

Ewa PAŁKA-ŁEBEK*, Maia MELADZE**,
Maria ŚMIGIELSKA***

REVITALISATION AS A CONTEMPORARY PROCESS OF MODELLING URBANISING AREAS

REWITALIZACJA JAKO WSPÓŁCZESNY PROCES MODELOWANIA OBSZARÓW URBANIZUJĄCYCH SIĘ

No. DOI: 10.25167/sm.1409

ABSTRACT: Nowadays revitalisation is treated as a process which is implemented in areas of a different character, the aim of which is to eliminate barriers that prevent or slow down their broadly understood economic invigoration. It is directed towards comprehensive problem solving. Revitalisation is one of the most important tasks for local policy and is perceived as area modelling (including areas going through the urbanisation process). In various regions of Europe, this process has been taking place for over three decades, while in Poland it is a relatively new one. In our country, revitalization has accelerated, among others, owing to availability of co-financing, provided by a greater access to dedicated EU funds as well as to legal and administrative regulations. Actions supporting the revitalisation process with the use of proven instruments are also on an increase in the countries that want to join the EU structures and/or enter the path of modelling their own economies, adapting them to contemporary socio-economic challenges within their own or available possibilities.

Based on the analysis of the course of revitalisation process, with a particular emphasis laid on areas being urbanized in selected EU countries, Poland and Georgia, some general regularities related to the studied actions and to their implementation are determined in the conclusions.

KEY WORDS: revitalisation, urbanizing areas, space modelling process, Georgia

ABSTRAKT: Współcześnie rewitalizacja jest traktowana jako proces podejmowany w przestrzeni o różnym charakterze, którego celem jest likwidacja barier uniemożliwiających lub spowalniających jej szeroko pojętą aktywizację gospodarczą. Ukierunkowana jest ona na kompleksowe rozwiązanie problemów. Rewitalizacja jest jednym z ważniejszych zadań w polityce lokalnej, które postrzegane jest jako modelowanie obszarów (w tym urbanizujących się). W różnych regionach Europy proces ten zachodzi już od ponad trzech dekad,

* Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Institute of Geography, Department of Social and Economic Geography, ewa.palka@ujk.edu.pl, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1733-9046>.

** Grigol Robakidze University in Tbilisi, Georgia, Institute of Business and Management, m.meladze@gruni.edu.ge, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7674-4538>.

*** University of Opole, Faculty of Economics, Department of Economic Geography and Spatial Management, nar63ok@uni.opole.pl, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2451-1804>.

natomiast w Polsce znacznie krócej. W kraju przyspieszony on został m.in. dzięki możliwościom współfinansowania działań w tym zakresie, jakie stwarza większa dostępność do funduszy unijnych dedykowanych na ten cel, oraz uregulowaniom prawno-administracyjnym. Działania w zakresie procesu rewitalizacji z wykorzystaniem sprawdzonego instrumentarium coraz częściej podejmowane są również w krajach pretendujących do struktur unijnych lub wkraczających na drogę modelowania własnej gospodarki poprzez dostosowywanie jej do współczesnych wyzwań społeczno-ekonomicznych w ramach własnych czy też dostępnych możliwości.

Na podstawie analizy przebiegu procesów rewitalizacyjnych ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem tzw. terenów urbanizujących się z wybranych krajów UE, Polski oraz Gruzji w konkluzji określono ogólne prawidłowości dotyczące badanych zjawisk oraz ich wdrażania.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: rewitalizacja, obszary urbanizujące się, proces modelowania przestrzeni, Gruzja

Introduction

Nowadays, revitalisation is treated as a process implemented in areas of a different character, the aim of which is to eliminate various barriers that stop or slow down their development. It is perceived as a very effective development activity, integrating various development goals (including those in areas going through the process of urbanisation) and focused on comprehensive problem solving. Revitalisation is one of the most important tasks financed from the EU funds in the years 2014-2020. It is understood as a process of spatial, technical, social and economic transformations aimed at the so-called "bringing back to life". The present study identifies revitalisation as a modern process of modelling areas being urbanised. It has been included in the Polish government policy and appears in various documents defining regional or local development.

Accordingly, the main purpose of the article is to analyse revitalisation in areas undergoing urbanisation. To achieve this goal, the authors examined literature and information from published sources or various documents available. To this end, their experience gained during the research conducted previously in rural areas also proved important. The research procedures used in the present work were initiated by an in-depth literature review which is a basic element of scientific cognition. This allowed acquiring knowledge about the studied phenomenon. An expert literature review method was applied. In addition, to achieve the aim of the study, various documents issued by local authorities were analysed.

In various regions of Europe, this process has been taking place for over thirty years. In Poland, it began with a delay and was accelerated, among others, owing to availability of co-financing provided by a greater access to dedicated EU funds as well as to legal and administrative regulations. Actions supporting revitalisation process with the use of proven instruments are also increasingly undertaken in countries that want to join the EU structures and/or enter the path of modelling their own economies, adapting them to contemporary socio-economic challenges within their own or available possibilities.

The basic feature of the European areas undergoing the urbanisation process is their diversity. A significant part of them are struggling with problems of a different nature. For this reason, the EU has started to engage in renewal and revitalisation issues. The

subject of research is revitalisation of the areas in question. The study is based on an analysis of the revitalisation processes, with a particular emphasis on the so-called areas undergoing urbanisation from selected EU countries, Poland and Georgia, and its conclusions outline the ways in which these processes are being implemented as well as the level of their accomplishment. In their paper, the authors focused on the time aspect of implementation of revitalisation activities, while they do not intend to compare the effects of revitalisation, which is difficult, among others, due to different development conditions and legal regulations. Interesting considerations in the literature devoted to this issue were presented by Kaczmarek (2015: 67-72). The main goal was achieved through specific objectives such as assessing the possibility of adapting European solutions from the field of revitalisation to Polish conditions and presenting revitalisation activities carried out so far. The following areas have been included among the urbanising ones:

- zones of intense social and economic development (mainly cities' hinterland);
- transition zones characterised by symptoms of growth;
- expanding peripheral zones of various types (national, regional, e.g. inter-agglomeration areas, or local, e.g. zones of poor transport accessibility in counties (*poviats*) and communes).

The basic method of scientific research that has been used so far to study revitalisation in Poland is the analysis of theoretical cognitive content. The processes examined in the present paper are difficult to measure. The study contains selected case studies based on the analysis of specific communes. The definition of revitalisation, which is currently binding in Poland, comes from the Act on Revitalisation adopted on 9 October 2015 (Journal of Laws 2015, item 1777). It indicates that it is “a comprehensive, coordinated, long-term process of spatial, social, economic or technical transformation carried out in a degraded area, initiated by a local government unit in order to lead it out of a crisis, mainly by giving it a new functional quality and creating conditions for its development, based on its characteristic endogenous conditions.”

Revitalisation in selected European and non-European countries

The term “revitalisation” first appeared in the United States (Pałka-Łebek 2019: 165). The need for renewal occurred in American cities where problems among Afro-Americans who lived in poor neighbourhoods intensified (Heydrych 2008: 109-114). This situation revealed the need for reforms to overcome social divisions. Revitalisation seemed to be the answer to this problem. Over time, this process encompassed cities of all sizes as well as the peripheries.

In Europe, Germany is a country that was one of the first to start revitalisation. Its beginnings related to German cities and were initiated in the 1960s. They were referred to as the “framework of revitalisation” (Tallon 2010: 34-37). Revitalisation had been taking shape in this country for a long time before it acquired the contemporary character. What changed this process was German reunification. It transferred to

the federal government a part of the duties and responsibilities for the condition of the eastern states where revitalisation processes did not exist. Thus the scope and significance of the studied process evolved (Bamberg 2007: 15-19). An original path of revitalisation was found, combining both public (budget) and private funds, which began to give positive results. This solution was called the “German model of revitalisation” (Hamedinger 2004: 21-28). In Germany, the scope of revitalisation projects was constantly being expanded. In parallel, discussions were held concerning the legal interpretation of this process. They contributed to adding to the Constitution a provision on financial support for investments of a specific nature. Subsequently, in 1971, the proper Revitalisation Act was adopted which laid down the regulations for the preparation of revitalisation programmes and their financing (Durand 2003: 5-12). At the same time, the revitalisation processes were handed over to municipalities which initially developed programmes related mainly to the spatial planning and concerning small areas only. They usually refrained from spending revitalisation funds, saving them rather for more extensive projects. Over time, the projects also started to include social issues, playing an important role in revitalisation. The new concept of revitalisation in Germany, combining activities related to the spatial and social sphere, resulted from the evolution of the early German approach to revitalisation at the turn of the 1970s and the 1980s (Bassand 1986: 16-19). It was named the classic revitalisation model (Yin 2003: 197-209). After the reunification of Germany, in the 1990s, the classic revitalisation model was also applied in the former East Germany, where it was not so effective due to specific local conditions. Since the 1990s, attempts to take up social revitalisation have been widely initiated. Under German law, revitalisation is a process that is expected to solve problems through appropriately adopted programmes prepared and carried out in accordance with the public interest. It should be a permanent element of development policy (Hamedinger 2004: 21-28).

To sum up, it can be stated that the strategy of revitalisation in Germany is an example of a comprehensive approach to development (Fuá 1980: 28-33). It takes into account the interests of all participants of this process and uses available planning, legal and financial instruments. According to Böcher (2014: 31-39), the most important achievements of German revitalisation policy include: creation of stable legal regulations, spreading the knowledge on revitalisation through the dissemination of good practices, analysing positive and negative experiences from the implementation of revitalisation projects.

In Great Britain, in the early 1980s, the first revitalisation measures were initiated with the use of market mechanisms (Ray 2006: 280-289). During this period, the economic recession increased in the island. Thanks to revitalisation, it became possible to implement various projects, which helped to renew degraded areas and to improve the socio-economic situation (Gorton 2009: 1310-1315). All new initiatives and undertakings were supported by the government, especially when they took into account the requirements of environmental protection and when they were approved by the local

community. The revitalisation processes implemented in Great Britain were based on a specific regeneration model (property-led regeneration model) (Pałka-Łebek 2019: 163-171). It implied dynamic development of the private sector in the economy of the revitalised area and provided a driving force for development (Evans 1990: 66-71). Both scientists and practitioners were divided in assessing the role of this process. Some treated it as a “panacea”, while others as a “placebo” for socio-economic development. The most important actor of revitalisation in this country is the government which takes decisions through the specialised agencies regarding the implementation of revitalisation projects and co-finances them (Varady 2015: 263-270). Local authorities are also considered to be important participants of this process. Great Britain has a competitive revitalisation financing system (Demesick 1987: 74-81). That is why local governments play the key role in all the implemented projects which are dedicated to them. Revitalisation processes in Great Britain are of a partnership nature. Voices of local communities are widely considered. Hence, revitalisation management is quite complicated (McElfish, Jr. 2007: 8-11).

As priorities for effective management of the revitalisation process, Carter (2006: 36-43) identified the following activities:

- to properly identify and equally involve all the relevant actors of the process;
- to create a correct revitalisation programme consulted with all the partners;
- to distribute duties and responsibilities among all the participants of the process;
- to provide proper successful leadership;
- to appoint a team of experts with appropriate qualifications;
- to constantly monitor and evaluate the revitalisation process.

Following Great Britain, in the next years, the phenomena of renewal and revitalisation came to other countries, e.g. Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal (Röling 1993: 21-27; Silva 2012: 500-507). A very similar policy was also implemented in other countries, e.g. Norway, Sweden or Finland (Gawell 2009: 1311-1315; Skalski 2009: 42-48).

France is also a country where revitalisation processes started relatively early (Fuá 1980: 28-33). Beginning in the post-war years, the French government, in cooperation with local governments, intervened in the socio-economic space, implementing a costly renewal programme (Colantonio, Dixon 2011: 32-39). France, as a country highly sensitive to the problems of social justice, directed state intervention towards the social and economic sphere already in the mid-1970s – therefore quite quickly (Douve 2003: 43-50). The revitalisation policy in France consists in significant investments (Liu & Laske 2010: 93-95). It aims to finance, often costly, programmes (Audubert 2010: 21-27). The country persuades others to undertake the necessary joint public and private remedial actions. Revitalisation programmes implemented in France since the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries aim to accomplish several goals, the most important of which are – according to Donzelot and Mevel (2001: 16-20) – to achieve social diversity and revitalisation of rural areas. In France, apart from the cities, the results of revitalisation processes were visible at the earliest in the

areas located close to urban centres (Burgel 2006: 15-19). It is worth emphasising that in France there was a constant lack of staff qualified in drafting programmes devoted to revitalisation. In addition, the relevant act imposed an obligation to carry out systematic evaluation of revitalisation, taking into account the changing requirements related to the monitoring of this process (Skalski 2010: 42-48). Currently, in France, in line with the EU activities, an integrated approach and strong local partnership are supported. Pursuant to the Act on Spatial Planning and Development (LOADT) of 4 February 1995, Special Revitalisation Zones were created. They are designed to support development using financial resources. Specific provisions apply to them, and their main purpose is to direct state aid to projects that create jobs in the least populated areas affected by demographic and social problems and being at risk of an economic decline (Audubert 2010: 11-16).

The situation regarding revitalisation in Slovakia is more complicated than in Poland. The economic growth, which was observed in the country after its accession to the EU, caused significant migration. With a relatively low level of identity of local communities and the weakness of local government structures, many Slovak areas are experiencing regression and are even threatened with collapse (Birkle, Krewani 2016: 12-17).

Revitalisation in the Czech Republic is organised in a similar way as in Slovakia. However, there is a clearly higher level of financing of revitalisation projects, the scale of the process is greater, and the quality of projects is definitely higher. In addition, placing revitalisation projects among the regionally defined objectives of local development policy is a factor that favours the process (Pałka-Lebek 2019: 200-204).

The need to revitalise the areas staying under the influence of urban centres in Canada was emphasised by Lauzon et al. (2015: 76-83), whereas revitalisation processes in areas under urbanization in the USA were presented by Chinitz (1969: 21-26) and Box (1976: 791-799), in Japan – by Knight (1994: 634-646) and Kakluchi (2014: 1-12), and in Taiwan – by Liu (1990: 90-96).

Revitalisation measures are also implemented in other countries. An example of a country where – despite its lower level of the socio-economic development and a weak activity of local communities – the process of revitalisation has already been initiated is Georgia. The studied process has much shorter traditions there than in the countries mentioned above. Georgia is a country of many contrasts of different nature. Similarly to the previously discussed European regions, revitalisation projects in this country initially concerned cities, to be expanded later to areas of their influence. Activities related to this process have been included in the Regional Development Programme of Georgia for 2018-2021. Due to the fact that Georgian rich and diverse cultural heritage is well known all over the world, its protection has been defined as the overarching goal. At the same time, it has been recognised as a priority that could become a stimulus for invigorating the economy of the entire country. Another important task is to develop a new approach in the light of which public spaces are being changed. The first action of this nature was the revitalisation of numerous buildings in the old Tbilisi and in the historical district of the Georgian capital.

The role of revitalisation is also emphasised in Georgian policy at the central level. Georgia, as a former Soviet republic, is promoted as a newly discovered tourist destination. It is the only country in the world, where wine production methods introduced over 8,000 years ago are still used and are rated as the best in the world. Wine was invented in Georgian Tsinandaki, and Tbilisi was considered the centre of Georgian culture. According to the planning documents, they must be seen as the greatest stimulus for development that will lead to a revival of this region as the centre of Georgian cultural life. “Rebirth in the 21st century” is an initiative of public private partnership (PPP) which is called the Silk Road Group. The partnership hopes to strengthen Georgia’s position and to create a European cultural centre (Regional... 2017). The estimated budget of the initiative is GEL 124 million. It is focused on the preservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, support of “small scale” architecture, protection of culture in particular regions, creation of public spaces (Regional... 2013). The authorities expect that these actions will result in, among others, an increase in the number of renovated historic buildings and the number of museums established, an increase in revenues from museum and exhibition activities, as well as an increase in the number of tourists.

At present, in Georgia, funds aimed at revitalisation come from various sources, both domestic and foreign. The authorities, in addition to their own funds, receive financial support from the following sources: the European Union (through bilateral programmes), the World Bank, Development Agencies, e.g. French, Swedish or Austrian, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Council of Europe, the Asian Development Bank.

Summing up, it can be said that revitalisation measures implemented in Georgia currently contribute most often to the revitalisation of individual objects or groups of objects. Taking into account the observed shortage of funds allocated for this purpose, the principle of maximum mobilisation of financing sources should be adopted and alternative financing methods should be sought. Unfortunately, the period of implementation of revitalisation projects in Georgia is not yet long enough to determine whether the related development opportunity has been properly used.

Selected examples of successful revitalisation (case studies)

To identify successes in the sphere of revitalisation, this study uses specific examples that illustrate the beneficial effects of the process on local development. Firstly, it focuses on analysing examples from other countries. These are primarily Western European model examples.

In the countries being the homeland of village renewal, revitalisation of areas in the process of urbanising was also widely known. Initially, it took the simplest forms, e.g. objects or areas with original historical or architectural values, unused or neglected, were given new functions or – after proper preparation – their existing functions were maintained. This way, their values were strengthened. In Western European countries,

local residents were actively involved in revitalisation activities and experienced experts participated fully in almost every programme devoted to the process.

At first, revitalisation projects took the simplest organisational forms. The change of function sometimes contributed to the creation of objects or areas that did not exist before. Here a good example can be the widespread transformation of farm buildings in Germany (Rhineland-Palatinate) into residential buildings with the specific features of local rural buildings. A model example can be the revitalisation of urbanised space in the community of Konken (Germany), thanks to which, above all, the infrastructure has been modernised, the aesthetics of the areas has been improved, while their historical and architectural character has been preserved. An undeniable benefit was the creation of almost 300 jobs that were mainly taken by young people. State subsidies for the implementation of revitalisation projects amounted to about EUR 1.5 million, including EUR 285 thousand for private projects financing, and EUR 1.2 million for the implementation of local government projects (Böcher 2014). A significant number of projects and their large scope allowed comprehensive renewal of not only individual towns, but also of whole communes. The revitalised units received the so-called “new life” through the new functions of particular localities, which as a result contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of their residents (Chmielewska 2010: 24-29). An interesting illustration of the revitalisation process is the community of Vaterstetten-Baldham (Ebersberg District) in Germany, where preserving the identity was strictly watched. The dynamic development of the commune was associated with the construction of a railway line from Munich to Rosenheim (1871). Under the influence of the current development, villages were deprived of their dominant identity features. Typical town centres became blurred, public spaces lost their significance. The new plan for space usage developed in 2002 was thus put up for public discussion. Social participation influenced the decisions on revitalisation and spatial planning. Local government authorities, taking into account the will of the residents, withheld the binding decisions resulting from the municipal spatial development plan in force. As a result, new guidelines for shaping a development model based on the principles of sustainable development were established (Zimnicka & Czernik 2007: 11-17). It mainly postulated the following:

- elimination of cases when small locations would be developed through being integrated into the structure of surrounding units;
- development of particular locations in terms of functional diversity;
- support of specialisation that would give specific development impulses to localities;
- restraint on intensive development of housing.

The municipality of Vaterstetten-Baldham initiated, in accordance with the principles set out in the act, an effective cooperation in shaping a coherent planning. Within this cooperation, advanced centres have developed and while operating in a polarisation system, have been affecting the surrounding peripheries. A specific feature of the revitalisation process is the preservation of local identity. This is reflected in various

resolutions adopted by the municipality which secure the need to protect historical and cultural values as well as physiognomic features of the landscape. Revitalisation processes in the municipality of Vaterstetten-Baldham are also standardised by regulations being in force in Germany. According to them, units with unique resources of local identity develop revitalisation plans that incorporate special renewal principles.

The municipality of Orvault (department of Loire-Atlantique, region of Pays de la Loire in Brittany) in western France may serve as an example of development achieved under the influence of effective revitalisation and properly used suburbanisation. Until the 1950s, it had been a typical rural commune. It experienced its greatest development in the years 1962–1975 under the influence of the increased number of inhabitants (Zimnicka & Czernik 2007: 11-17). From the beginning of the 21st century, the commune was encompassed by suburbanisation processes, which involved a strong increase in investments. Town spaces were shaped under the influence of good transport accessibility and the nearby presence of the urban centre of Nantes. The current development of the municipality contributes to the positive evolution of the labour market and its independence from the closely located main centre. Changes in the labour market consist mainly in creating jobs in Orvault and neighbouring municipalities to free them from the dominant market of the urban centre. At their initial stage, investments in this area were located mainly along the roads that formed the development axes. As a result, new economic functions developed in the newly created housing areas. In addition, extensive building spaces have been created, founded on the so-called “old and new roots”. They are separated by the valley of the Cens River (tributary of the Loire), which forms a green belt under protection. The ongoing investments contributed to the fact that the outermost regions merged, creating continuous spaces. The town of Orvault Bourg, which is the capital of the municipality, has also taken a specific revitalisation path. For several dozen years it had been developing as an important agricultural service centre. It also had commercial functions. The town expanded on the “old root”. Orvault Bourg was developing qualitatively. New schools, roads, a health centre, a municipal office, community clubs, playgrounds and a library were built. Housing investments, however, were located in settlement units arising on the “new root”. They were accompanied by transformations of existing buildings, e.g. adaptations of buildings for holiday homes, or expansion of road lines and public transport. New buildings blended into the existing space. The next stage of the investment began at the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries and was focused on creating new settlement spaces. The approved Guidelines for Spatial Planning set apart an intensive development zone of 40 ha. A new unit called La Bougalliere was created – a successful government experiment offering a quality housing environment for low-income people who depended on social assistance. A new residential space was designed, located among greenery, with good transport connections and with nearby work places.

The revitalisation processes implemented in the municipality of Marden in Great Britain were also special. In the 1970s, along with the disappearance of agricultural functions, other functions, including industrial, storage and service ones, developed

in the area. In the 1980s, unfavourable processes of space degradation started. The old, historic core of the village was neglected. In the 1990s, the municipality started the revitalisation programme. It covered a number of villages and adjacent hamlets. This organised revitalisation project was called “Marden 2000 Programme” (Pałka-Łebek 2019: 186-188). Its overarching goal was to determine the characteristics of towns requiring transformation, to adopt the principles of revitalisation of resources and to prepare appropriate revitalisation programmes and a local plan. The “Marden 2000 Programme” was supported by the local government and Kent County authorities. The concept of spatial development was based on the observed principles of maintaining spatial order, preserving cultural values and sustainable development. Economic invigoration, mainly in the field of fruit and gardening functions, has contributed to an increase in employment opportunities in the commune and awakened social bonds among the inhabitants. Open areas adjacent to particular towns accentuated their character and strengthened the original appearance of their landscape. The tourist function was developed based on existing historical resources. An organised system of public spaces began to play an important role for social integration. All this resulted in positive changes in the spatial structure of the municipality.

Summing up, in the light of case studies, it may be stated that in the Western European countries the highest dynamics and advancement in urban revitalisation were observed in the communes in which earlier local development methods became popular, e.g. the concept of endogenous development, village renewal, social capital development, social initiatives, multifunctional development or development of local communities.

The present study also outlines selected cases of successful revitalisation in Poland. They refer to two regions of the country. First, there come two examples from Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. These are the communes of Chęciny and Morawica which are located in the immediate vicinity of the city of Kielce and are subject to its influence. Currently, in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, the priority direction in rural development is the use of the wealth of nature and cultural heritage in tourism. The entire region has numerous and varied natural and landscape values, a rich historical and cultural heritage, and an unpolluted natural environment. These unique and original natural and cultural assets and the richness of tradition have become an inspiration to create specialised brand products for tourism. The possibilities of activating rural areas through tourism were described by Wojciechowska (2009: 145-169). The idea of creating brand tourist products has been developing in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship for several years.

Chęciny is an urban-rural commune located 15 km away from Kielce. It covers an area with nationally unique natural, geological and cultural values. The vision of its development assumes that it is the most touristic place in the province. At the early stages of the revitalisation process, the focus was on renovation of many public buildings and spaces. The works were initiated in the old town within historic buildings of the urban layout. In the framework of the revitalisation projects implemented in Chęciny, the upper and lower markets and adjacent streets were modernised, the

urban space was tidied up, and the commune was adapted to properly serve tourists and residents. Revitalisation of the Chęciny castle began in 2013 and ended in 2016, and its cost amounted to over PLN 8 million (including PLN 6.5 million from the EU funding, and PLN 1.6 million of the commune's own contribution). The scale of the castle's revitalisation and its result were appreciated when Chęciny found itself among the winners of the Top Municipal Investments Competition of Eastern Poland 2016. Currently, it is one of the most visited facilities of this type in Poland. As part of revitalisation tasks, many historic buildings were renovated. However, examples of difficulties in conducting revitalisation works may also be indicated. An excellent example here would be the synagogue built in 1638. For several years the authorities had treated its renovation as a priority. Unregulated legal issues concerning the ownership of the synagogue stood in the way. In 2017, they were clarified through an agreement with the Jewish commune in the Katowice court, and the Commune Office in Chęciny drafted a project to revitalise the building. The commune in question is a good example, both nationally and regionally, of a proper perception of strict planning principles. Unrestricted landscape management and housing development were abandoned. The "green belt" principle is applied, i.e. buildings are surrounded with green zones and need to blend in well with the landscape. A model example of this is the hall called "Pod Basztami" which has recently been built in Chęciny and whose body has been significantly lowered so as not to spoil the view of Chęciny monuments. A significant investment in the commune was the Conference and Training Centre and the Leonardo da Vinci Educational Centre located in Podzamcze Chęcińskie. Since 2014 they have been included in the Regional Science and Technology Centre. The buildings were erected within the palace's grounds, i.e. in the court of the former Starosts of Chęciny. The da Vinci Centre is the second largest facility after the Nicolaus Copernicus Centre in Warsaw, which popularises learning through fun and with the use of modern teaching methods. There was also a biobank built, right next to the Centre. In Korzecko, a village near Chęciny, there is a nature reserve on Rzepka Mountain. Exploitation of rock resources has exposed its southern slope. In its immediate vicinity, the European Centre for Geological Education (ECGE) was set up, becoming a branch of the University of Warsaw. It is a complex of five facilities which was built on the site of the former Korzecko quarry, behind the slope of Rzepka Mountain, and constitutes a modern research institute and conference facility of the University of Warsaw. Currently, it is 90% renewables-powered. In an original way, it has become part of the landscape of a disused quarry and has been recognised, both nationally and internationally, as a unique "training area" for geological surveys. The ECGE performs didactic, R&D, conference and tourist functions. It was completed in autumn 2015 and was recognised as the best public building in Poland at the prestigious European Property Awards in London, owing to, among others, its extremely original architectural design. The total construction cost amounted to PLN 35 million (including PLN 28 million from the EU funds, over PLN 5 million from the subsidies of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education). In addition to its investments in tourism and sci-

ence, the Commune of Chęciny also implements a number of social projects. Activities of non-governmental organisations and informal groups are promoted. A University of the Third Age and a pro-health association have been established and have been organising interesting classes. There is also an initiative planned for the near future that should become a solution to many social problems. Near Chęciny, on an extensive parcel of community land, a large investment will be founded. Due to its good location, a huge logistics centre will be built, covering an area of 68 thousand m² and offering jobs to over 300 people.

The development success of Chęciny Commune, according to its residents, is owed not only to a high level of social capital, but is also the result of adopting the correct vision of development, of pursuing it constantly and of the efficient functioning of the local government services, especially of good work of specialists in the field of project preparation and in obtaining funds from various sources. Thus, the commune may be a model for others as to how, in an original and effective way, local resources can be used for intensive development.

To sum up, it can be stated that revitalisation process in Chęciny was initiated in the urban and architectural sphere. Over time, spatial, environmental, social and economic activities were added. And this seems to match the model of the revitalisation process set out by Pałka-Łebek (2019: 311-321).

Another example of effective revitalisation is Morawica. This urban-rural commune is located in the Kielce zone of influence. Transformations taking place in the area contributed to a change of its function: from typically agricultural or agri-industrial to residential and – to certain extent – the economic one, resulting from the influence of investment activities. Morawica Commune is distinguished by a large population increase (the highest population growth and migration balance in Kielce County). For many years, owing to the high quality of communal space, a significant influx of people has been observed here, mainly from urban areas. It is also a very attractive area for potential residents and investors. The commune has a wide access to cultural and sports facilities, school and pre-school education, health care as well as roads and railways. Along with folk culture, general cultural activities developed. The modern Local Government Centre, opened in 2013, provides extensive support, creates opportunities for meetings and organisation of cultural events. Moreover, the example of Morawica illustrates good functioning of civil society. In this commune, all areas of public life are developing very dynamically. The number of business entities is growing systematically, with a predominance of private companies. The leading areas of activity are trade, service and transport. There are also several large production and processing plants based on agriculture, forest resources and tourism. A wide investment offer is being prepared. Thanks to many undertakings aiming at sustainable development, since 1990 over 50% of the today's inhabitants have moved to settle here. Sustainable development has contributed to raising the standard of living, as evidenced by the constantly growing number of residents and investors. Future development plans assume further local development of the commune. As a result, the living conditions of

residents, the activities of companies and institutions located here continue to improve. This is possible, among others, due to the fact that Morawica Commune is one of the leaders in acquiring the EU funds, also on the national scale. Local authorities treat revitalisation as another way to achieve even more effective development. The Board of Morawica believe that as long as it is possible to obtain all development-oriented funds, they should be used to the maximum, so that, when they stop being accessible, the level of development is advanced enough for the commune to act as “accelerated self-propelling mechanism”, with the appropriate level of social capital. To sum up, Morawica Commune may serve as a national and regional benchmark of effective applying for funds from various sources (incl. the funds for revitalisation) and of their effective usage. The attitude of the local authorities and that of the local community also add up to this success. Revitalisation is perceived here as a modern method of raising funds and using them for the benefit of the residents and for the development of the commune.

The present study also comprises model examples of urban revitalisation from Opole Region, despite the fact that this particular voivodeship was characterised by the lowest allocation of the EU and other funds for revitalisation projects. In this case, revitalisation was guided by very rich traditions of countryside renewal, which means that the process is likely to find fertile ground there. Some positive revitalisation actions were implemented, for example in the Communes of Gogolin, Nysa, Walce, Kluczbork and Olesno. The Commune of Kluczbork adopted a revitalisation programme for 2016–2023 which is a continuation of the actions taken by the authorities in the field of revitalisation of degraded areas, conducted successfully as part of the projects implemented in the years 2009–2015. The areas that have undergone this process are not randomly selected objects that require revitalisation or major refurbishment, but areas with a particular accumulation of socio-economic problems. Two key tasks were completed, i.e. renovation of the town hall and its surroundings, the park and the nearby residential buildings. The aim was to provide the residents, as well as the growing number of tourists, with an interesting way of spending free time, and to create opportunities for organising cultural events. In Olesno Commune, as in Kluczbork, owing to the organisation of public spaces, their aestheticisation and modernisation of the infrastructure, numerous events started to be organised, being extremely important to maintain cultural life and promote a healthy lifestyle. Revitalisation and enhancement of the attractiveness of the old town in Kluczbork have enriched the offer of cultural events and improved the look of the central space, which – in turn – has intensified the tourist flow. The public facilities and spaces in both communes started to perform new tourist and cultural functions. This enabled the inhabitants to actively participate in social and cultural life. The implementation of such extensive revitalisation projects in Kluczbork Commune brought about measurable results, for which the unit received the first prize as the Best Public Space of Opole Voivodeship in 2013.

Both in the Commune of Kluczbork and in the one of Olesno, the local authorities undertake actions aimed at attracting new investors. For this purpose, e.g. in the former, a sub-zone of the Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone Invest-Park was created, which has already been used by investors, and the authorities are preparing further areas for investment.

Demographic factors are also a priority issue in this region. As forecasts indicate, until 2023 the phenomenon of population aging will have had an adverse effect on the number of socially excluded people and the structure of this social group. Decreasing fertility, life span and decreasing labour resources cause an increase in social inequalities, poverty, homelessness, in the number of the disabled and of people living alone. In this respect, according to the commune authorities, the most important is to limit social exclusion, build social capital and support families. According to the assumptions, in 2023, the areas covered by Local Revitalisation Programmes of the Communes of Kluczbork and Olesno – through the implementation of revitalisation projects – will have become attractive in economic, spatial, functional, recreational, cultural and social terms. The renovated public space will become a meeting place for the residents and a place where important social projects aiming to counteract social exclusion will be implemented. The possibility of sharing the available attractions, as well as of participating in organised cultural and entertaining events is conducive to strengthening social ties. Integrative events organised in revitalised areas attract the residents, which promotes social integration and prevents social exclusion, in particular of the elderly and the disabled. Owing to revitalisation process, social cohesion is restored and strengthened, primarily by rebuilding neighbourhood relationships and organising meetings.

At the end of 2007, leading companies from the tourist industry of Opole Voivodeship, the Opole Science and Technology Park, the University of Opole, as well as the Counties of Kluczbork and Olesno, formed a tourist cluster named “Land Flowing with Milk and Honey”. This cluster is a spatial and sectoral concentration of entities working for economic development and consisting of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the neighbouring areas, in the same or related industries. They are connected by an extensive network of relationships of a formal or informal nature. Joint actions taken in the cluster contribute to improving the competitiveness of its members, stimulate their innovation, reduce operating costs, and above all – give the opportunity to apply for the EU funds for joint ventures.

To sum up the reflections on revitalisation in the areas outlined as the case studies, several mutually overlapping factors may be indicated, namely:

1. The presence of a leader who instils the idea of a change and activity in the local community and arouses enthusiasm for action in this area;
2. Openness and willingness of the residents to cooperate. Cooperation manifests itself both through their involvement in individual, small measures for the benefit of the village, as well as through implementation of strategic projects involving, e.g. participation in the drafting of a local revitalisation programme;

3. Active cooperation regarding local associations and organisations as well as other entities that actively apply for financing of specific activities.

Long-term coexistence of the above-mentioned factors gives a chance to the local community to implement a coherent development concept. In the long run, it gives the residents not only satisfaction but also material benefits, which triggers the process of spontaneous development.

The characteristic feature of revitalisation process observed in the areas described in the case studies is the exceptional activity of the residents, as well as skilful use of the results of actions taken earlier. Involvement of the local community was a favourable condition for the success of revitalisation, which is perceived as a multifaceted, long-term process of local development. Undoubtedly, a kind of “self-propelling mechanism” of development should be considered to be a very good practice. An important condition was the presence of strong local leaders who promoted the idea of renewal and activated the inhabitants.

Revitalisation as a modern concept of reviving urban areas. An attempt to make general observations in the light of the case studies

A significant role in undertaking revitalisation initiatives is played by funding opportunities as they condition project implementation. Therefore particular EU countries have worked out their own models of implementing and financing revitalisation programmes. The most important of these include:

- the English model which consists in a significant involvement of private partners in the form of public private partnership. In practice, it operates in such a way that special companies are created, consisting of the public sector entities and private investors, who are selected through a tender procedure and are responsible for obtaining financing;
- the Spanish model (it is also used in Portugal, Ireland, Greece) is based on a dominant share of the EU funds, while the contribution of the public sector is often supplemented by the participation of private investors;
- the German model is used primarily in the eastern states of the country and consists in financing programmes exclusively from the public funds. Very similar solutions are used in France.

A synthesis of the above considerations is presented in the model below, illustrating the division of the European countries on the ground of their experience in revitalisation and the directions of transposing these experiences in Europe. The countries were divided into three groups: Central, North-Western and Southern Europe (Figure 1). The main representatives of Central European countries include Germany and Austria. They are characterised by the fact that their process of revitalisation first started to be developed conceptually and organisationally, mainly on the basis of the idea of village renewal. For the other two groups, namely the countries of North-Western and Southern Europe, the common feature is the “young age” of revitalisation, as the

process developed with some delay. The above countries have disseminated the knowledge about revitalisation, and since the 1990s also the experience in this field to the countries of the collapsing socialist bloc, among which Poland was one of their first beneficiaries. In countries with a centrally planned economy, due to specific conditions and development mechanisms and the approach of local communities, experience in the field of rural revitalisation is smaller. The situation was completely different in the countries where there was always a market economy. For many years they have learnt to understand market requirements, and the rural population has worked out a positive attitude to the revitalisation process. At this point it is worth noting that it is difficult to compare revitalisation in the Western European and the Central and Eastern European countries, as the market economy in the latter has spread with a significant delay.

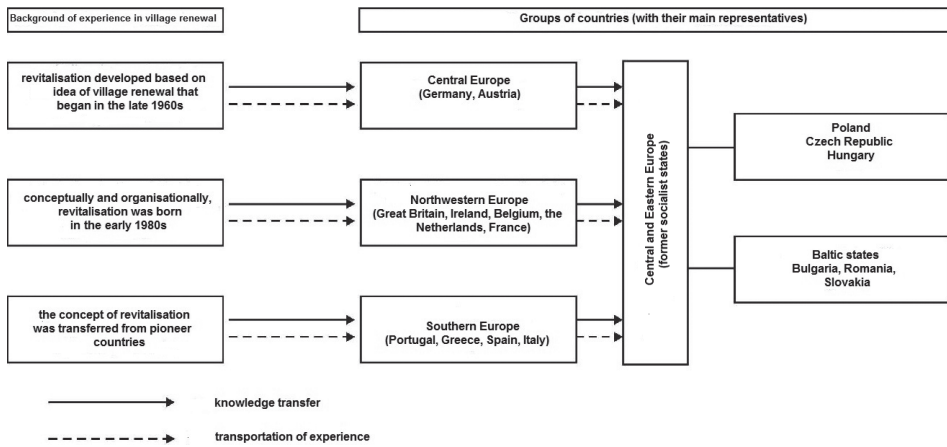


Fig. 1. A model illustrating differences among European countries regarding transportation of revitalisation experiences and directions of knowledge transfer

Source: based on Pałka-Łebek (2019).

The main benefit from assessing foreign experiences is the possibility of anticipating problems related to revitalisation that have occurred previously in the highly developed Western European countries. This may allow making optimal use of knowledge and avoiding threats in the revitalising countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The group of former socialist countries is also diversified in terms of adaptation of the idea of revitalisation. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary as the countries in which transformations in agriculture were illustrated by Grykień (2005: 42-57) with a model of deep restructuring, required urgent revitalisation measures to solve or eliminate problems. These countries were characterised by great opportunities to initiate revitalisation, due to, among others, the importance of communal governments, the role of local communities and non-governmental organisations. On the other hand, transformations in agriculture in Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic States were

described with the use of a shallow restructuring model, hence revitalisation in these areas is developing with some delay.

Summary and conclusions

Revitalisation, like other processes shaping the socio-economic space, takes place in specific conditions which constitute its reference frame. In modern times, in the areas of urban influence, both in Poland and in other countries, the processes of social, cultural, spatial and functional degradation occur with varying intensity. For this reason, the revitalisation process consisting of various corrective actions plays a very important role. Its correct implementation is a condition for the proper development of these areas.

The process studied in the present article indirectly serves to build social capital within the local community. It also helps to improve the well-being of the residents. Revitalisation should not be treated as a final goal in itself, but should be considered as a tool for achieving long-lasting and balanced development.

Based on the conducted research, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. Revitalisation is not a goal in itself, but it makes sense as long as it is integrated into a wider scope of socio-economic projects. It creates special development opportunities for the peripheries.

2. The examined process, due to the costs and durability of its effects, is currently the most effective development-oriented activity integrating various development goals. The example of the Western European countries shows that revitalisation processes are very useful to start the internal development of local communities.

3. In Poland, the grassroots approach and revitalisation mechanisms are not yet functioning in a satisfactory way. Financed mainly from the EU and regional development funds, support instruments usually lead to the revitalisation of individual facilities or complexes of facilities.

4. Over the last 20 years revitalisation has been treated by the residents and local governments as an important factor conditioning the development and improvement of living conditions.

5. In Poland, there is a visible lack of funds to be allocated to revitalisation activities. It is advisable to combine different measures, including different types of partnership (e.g. PPP). Following the example of many Western countries, it is necessary to establish special government financial instruments for revitalisation, e.g. the national revitalisation fund, as well as to clearly specify the rules regulating the financing of revitalisation processes.

6. Actions that would mobilise funds for revitalisation are particularly recommended for local communities. For this reason, local authorities should initiate and develop partnerships in order to mobilise funds.

7. The EU regional policy programmes financed from the EU structural funds provide funds for revitalisation. However, these external financing sources cannot replace country's own contributions (from the government and local government level).

References

- Audubert, Auriane. 2010. *Comment revitaliser les zones rural?, L'exemple d'Isomir*. Agence Pour la Création d'Entreprises.
- Bamberg, Paul. 2007. *Ökonomische Potentiale im Flächenmanagement von Umbruchregionen. Beispiele für Um- und Nachnutzung von Industriedenkmalern*. Berlin: Partner GmbH.
- Bassand, Michel et al. 1986. *Self-Reliant Development in Europe: Theory, Problems, Actions*. Aldershot.
- Birkle, Carmen. Angela Krewani. Martin Kuester, (ed.). 2016. *McLuhan's global village today: transatlantic perspectives*. London–New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Box, George. Edward Pelham. 1976. Science and Statistics. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 71, 791-799.
- Böcher, Malcolm. 2014. *Ländliche Entwicklung aktiv gestalten, Byndesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft*. Berlin.
- Burgel, Guy. 2006. *La revanche des Villes*. Paris: Hachette.
- Carter, Andrew. 2006. *Strategy and Partnership*. In: *Urban regeneration*, Roberts Paul, Sykes Harry (eds), London–Thousand-Oaks–New Delhi: A Handbook Sage Publications.
- Chinitz, Benjamin. 1969. *The Regional Problem in the USA*. In: Edward Robinson (ed.), *Backward Areas in Advanced Countries*, London–New York: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press.
- Chmielewska, Barbara. 2010. *Odnowa wsi jako jedna z form realizacji polityki rozwoju obszarów wiejskich (Village renewal as a form of realisation of the rural areas development policy)*. In: Barbara Chmielewska (ed.), *Wybrane zagadnienia polityki rozwoju obszarów wiejskich w Polsce i na Ukrainie (Selected issues in the policy of development of rural areas in Poland and Ukraine)*. Warszawa: Instytut Ekonomiki Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej, Państwowy Instytut Badawczy.
- Colantonio, Anrico. Tina Dixon. 2011. *Urban regeneration in Europe*, London: Wiley.
- Demesick, Peter. Paul Wood (eds). 1987. *Regional Problems, Problem Region and Public Policy in the United Kingdom*, Clarendon: Oxford.
- Donzelot, James. Cibil Mevel. 2001. *La politique de la ville: une comparaison entre les USA et la France*, Paris: Collection 2001 PLUS, DRAST-PUCA.
- Douve, John. Dale Ploegm van der Roep. 2003. Multifunctionality and Rural Development: the Actual Situation in Europe. In: *Multifunctional Agriculture. A New Paradigm for European Agriculture and Rural Development*, Ashgate. 37-53.
- Durand, Guy. Guido Huylenbroeckran. 2003. Multifunctionality and Rural Development: a General Framework. W: *Multifunctional Agriculture. A New Paradigm for European Agriculture and Rural Development*, Ashgate. 1-16.
- Evans, Alan. 1990. Investment diversion and equity release. The macroeconomic consequences of increasing property values. *Urban and Regional Economics*, series C, vol. II, no. 50, Department of Economics.
- Fuá, Georgio. 1980. *Problemi dello sviluppo tardivo in Europa*. Paris: OCDE.
- Gawell, Malin. Bengt Johannisson. Mats Lundqvist. 2009. *Entrepreneurship in the Name of Society*, Stockholm: Reader's Digest of a Swedish Research Anthology, The Knowledge Foundation.
- Gorton, Milan et al. 2009. The folly of European Union Policy Transfer: Why the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Does not fit Central and Eastern Europe. *Regional Studies*, vol. 43:10, 1305-1317.
- Grykiń, Stanisław. 2005. *Przemiany na obszarach wiejskich w krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej-sukcesy i niepowodzenia (Transformations in the rural areas of Central-Eastern European countries – successes and failures)*. In: Benicjusz Głębocki, Urszula Kaczmarek (eds). *Obszary sukcesu na polskiej wsi (Success areas in Polish countryside)*. Studia Obszarów Wiejskich, 8, Warszawa: IGiPZ PAN. 41-58.
- Hamedinger, Alexander. 2004. Integrierte Stadterneuerungsstrategien in England und Deutschland. *Derive-Zeitschrift für Stadtforschung*, Heft 17, Wien.
- Heydrych, Jarosław. 2008. Od Lincolna do Obamy – problem niewolnictwa w USA (From Lincoln to Obama – the problem of slavery in the USA). *Przegląd Politologiczny*, 4, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Instytutu Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa UAM, 101-115.

- Kaczmarek, Sylwia. 2001. *Rewitalizacja terenów poprzemysłowych. Nowy wymiar w rozwoju miast (Revitalisation of post-industrial areas. A new dimension in the development of cities)*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Kaczmarek, Sylwia. 2015. Skuteczność procesu rewitalizacji. Uwarunkowania, mierniki, perspektywy (The effectivity of the revitalisation process. Conditionings, measures, perspectives). *Studia Miejskie*, 17, 27-36.
- Kakluchi, Emico. 2014. Cultural heritage protection system in Japan: current issues and prospects for the future. *National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Tokyo*, 1-12.
- Knight, John. 1994. Rural revitalization in Japan: Spirit of the village and taste of the country. *Asian Survey*, 34, 7, 634-646.
- Lauzon, Al. Ray Bollman. Bill Ashton. 2015. *State of Rural Canada Report*, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Brandon University, 107.
- Liu, Chang. 1990. *The Village Renewal in Germany and its Implication for Taiwan*, National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan, 165.
- Liu, Chang. Esther Laske. 2010. The Empty Rural Area Diagonal in France. *Diagonale du Vide*, 14, 90-96.
- McElfish Jr, James. 2007. Ten things wrong with sprawl. *The Environmental Magazine*, 03/04.
- Pałka-Lebek, Ewa. 2019. *Rewitalizacja obszarów wiejskich – uwarunkowania, modele, konsekwencje (Revitalisation of rural areas – conditions, models, consequences)*, Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne.
- Ray, Christopher. 2006. Neo-endogenous rural development in the EU. In: Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, Patrick Mooney (eds), *The handbook of rural studies*, 278-292. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.
- Regional development programme of Georgia 2018-2021*, 2017, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Tbilisi.
- Regional Development Strategies for 2014-2021 for the regions of Georgia*, 2013, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Tbilisi.
- Röling, Niels. 1993. Agricultural Knowledge and Environmental Regulation in the Netherlands. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 33, 2.
- Silva, Luis. 2012. Built heritage-making and socioeconomic renewal in declining rural areas: evidence from Portugal. *Etnográfica*, 16, 3, 487-510.
- Skalski, Krzysztof. 2009. *Rewitalizacja we Francji – zarządzanie przekształceniami obszarów kryzysowych w miastach (Revitalisation in France – managing transformations of crisis areas in cities)*. vol. 2, Kraków: Instytut Rozwoju Miast.
- Skalski, Krzysztof (ed.). 2010. *O budowie metod rewitalizacji w Polsce-aspekty wybrane (About building revitalisation methods in Poland – selected aspects)*. Monografie i Studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Kraków.
- Tallon, Andrew. 2010. *Urban regeneration in the UK*. London: Routledge.
- Varady, David. Reinout Kleinhans. Maarten van Ham. 2015. The Potential of Community Entrepreneurship for Neighbourhood Revitalization in the United Kingdom and the United States. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 9(3), 253-276.
- Wojciechowska, Jolanta. 2009. *Procesy i uwarunkowania rozwoju agroturystyki w Polsce (The processes and conditions behind the development of agritourism in Poland)*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Yin, Ling. George Zestos. Leo Michelis. 2003. Economic convergence in the European Union. *Journal of Economic Integration*, 18 (1), Center for International Economics, Sejong Institution, 188-213.
- Zimnicka, Agnieszka. Lechosław Czernik. 2007. *Kształtowanie przestrzeni wsi podmiejskiej na przykładzie oddziaływania miasta Szczecina (Shaping the space of suburban countryside. A case study of the influence of the City of Szczecin)*, Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Hogben.