

The growing need to support urban areas facing an accumulation of different problems has resulted in the search for solutions through the regeneration process. The current direction of the urban regeneration policy indicates the necessity for the local community to participate in the decision-making process. For this purpose, public participation is used as one of the elements of the regeneration process. One of the important directions of regeneration activities is the development of the degraded green space. Apart from a number of environmental aspects, access to green spaces in the cities offers many benefits to the society in the form of interpersonal interactions and stimulation of social activity. This aspect is one of the important pillars of the regeneration that make it possible to prevent the problems of isolation and social exclusion. Until now, the regeneration undertakings have mostly concerned the development of public spaces, areas attractive for tourists or post-industrial areas. Unfortunately, in large urban agglomerations, access to micro semi-public spaces devoted directly to the local community is usually limited. The small semi-public spaces are the ones that have the potential to create a local network of places where recreation and neighborhood activities can take place. One of the examples of such spaces are the urban courtyards. Usually, courtyards constitute neglected spaces, which are most often used as a local car park or a garbage collection spot. The participation of residents in the development of the courtyard spaces creates opportunities not only to improve the quality of their lives but also to renew the degraded urban space. The issues related to the semi-public spaces and the participatory approach to the regeneration of such areas have been rarely undertaken in a comparative research context. There is a lack of systematic reviews and analyses of the techniques and participatory methods used, which are collectively referred to as the participatory mechanisms. The knowledge about social attitudes towards understanding roles, beliefs and thus solutions for participation process and factors motivating participants to become involved is insufficient. It is not known what kind of problems concern the semi-public spaces and what are the effects of the regeneration activities in the opinion of the residents.

Considering the above issues, **the main objective of the project is to explore the participatory mechanisms and social attitudes towards the semi-public spaces regeneration on the example of urban courtyards in Polish cities.** The project has been divided into three parts leading to the main objective. The research will be conducted in 17 courtyards in six Polish cities (Kraków, Bytom, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Olsztyn, Gdańsk, Kalisz). The first part assumes a comparative analysis of the participatory mechanisms in the regeneration of courtyards in the selected cities. For this purpose, the survey of sources will be applied (revitalisation programs and reports on public consultations). In the second part of the project, social attitudes towards participation in the regeneration of the city courtyards will be examined. At this stage, we intend to conduct in-depth interviews with three groups of stakeholders (local leaders, local government representatives and those who conduct public consultations). After this stage, we will choose three case studies in order to carry out the last phase of the project. The last part of the study will concern the analysis of the issues related to the courtyard spaces, including the assessment of the effects of the development project implementation. For this purpose, we will conduct in-depth interviews with the residents of the immediate vicinity of the selected courtyards. In addition, we will use field research to observe changes in spatial development.

The comparative analysis will make it possible to compare the above issues with other cities across the country. The essence of the research subject results from the growing need to engage communities in decision-making processes in the cities. The results of the research will allow to develop a theoretical basis for a debate on the participation of residents in the process of regeneration of the semi-public spaces. The project will be carried out on the example of urban courtyards serving as a research area where similar research has rarely been undertaken. The explanation of significant differences and patterns in the functioning of public participation will allow to better address the basis for building a new model of regeneration policy in the cities.