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THE FUNCTION OF HOTELS IN REVITALIZING RURAL AREAS: CASE STUDIES IN POMERANIA PROVINCE

Abstract: This article indicates optimal local, social, economic and geographical relationships contributing to the effective implementation of hotel investment as a part of rural area revitalisation. This will be undertaken through the case studies of four hotels functioning in revitalized historical buildings in the rural areas of Pomerania Province. A 'multiple case study' will be performed based on the following methods: 1) the desk study of the data concerning the activity of the hotels; 2) a micro- and meso-scale cartographic inventory; 3) structured individual in-depth interviews with hotel owners and managers, as well as with the authorities and officials responsible for the promotion of the communes where the hotels are situated.

Keywords: revitalization, rural areas, hotel function, Pomerania.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to indicate the social, economic and geographical relationships, locally contributing to the effective implementation of hotel investment as a part of rural area revitalisation. The empirical studies which this text is based upon were conducted as a 'multiple case study' of 'categorized' hotels functioning in revitalized residences in the rural areas of Pomerania Province. It was established that out of the 199 hotels, 45 are situated in rural areas, and four are examples of a new function as a part of the revitalisation of historical sites (palace and park, or manor and park complexes). The four hotels were: Spichrz Hotel in Borcz (Kartuzy district, commune of Somonino), Wieniawa Hotel in Reków Górny (Puck district, commune of Puck), Ciekocinko Palace Hotel in Ciekocinko (Wejherowo district, commune of Choczewo) and Godętowo Palace Hotel in Godętowo (Wejherowo district, commune of Łęczycza). The authors decided to analyse only categorized hotels as the conditions such buildings have to meet are the most formalized (Legal Digest 2004, no 188, entry 1945, with later amendments 2004). It seems that opening a categorized hotel to revitalise historical residential complexes in-

volves a greater challenge than any other activity in the hotel industry. Empirical research (desk studies, cartographic inventory and in-depth interviews) was carried out in May 2017.

The article is organised in the following way, firstly, based on the literature, the authors present the idea of revitalizing rural areas by introducing hotels, indicating the advantages and disadvantages of this, as well as its challenges. Next, they discuss in detail the multiple case study methodology and when presenting the results, they refer to a number of significant issues. Based on the results of the desk study, the authors present a general description of the hotels in the revitalized palace and park complexes in the rural areas of Pomerania Province. The micro-scale cartographic inventory enabled them to indicate the functions within the premises of those complexes which are currently hotels. The meso-scale inventory allowed the researchers to evaluate the potential of Pomerania Province as regards introducing hotels as a part of rural area revitalization. Finally, due to individual, in-depth, structured interviews, it was possible to define the problems, challenges and benefits by implementing the hotel function.

2. THE IDEA OF REVITALIZING RURAL AREAS BY IMPLEMENTING THE HOTEL FUNCTION

Introducing hotels is one way to revitalize rural areas. Investments in the hotel industry made as part of revitalization should lead to new jobs; investments should serve the purpose of raising the local community's environmental, cultural, social and economic awareness. It must be noted, however, that the objectives of the major stakeholders in hotels may vary. On the one hand, there are investors and managers of hotels, and on the other the inhabitants of the revitalized rural space and their representatives.

The development of the tourism and tourist hotel infrastructure in particular is perceived as a catalyst for the multifunctional development of rural areas, complementary to agriculture. Introducing the tourist function, including hotels, often takes place as a part of revitalization. We are talking here about a situation when new functions complement or replace current ones which results in the elimination of existing shortages and spatial, functional, ecological, social and economic conflicts (KORELESKI 2007, WŁODARCZYK 2011). The introduction of the hotel function is particularly desirable in areas of relatively low agricultural production which are inappropriately and inefficiently managed. On the other hand, introducing hotels should take place in areas showing high tourist potential, based on natural and human assets (BIEŃKOWSKI 2001). All these features are found in the rural areas of Pomerania Province.

We should be aware that introducing hotels into rural areas may cause negative consequences such as acculturation with local inhabitants adopting cultural models brought in by the hotel managers, employees and guests (BIEŃKOWSKI 2001). Introducing the hotel function may lead to an intensification of tourism which can consequently result in the cultural, social, economic and physiognomic homogenization of rural space: the rural destination becomes similar to other tourist areas, as well as those areas which generate tourism (DURYDIWKA 2014, MIKA 2017). Hence, developing hotels in the countryside should be done with caution taking the social, cultural, economic, ecological and landscape contexts of the revitalized site into consideration (BIEŃKOWSKI 2001, MYGA-PIĄTEK 2012). Therefore, the character of a hotel in revitalized palace and park complex should be clearly different from the character of a modern urban site. An effective offer of a hotel operating in a revitalized palace should be exclusive, referring to the experience of beauty and harmony of the rural landscape, as well as to the local cultural and historical heritage (CUDNY & ROUBA 2012, ROUBA & CUDNY

2011). As a result, the revitalization of rural areas by introducing a hotel should instigate the development of the local inhabitants' cultural self-awareness (DURYDIWKA 2014), and at the same time enhance sustainable development (GONDA-SOROCZYŃSKA 2008, KRONENBERG 2011).

According to J. KIZIELEWICZ (2002), introducing the hotel function to revitalized buildings involves a number of challenges which have to be faced by the investor. One of them is the potential conflict between the requirements of historical monument protection (a legally defined necessity to preserve the historical substance) and the requirements that a hotel has to meet the law along with the prospective guests' expectations (proper furnishings of common areas and individual rooms). It is clear then that a legal conflict may appear between protecting what is historical (Legal Digest 2003, no. 162, entry 1568 with later amendments) and ensuring the function of what is to be used (Legal Digest 2004, no. 188, entry 1945 with later amendments) (LITWIN *et al.* 2010). W. CUDNY & R. ROUBA (2012) write about architectural and functional determinism, the result of which is that preserving historical elements is superior to introducing new functions. This brings specific consequences concerning the product (the accommodation answers not only the client's needs, but also the requirements of historical monument protection), the organization (an important stakeholder of all activities is the province historical buildings conservator) and the costs (investment costs in the case of introducing the hotel function into a historical building are usually considerably higher than when a new hotel is built). It is worth remembering, however, that introducing a hotel may be the only way to protect rural cultural heritage (GONDA-SOROCZYŃSKA 2008).

J. KRONENBERG (2011) points to various tensions between the investor and the local community as a result of introducing a hotel. He also points to the possible lack of employees recruited from the local population, limited local community participation in events held there, as well as a lack of strategy for communication between the hotel owner and the inhabitants. Excepting the last, all these problems could be caused by either the local community or the investor. Solutions should be sought in attaching the hotel to the place and its inhabitants by referring to local traditions, using joint marketing of the hotel and the commune, supporting the local economy by employing more inhabitants, as well as cooperating with local suppliers and creating an attractive, and non-commercial, offer for them (KRONENBERG 2011).

Regardless of this risk, a hotel is considered to be one of the most appropriate functions introduced as a part of the revitalization of historical rural residential complexes. Contrary to restoring the residential func-

tion or introducing a museum, a hotel makes it possible to achieve a much better economic result (CUDNY & ROUBA 2012). Finally, it is possible to consider the requirements for protecting historical monuments, ensure an economic profit for the investor as well as increasing accommodation resources and restoring the attractiveness of the revitalized sites while increasing tourists and as a result achieve a multiplier effect in the local economy (KONIECZNA-DOMAŃSKA 2015).

3. THE CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY APPLIED TO SELECTED HOTELS OF POMERANIA PROVINCE

The aim of this article is to define those local social, economic and geographical relationships which encourage hotel investments to help revitalise rural areas. This means that it is necessary to explain why revitalization is needed and to identify the benefits from this process both for the entrepreneurs managing the hotels and commune representatives responsible for the protection of the local cultural heritage while representing the inhabitants' interests. This objective can be accomplished by case studies of four categorized hotels in revitalized historical palace and park complexes in the rural areas of Pomerania Province.

The investigation presented here is a descriptive multiple case study (YIN 2015). Accommodation in revitalized historical buildings (including historical palace and park complexes) in rural areas has been studied before. Despite various issues having been explored, there are no descriptions based on empirical research on the optimal social, economic and geographical relationships that encourage the introduction a hotel as a part of revitalization, both from the perspective of the entrepreneur who runs the hotel and the commune authorities. With respect to this, the authors decided to conduct a multiple case study, i.e. to analyse all four selected facilities. As a result, they managed to avoid a situation when the impossibility of achieving a methodologically complete case study might undermine the quality of the whole research. Thus, a multiple case study has allowed the authors to make generalizations referring to similar cases.

The research was carried out by the following methods: 1) desk research concerning the hotels; 2) a cartographic inventory of categorized hotels functioning in historical palace and park complexes (micro-scale); 3) structured individual in-depth interviews with the owners and managers of the hotels and with the mayors and officials in the communes where the hotels are found.

Any research project should start with a desk study. It enables researchers to collect and analyse existing data and thus establish the current state of knowledge concerning a specific topic. Considering the money and time spent at this stage, it is very cost-effective (MAKOWSKA & BOGUSZEWSKI 2013). As part of this, the authors searched for qualitative and quantitative data in the strategic documents created by the communes where the hotels are situated. We are talking here, above all, about studies of the condition and direction of spatial development, as well as historical monument protection programs. The authors also conducted secondary statistical and cartographic analyses taking advantage of the following data sources: province and commune registers of historical monuments, and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism 'Central Register of Hotel Establishments'.

The next method was a cartographic inventory. The definitions of a cartographic inventory emphasize the following features: 1) recognizing reality with the use of a cartographic apparatus; 2) sorting and archiving information obtained at the first stage; 3) processing the information found at the second stage; and, finally, 4) drawing conclusions based on the information obtained at the third stage (RATAJSKI 1973, SALISZCZEW 1998). In our study, the cartographic inventory was performed on two spatial scales: 1) meso-scale, involving the entire Province of Pomerania and concerning 'categorized' hotels in revitalized historical palace and park complexes in rural areas; 2) micro-scale, involving individual hotel locations (plots of land), where individual buildings were inventorised as regards their functions. The maps, which were the basis of field and 'desk work' in the cartographic inventory method, both at micro- and meso-scales, were prepared using the resources of the Topographic Items Database provided by the Geodetic and Cartographic Documentation Centre.

The last method was a structured, individual, in-depth interview. In qualitative interviews, information is collected through an asymmetrical interaction between an interviewer and a respondent. The asymmetry comes from the fact that only one party (the interviewer) decides the structure and purpose of the interaction. The interview is then not a conversation, but structured, based on a scenario, with the interviewer listening to the respondent's answers (KVALE 2011). This particular study included interviews based on two separate scenarios: one for representatives of communes, featuring categorized hotels in revitalized, historical palace and park complexes; and one for hotel owners and managers. Initially, it was assumed that two interviews would be conducted for each hotel, but as some potential respondents refused to participate, the authors conducted three interviews with representatives of local authorities and only one

Table 1. The scenario of an in-depth interview with representatives of local authorities in the rural areas of Pomerania Province (featuring 'categorized' hotels in revitalized, historical palace and park complexes)

Research questions	Individual questions
What is the purpose of introducing the hotel function as part of the revitalisation of historical sites?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What functions should be introduced as part of revitalizing historical sites? – Is introducing a hotel as a way to revitalise historical sites advisable? Why? Why not?
What, from a <i>gmina's</i> perspective, are the benefits of revitalization and introduction of a hotel to a revitalized building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the benefits of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel into a revitalized building from the perspective of the local community? – What are the benefits of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel in a revitalized building from the perspective of local businesses? – What was the influence of revitalization and the introduction of the hotel function to a revitalized building on local heritage and culture?

Source: authors.

Table 2. The 'scenario' of an in-depth interview with representatives of 'categorized' hotels in revitalized historical palace and park complexes in the rural areas of Pomerania Province

Research questions	Individual questions
What is the justification of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel into a revitalized building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Why was it decided to revitalize the existing historical building instead of building a new hotel? – Why was it decided to operate a hotel as a part of revitalization? – Was operating a hotel the only type of activity considered?
What, from the perspective of the hotel, are the benefits of revitalization and introduction of a hotel to a revitalized building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the benefits of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel to a revitalized building from the perspective of the local community? – What are the benefits of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel to a revitalized building from the perspective of local businesses? – What was the influence of revitalization and the introduction of a hotel to a revitalized building on local heritage and culture?

Source: authors.

with a hotel owner. Because they were uncertain about the frankness of the opinions revealed and because of the lack of involvement on the entrepreneurs' side, the authors abandoned the idea to record the interviews. Instead, they based their work on the detailed notes taken simultaneously by two interviewers. Due to these limitations, the results, especially those concerning entrepreneurs' opinions, should be treated very cautiously.

4. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF HOTELS IN REVITALIZED PALACE AND PARK COMPLEXES IN THE RURAL AREAS OF POMERANIA PROVINCE

The area of today's Pomerania Province fits into the medieval borders of Eastern Pomerania within a zone of changing Polish, German and Scandinavian influences. Noblemen's residences started to appear in this area in the 17th c. Most country residences belonging to the nobility and affluent landed gentry (*folwarks*, manors with parks, palace and park complexes) come from the second half of the 19th and early 20th c. (GAWEŁ 2013). A rich heritage may be an opportunity for development, though suitable conditions are required (LEŚNIEWSKA-NAPIERAŁA 2017). As noted by M. KOZAK (2008), the historic role of manors and palaces as the seats of the most affluent landed owners has disappeared. As a result, and due to the decreasing importance of agriculture in rural areas, it is possible to introduce new functions for these buildings, turning them into for example a hotel, restaurant or museum. Below, the authors present a description of revitalized manor and park, and palace and park complexes, as well as the categorized hotels they currently accommodate. If not given otherwise, the basic source of information is the material provided by the hotels.

Spichrz Hotel is situated in the village of Borcz, near Hopów, in the commune of Somonino, Kartuszy powiat. It is a manor-type village, with a typical linear layout. Its historical structure features a manor and estate farm, together with a manor house, distillery and park, as well as 'multi-family' estate farm buildings ("The historical monument protection program for the commune of Somonin: 2017-2020"; "The historical monuments protection program for the Kartuszy district: 2015-2018"). The village was first mentioned in 1241. Originally, it belonged to a knight, but with time, it became a landed property. In the early 19th c., as a result of the Napoleonic wars, a large part of the village was destroyed. After a fire at the beginning of the 20th c., the manor was replaced with a brick building. Construction work finished in 1911,

while the manor park had been set up at the turn of the 20th c. ("The development strategy for the commune of Somonino: 2012-2019"). In 1920, the property was taken over by Albert Hoene who started to breed cattle, sheep and pigs. During World War II, the property was not damaged, but its owners decided to abandon it. In 1945, it became a part of a collective farm.

In 1999, the property reverted to private ownership and the new owners started a revitalization process, including the manor house and granary which were turned into a hotel and a restaurant. The historical, two-storey manor house was built on a rectangular plan and in such a way that it encircled a courtyard. On the north side of the manor is a three-storey granary built of brick currently used as a hotel and a restaurant. The greatest challenge for the owner was to adjust the granary to perform its new function. At present, the hotel offers 14 rooms for guests and specializes in organizing business meetings, conferences and banquets. On the west side, the manor borders a park where events are held. It is interesting that, apart from the hotel building, the complex also includes the biggest Polish feather and down factory, *Polskie Północne Pierze i Puch* Ltd. There are two retail outlets on the premises, the company shop and the hotel reception. In addition, the hotel offers tours of the factory.



Photo 1. Spichrz Hotel in Borcz
Source: Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierała, 2017

Wieniawa Hotel is situated in the village of Rekowo Górne, in the commune of Puck. The first records mentioning it go back to 1392 when the village was a 'knight's property'. An eclectic palace was built in the very centre of Rekowo Górne in 1871 on the initiative of Councillor Hagen from Sobowidz. It was designed in the Italian style, on a rectangular plan with a quadrilateral observation tower ("The historical monuments protection program for the Puck district: 2016-2019"). Before World War II, the building had

been managed by Paul Mahncke who ordered the building of a distillery and a smithy. After the war, it accommodated collective farm offices, and from 1968, an Institute of Horticulture.

In 1994, the palace was bought by a private owner who started its revitalization under the strict supervision of the conservator and in addition the park surrounding the palace was renovated. The revitalization included the introduction of a four-star hotel which has 31 rooms for guests, as well as tennis, volleyball and basketball courts, a football pitch and a mini-golf course. The hotel offer also includes spa services and holidays for people with diabetes or gluten intolerance.



Photo 2. Wienera Hotel in Rekowo Górne
Source: Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierała, 2017

Ciekocinko Palace is located in the commune of Choczewo, Wejherowo district. We can read about the village of Ciekocinko in archives dating back to 1362. The historical manor house was built in 1910, while the park and estate farm date from the late 19th c. In 1945, the property was taken over by the state, and in 1950, a collective farm was set up there. In 2004, it was bought by a private owner and the revitalization process started ("The historical monuments protection program for the commune of Choczewo: 2017-2020"). Due to the many years of neglect, the building was in a very bad condition, and many elements of its construction and furnishings had been stolen. The restoration was based on the original assumptions of the design including the preservation of architectonic details. For instance, the new owner saw to the reconstruction of the entrance door. Additionally, those buildings which had been built at the time of the collective farm were demolished ("Ciekocinko Palace", 2017). The palace is surrounded by a park on the west side, and on the south and east, it borders on agricultural areas. Ciekocinko Hotel Resort & Wellness is categorized as a five-star hotel with 28 rooms for guests and conference facilities. The rooms are ar-

ranged in the Secessionist, Biedermeier and Art Deco styles. In the carriage house, there are ten cottage-style rooms. The hotel offers spa treatments, horse riding lessons and wine tasting. The palace and park complex includes a stable where Baltica horse riding competitions are held.



Photo 3. Ciekocinko Palace Hotel in Ciekocinko
Source: Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierała, 2017



Photo 4. Godętowo Hotel in Godętowo
Source: Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierała, 2017

Godętowo Palace Hotel is situated in the commune of Łęczycza in Wejherowo district. The Godętowo property was first mentioned in 1284 and has changed owners many times, being treated as an investment by the Pomeranian nobility. The manor building existed already in the middle of the 17th c. and in 1794, Count von Lehndorf created the first theatre in Pomerania on its premises. In 1820, the palace was enlarged by adding wings and a porch with a terrace descending to the garden. During World War II, the Wehrmacht occupied the palace where the military intelligence service headquarters was set up ("The development strategy for the commune of Łęczycza: 2010-2025", 2010). After the war, the estate became the property of the State Treasury. The palace, where flats and offices were arranged, gradually fell into ruin. In 2006, it went

into private ownership beginning a three-year revitalization, which included the introduction of a hotel. The three-star hotel currently offers 20 rooms for guests, organizes courses and conferences, as well as various events.

5. REVITALIZATION OF RURAL AREAS BY INTRODUCING THE HOTEL FUNCTION IN POMERANIA PROVINCE

The research conducted on the premises of selected revitalized palace and park complexes in Pomerania Province showed that the long-term transformation has led to the emergence of new functions (Fig. 1). This is consistent with the results of national studies by R. ROUBA (2010) who demonstrated that the transformations meant, above all cleaning up the surroundings, renovating the park, as well as demolishing useless buildings in very poor condition, introducing new transportation (new roads, parking lots), and building new or extending the existing buildings with the development of the new function in mind. The process of introducing hotels into historical manor houses led to the development of a varied social infrastructure in the surrounding parks (WITKOWSKI & STAROŚCIC 2008), including recreation. Due to its functions, the most distinctive complex is Spichrz in Borcz, which consists of a hotel, park and a quilt and pillow factory. Concerning the condition and balanced development of the complex, we should mention Ciekocinko Palace with its particularly impressive residential section.

Apart from these, we should also mention the functions the complexes provide for whole villages or even communes. The complexes certainly have a positive effect on the image of the communes where they are situated. Here, we may speak about the marketing function. In addition, by maintaining their traditional form, they are used for popularizing old architecture, so an educational function is present as well. Beyond any doubt, because of their history and architecture, all the places included are not merely an element of the local tourist accommodation infrastructure, but they are tourist attractions in themselves.

The potential for revitalizing rural areas by introducing the hotel function can be diagnosed in two ways. Firstly, the space should be generally attractive for potential investors from the hotel sector. Various authors indicate that such space should include other already functioning hotels as well (KALNINS & CHUNG 2004, PAPTAEODOROU 2004, URTASUN & GUTIERREZ 2006). Places attractive for the hotel sector are those with a high concentration of such services. Secondly,

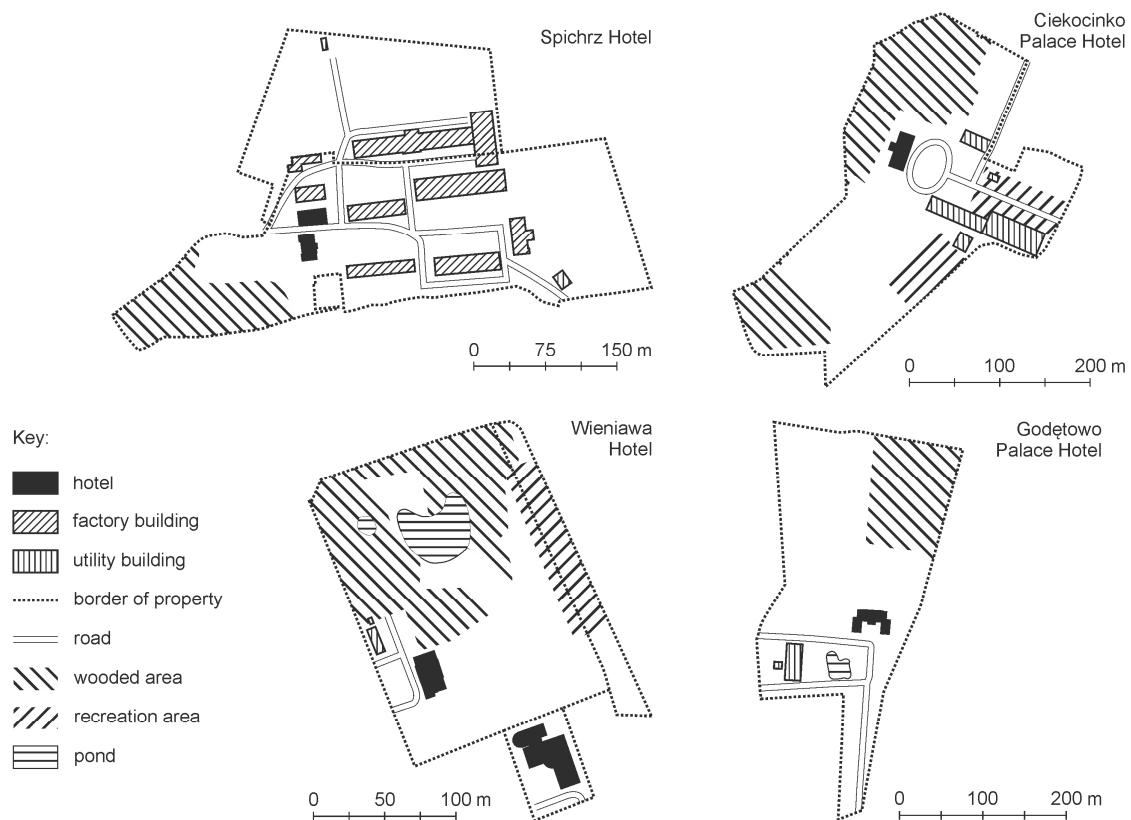


Fig. 1. Hotel location of revitalized palace and park complexes in the rural areas of Pomerania Province
Source: authors, based on their cartographic inventory and Central Topographic Objects Database

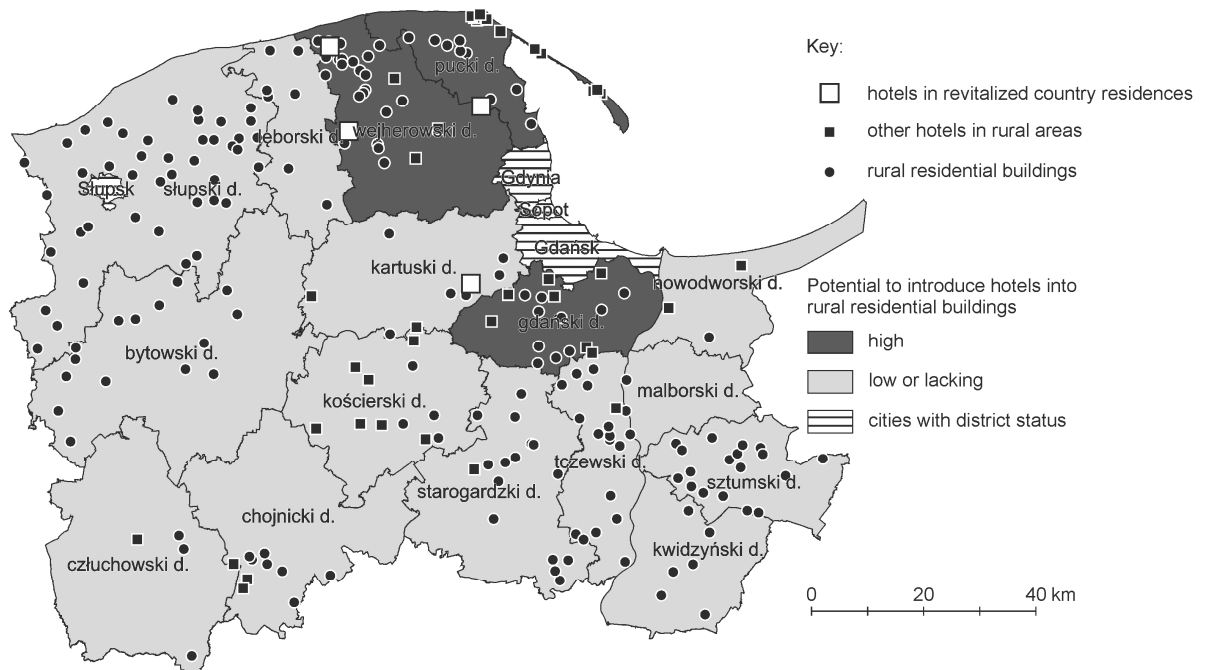


Fig. 2. Potential for introducing a hotel function as part of the revitalisation of historical palace and park complexes in the rural areas of Pomerania Province
Source: authors, based on data provided by Pomerania Province Conservator of Historical Monuments in Gdansk and the Central Register of Hotels

the area in question should include historical buildings, especially those with a particularly large potential for conversion to a hotel, including manor houses and parks, and palace and park complexes (KIZIELEWICZ 2002). Thus, it can be said that the potential for revitalizing rural areas by introducing a hotel will depend on the simultaneous concentration of already existing hotels and large historical residential buildings, potentially suitable for use as a hotel.

The evaluation of the potential for revitalizing rural areas by introducing a hotel was conducted in the following way. First, the authors established the districts in which the number of hotels is larger than the median (one building). Secondly, they indicated those districts where the number of historical palace and park complexes is greater than the median (eight places). The common part of both sets let the researchers identify areas of hotel concentration in palace-park, manor-park or estate farm complexes. In this way, Gdańsk, Puck and Wejherowo districts were considered to be promising for the development of hotels as a part of revitalisation (Fig. 2). It is worth mentioning that in Wejherowo district are three out of the four revitalized places included in the study.

It appears that introducing the hotel function is a particularly good idea when revitalizing palace and park complexes within a close distance of large cities well connected by transport (GONDA-SOROCZYŃSKA & SOROCZYŃSKA 2014, KRONENBERG 2011). From this perspective, the potential for the economically effective development of the hotel industry will be shown by rural areas within the functional area of 'Tricity'. This was confirmed by earlier analyses regarding the location of hotels and the spatial diversity of the prices of offered services (NAPIERAŁA 2013). However, it is worth emphasizing at this point that the concentration of palace and park complexes in the peripheral zones of large urban centres is not specific to Pomerania (MYGA-PIĄTEK 2012). From the perspective of the development of a hotel function in revitalized rural residential buildings, it is this zone that has the highest potential

On the other hand, we should pay particular attention to the situation of the peripherally located Słupsk district. It is an area with the largest number of country historical residence complexes (43). From this perspective, the potential for introducing the hotel function as a part of the revitalisation of historical palace-park or manor-park complexes is highest. Unfavourable location factors (first of all the lack of stimulating competition, typical of the functional areas of large cities) turned out to be an effective barrier to introducing 'categorized' hotels as well as hotels in general. R. ROUBA (2010) believes that the unique cultural, architectonic and landscape assets of hotels

accommodated in palace and park complexes compensates for drawbacks.

Analysis of case studies in Pomerania Province proves, however, that although the thesis may be true for hotels in general, it cannot be verified for star-rated hotels.

6. THE PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF REVITALIZING RURAL PALACE AND PARK COMPLEXES IN POMERANIA PROVINCE BY INTRODUCING HOTELS

The revitalization of historical buildings in rural areas plays a significant role in the process of revitalizing the countryside and, consequently, for local development. It is very important for all activities to be undertaken in such a way that the rural character of the building and its surroundings is not lost (WILCZYŃSKI 2009). In addition, it should result in revitalizing the countryside, increasing the attractiveness of a given place and stimulating local communities (BAŃSKI *et al.* 2009).

From the commune authorities' perspective, revitalization of historical buildings by private investors is of great importance because the commune benefits as regards promotion and image. Finding a private investor is often the only chance because rural communes usually cannot afford to revitalise such places themselves. In the communes in Pomerania, there are numerous historical buildings from the region's past, and it is virtually impossible to find sufficient funds to maintain these places.

It was emphasized in the interviews that apart from bilateral benefits, cooperation between a private investor and commune authorities may result in a potential conflict of interests. The hoteliers, especially at the initial stages of investment, expect exemption from local taxes and fees. The area covered by palace and park complexes is large, so the property tax is substantial, often nearly impossible to be paid by an entrepreneur at the early stage when the revitalized building is not bringing in sufficient profit. On the other hand, commune authorities are obliged to implement taxes in such a way that tax exemption does not relieve an individual tax-payer. The resolutions passed by the commune council must be defined so that they concern a potentially unspecified tax-payer. If it is possible to identify an entrepreneur who has been relieved from paying tax, it means that the statutory delegation to establishing exemption has been abused by the commune council (Legal Digest 1991, no. 9, entry 31).

Both, the commune authorities and the hoteliers emphasize that revitalization attract sentimental tourism to rural areas. Palace and park complexes in Pomerania are visited not only by the descendants of the former owners, but more generally by German tourists mainly due to history. At the same time, new hotels generate jobs for the local population. Due to their specific characters, such sites have a positive influence on the integration of local communities with the hotel itself and with its history. The effect is even stronger when hotels functioning in historical palace and park complexes become venues for various cultural events.

The interviews revealed that the hotels functioning in historical palace and park complexes are usually independent enterprises because hotel chains are unwilling to invest due to the high cost of refurbishment and the impossibility of fully adjusting them to the brand standards. Sometimes, cooperation with monument conservators is problematic because they impose numerous limitations on changing the buildings. The solutions they suggest often involve high costs of refurbishment and to introduce change without formal permission is not possible.

Similarly, it is not easy to make changes in the parks surrounding the manors because they often have a similar status. As a result of long-lasting damage and the loss of assets due to plant succession, recreation is very difficult. What is more, some entries in the register do not clearly specify the scope and object of the conservator's protection (SIKORA 2010).

7. CONCLUSIONS

The revitalization of historical palace and park complexes in rural areas has several functions which the authors managed to identify as a result of the research. The first diagnosed function is the marketing one. The effect of revitalization is beneficial for the image of the entrepreneur and the commune (including its inhabitants). Another significant result of revitalization is the cultural function. When the authentic historical contents are preserved, revitalization makes it possible to restore the relationships between the inhabitants and local heritage, and the activities undertaken in cooperation with the commune authorities have substantial potential. The results of the research verify the earlier evaluation by M. DURYDIWKA (2014) as the cultural function corresponds to the educational function.

The key function of the revitalization discussed in the article is its economic role. Using palace and park complexes as hotels is the right development as it

guarantees their availability to potential tourists and inhabitants alike. From the economic perspective, particularly effective will be the revitalization of those complexes in the direct vicinity of large cities. The hotels offer a luxury product which agrees with the prestigious character of the earlier residential function. Hotels may be economically successful above all in the functional zone of a large city, well-connected with the potential buyer's place of residence. The results are consistent with those of earlier works (CUDNY & ROUBA 2012, KONIECZNA-DOMAŃSKA 2015, ROUBA & CUDNY 2011).

Concerning the budget plan for a rural commune, revitalization of historical palace and park complexes is such a heavy financial burden that it is practically impossible without the involvement of a private investor. However, introducing the hotel function as a way of revitalizing these sites brings the best possible effects. Consequently, local governments start to understand how important supporting private revitalization initiatives are, though, on the other hand, this support is expected from the hotel owners too. Naturally, a compromise must be reached between possible and expected support.

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