784
Olsztyn City County	2 007	2 188	2 113	2 405	2 414	2 570	2 141	2 139

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS 2009.

Housing conditions in housing units completed for use during the years 2005–2008

The statistical deficit of housing units in Poland is currently estimated at ca. 1.6 million housing units (ŚLESICKA 2007 p. 69). In 2008, over 4 housing units were completed for use per 1000 residents in Poland (Tab. 7). This, undoubtedly, is a positive phenomenon although it still does not suffice to satisfy the needs of the population. The increase at similar level can be seen in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship. The number of housing units completed in Olsztyn looks particularly well. In every case it exceeds twice the value of the indicator for the country and for the voivodship. Olsztyn, as the largest town in the region, with the largest population recorded the highest number of housing

Table 7
Number of housing units completed for use per 1000 residents in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elbląg City County	2.4	1.6	4.0	2.7
Olsztyn City County	6.4	7.4	9.4	8.9
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	3.1	3.1	4.1	4.8
Poland	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.3

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

units completed for use during the years 2005–2008. The situation in Elbląg City County is different. In Elbląg much fewer housing units per 1000 residents were completed for use than in Olsztyn and also fewer than in the voivodship. New housing units are not established sufficiently quickly to satisfy the housing needs of the second largest concentration of population in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship.

The relation of the number of housing units completed for use to the number of solemnized marriages is one of the basic indicators of housing². During the years 2005–2008, in Poland, 550 to 640 housing units per 1000 solemnized marriages were completed for use (Tab. 8). On that base it can be concluded that only a half of the new households has a chance of living on their own in own flat. Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship ranks slightly better. The prospects for the newly wed from Olsztyn look particularly well as concerns the housing because the values there are more than twice higher. In Elbląg the situation is different. In 2006 only 282 housing units per 1000 solemnized marriages were completed for use there, which hinders gaining independence significantly. During the other years that indicator increased slightly, but it continued to be highly unsatisfactory.

Table 8
Number of housing units completed for use per 1000 marriages solemnized in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elbląg City County	467	282	599	425
Olsztyn City County	1 205	1 439	1 564	1 438
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	570	532	612	683
Poland	551	510	538	641

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

The average usable area of a housing unit completed for use during the years 2005–2008 in Poland was relatively constant. Similar conclusions come to mind from analysis of the usable area of the housing unit in Warmia and Mazury (Tab. 9). On the other hand, the average usable area of the new housing unit in Olsztyn increases gradually. During three years that was an increase by slightly less than five square meters. The largest new housing units were completed for use in Elbląg in 2005 (over 105 m² of usable area). With each consecutive year the average area of the housing unit in that town

² The currency of that indicator is rightly objected to by, e.g. Paweł Hut, 2007. *Współczesna kwestia mieszkaniowa w Polsce; geneza, uwarunkowania, perspektywy rozwiązań*. In: *Polityka społeczna*, Ed. G. Firlit-Fesnak, M. Szyklo-Skoczny. PWN, Warszawa, p. 297.

decreased, which might be a consequence of changes in the structure of housing construction by investors, particularly in 2008.

Table 9
Average usable area of a housing unit completed for use in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008 (m²)

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elbląg City County	105.2	94.3	77.9	81.1
Olsztyn City County	68.5	66.9	61.5	73.1
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	93.8	88.8	84.1	90.4
Poland	105.3	101.6	105.6	104.0

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

The average number (Tab. 10) and area of rooms (Tab. 11) in housing units completed for use during the years 2005–2008 was also subject to detailed analysis. Compared to the earlier construction projects, housing units completed for use during that period have, in average, more rooms. This is the consequence of increasing the usable area of the housing unit, which, understandably, translates into a larger number of rooms per housing unit.

Table 10
Average number of rooms in the housing units completed for use in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, the urban counties of Warmia and Mazury and in Poland during the years 2005–2008

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elbląg City County	4.3	4.2	3.7	3.6
Olsztyn City County	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.5
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.9
Poland	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.3

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

Comparing the usable area of housing units completed for use during the years 2005–2008 it must be noticed that in every territorial unit the newly completed housing units have rooms with the average area exceeding 20 m² (except in Olsztyn), while the average room area in the earlier housing resources in no case exceeded 20 m². That clearly positive phenomenon offers the opportunity of reversing the situation where housing units with small usable area and with the minimal number of rooms represented around a half of the housing units in the country (see: KORNILÓWICZ 2005, p. 72).

Table 11
Average room areas in the housing units completed for use during the years 2005–2008 in
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship and urban counties of Warmia and Mazury (m²)

Item	Year			
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elbląg City County	24.3	22.2	21.3	22.7
Olsztyn City County	20.1	19.9	18.6	21.2
Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship	22.3	22.2	21.3	23.0
Poland	24.1	24.0	24.3	24.4

Source: Bank Danych Regionalnych, GUS, 2009.

Summary and conclusions

Among many problems of spatial diversification in the development of Poland underdevelopment of the eastern and northeastern voivodships has a significant position because of the economic and social disproportions between those areas and the remaining part of the country. This also applies to housing. Systemic backlog combined with poor infrastructure, difficulties in the labor market as well as status and equipment of the housing resources additionally highlights the complexity of socioeconomic situation in the analyzed areas. Residents of those voivodships face significant social issues that can contribute to their social marginalization or supportive to migration processes.

The demographic situation of Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship and its urban counties is favorable. In Olsztyn the natural increase of population increases continually. In the towns with the status of counties from that voivodship the numbers of solemnized marriages and of the people working increase systematically. In Elbląg and Olsztyn the people aged 20–34 years represent over 25% of the population.

Housing conditions in the two urban counties in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship as compared to Poland and the entire voivodship are, according to the conducted survey, diversified. Olsztyn as the largest city in the voivodship is characterized by the increasing trend of the indicators characterizing housing. As a consequence it confirms that housing conditions in cities of Poland exceed the average for the country significantly. That position is confirmed by the intensity of housing construction. This is particularly well visible in the number of housing units completed for use per 1000 residents and 1000 solemnized marriages despite the continual immigration into the city. In the capital of the voivodship the increase in housing resources occurs with significant participation of individual construction as well as construction of housing units for sale and rent.

The position of Elbląg as compared to Olsztyn and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship is strongly diversified. As the second largest concentration of population in the voivodship relatively large housing resources characterize it. Despite quite clear negative balance of migration its housing structure indicators are below the average. This is particularly well visible through the number of housing units completed for use per 1000 residents and per 1000 solemnized marriages, which are lower than the average values for both the country and the entire voivodship. It is worth noting that the shares of cooperative, company and social housing construction there are higher there than in Olsztyn.

During the years 2005–2008, favorable changes in the structure of Polish housing have been observed. Numerous housing units completed for use and improvement of housing conditions are, unfortunately, just the start of the necessary changes. Among numerous problems of Polish housing the issues of living standards and social housing deserve particular attention. The social housing construction is based on the assumptions considering the role of the State and territorial governments. Efficient housing policy, considering in a skillful way absorption of the EU structural funds for housing purposes (More in: ZYGIEREWICZ 2007) stabile socioeconomic situation and organizational-legal order of the State could become the stimulants for improvement of the housing conditions in the country, and as a consequence in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship.

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