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### **THE EFFECTS OF REVITALIZING ACTIONS – IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF A REGION (A CASE STUDY OF OPOLSKIE VOIVODESHIP)<sup>1</sup>**

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### **EFEKTY DZIAŁAŃ REWITALIZACYJNYCH – IDENTYFIKACJA I ZNACZENIE DLA POLITYKI ROZWOJU REGIONU (PRZYKŁAD WOJEWÓDZTWA OPOLSKIEGO)**

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**Summary:** The aim of the work is to identify effects of the process of revitalization in the space of a region. The authors examine the results which were achieved on closing the realization of revitalization projects in the years 2007-2013 in Opolskie Voivodeship. They also undertake an attempt to determine their significance for the perspective shaping of the regional development policy. The research was conducted on the basis of the analyses of: applications of revitalization projects co-financed within the Regional Operation Program for Opolskie Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013, local revitalization programs in the cities of Opolskie Voivodeship, focus studies conducted in 12 cities of the region, as well as survey research carried out among representatives of all local government units in the voivodeship. The results of the studies point to the fact that the attained effects of revitalization only partially were in accordance with the assumptions of the conception of revitalization and its idea. It is indicated that cities, mainly medium-sized and large, are privileged regarding the range of generating positive changes which result from revitalization and that economic effects are marginalized.

**Keywords:** revitalization, effects, regional development, regional policy.

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<sup>1</sup> For the needs of the present work, the authors use partial results of the studies entitled “Revitalization of urban areas and development of degraded areas in Opolskie Voivodeship”, which were realized within the project “Opole Territorial Observatory – strengthening the system of monitoring public politics” ordered from the Marshal’s Office of Opolskie Voivodeship. The original project was completed by the following team of experts: Janusz Słodczyk, Adam Drobniak, Agnieszka Dembicka-Niemiec, Edyta Szafranek, Magdalena Śliwa, Renata Klimek, access: [www.rot.opolskie.pl](http://www.rot.opolskie.pl).

**Streszczenie:** Celem opracowania jest identyfikacja efektów rewitalizacji w przestrzeni regionu osiągniętych po zakończeniu realizacji projektów rewitalizacyjnych w okresie 2007-2013, a także określenie ich znaczenia dla perspektywicznego kształtowania polityki rozwoju regionu. Jako studium przypadku przyjęto województwo opolskie. Badania przeprowadzono na podstawie analizy: wniosków projektów rewitalizacyjnych współfinansowanych w ramach RPO WO w latach 2007-2013, lokalnych programów rewitalizacji miast województwa opolskiego oraz badań fokusowych w 12 miastach województwa i badań ankietowych przeprowadzonych z przedstawicielami wszystkich jednostek samorządowych województwa. Wyniki badań wskazały na uzyskanie efektów rewitalizacji tylko częściowo zgodnych z założeniami koncepcji rewitalizacji i jej idei. Wskazano na uprzywilejowanie miast, głównie średnich i dużych, w zakresie generowania pozytywnych zmian na skutek rewitalizacji, a także marginalizowanie efektów gospodarczych. Rewitalizacja w badanym regionie przyczyniła się głównie do zmian infrastrukturalnych, w zakresie poprawy stanu zagospodarowania przestrzeni i sytuacji społecznej. Uzyskane efekty w dużym stopniu zależały od uwarunkowań formalno-organizacyjnych procesu rewitalizacji. Powinny w perspektywicznej polityce regionalnej stanowić punkt wyjścia przede wszystkim do modyfikacji systemu zarządzania i organizacji rozwoju regionalnego w zakresie procesu rewitalizacji, w szczególności weryfikacji kryteriów konkursowych oraz wzmocnienia wielopodmiotowości i partycypacji społecznej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rewitalizacja, efekty, rozwój regionalny, polityka regionalna

## 1. Introduction

One of vital dimensions of the development of cities and regions is revitalization. In fact, even if not in a formalized form, revitalizing processes have been going on within the spaces of different states, regions and cities with a varying intensity for centuries. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, revitalizing started to be treated in a subjective way: as a directed, systematized process of influencing the quantitative and qualitative changes, primarily in the development of cities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the revitalization process was oriented mainly at improving the image of the urbanistic-architectural structure of cities, while beginning with the 1990s, the contemporary character of revitalization began to be realized by means of governmental programs, that is beside conservation and rebuilding of monuments and historic units, tasks connected with the improvement of the social and economic situation of urban centers [Jadach-Sepioło 2010].

## 2. The essence and assumed effects of revitalization – a theoretical framework

Revitalization is defined as a sequence of planned actions aimed at economic recovery and transformation of the spatial and functional space of degraded areas in cities [Kaczmarek 2001, p. 16]. This is a process which consists in eliminating factors responsible for unfavorable socio-economic phenomena and one which targets the restoration of vitality of the given area [Egercioğlu et al. 2016, p. 331]. The literature of the subject most often draws attention to the fact that the primary

objective of revitalization-oriented actions is the revival of functioning of the socioeconomic sphere, which contributes to improving the attractiveness and activity of heavily degraded places [Adair et al. 2000, pp. 147-156; Mac Gregor 2010, pp. 38-51; Muzioł-Węclawowicz 2010, pp. 11-12; Szajnowska-Wysocka, Sobala 2013, pp. 22-24; Jayantha, Hei 2015, pp. 245-261]. In the detailed framework, it is indicated that the aim of revitalization-related actions should be providing local communities with better living conditions, creating possibilities of taking up employment, satisfying needs of everyday life, such as housing, services, leisure or education, and also restricting the phenomenon of social pathology, social exclusion, lowering the level of pollution, or increasing that of public security [Sztando 2010, p. 302; Dąbrowski 2013, pp. 48-49; Szajnowska-Wysocka, Sobala 2013, pp. 9-26; Kaczmarek 2015, pp. 27-36]. However, the practice connected with the revitalization actions which are taken in Poland shows that they frequently deal with improving the order and image of the space, which by assumption can influence the socioeconomic dimension in the future. Herbst [2008, p. 17] states that the basic drawback of the majority of approaches towards the revitalization-oriented actions in Poland is the advantage of “redecorating” perspective over social problems of areas in need of revival.<sup>2</sup> The assumed priority objectives of revitalization indicate that it concerns three main spheres of local and regional development: social, economic and spatial. It cannot concentrate solely on selective branch-based actions (e.g., infrastructural ones only), but ought to exert a complex impact [Kaczmarek 2015, pp. 27-35; Parysek 2015, pp. 9-25; Kłosowski 2005, p. 1; Skalski 2004, p. 1].

Conducting research dealing with revitalization also requires acknowledging that it is a complex process, which many parties should be engaged in and for the realization of which one makes use of different instruments and tools of the management character [Rogatka et al. 2015, pp. 37-48; Noworól 2012, p. 29; Grochowski et al. 2010, p. 186]. Revitalization should be treated as a process of integrated financial, organizational and legal actions, one that should win social acceptance and be taken up by the commune as well as local socioeconomic partners [Tertelis 2005, pp. 12-14].

In the case of Poland, revitalization gained in importance as a dimension of local and regional development following the country’s entering the structures of the European Union. This resulted from the necessity of adjusting the policy of local and regional development to the EU’s requirements, as well as to possibilities of obtaining financial means to carry out tasks in the field of revitalization. At present, revitalization is one of the paramount priorities of urban policy and its processes and principles of formation have gained even more significance in consequence of accepting the

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<sup>2</sup> Instances of such actions can be pointed on the basis of description of projects realized in Poland to date within the framework of EU grants [mapadotacji.gov.pl]. They are also presented in scientific analyses (among others: [Muzioł-Węclawowicz 2010, p. 355; *Rewitalizacja...* 2015, pp. 23-44].

so-called revitalization bill in Poland.<sup>3</sup> Revitalization is a process going on within the local space, yet the sum of its actions translates into the improvement of the situation within the space of regions and conditions of the processes of their socio-economic development. This results directly from the following two facts: 1) units of local government and their organizational branches on the regional level can be stakeholders of revitalization; 2) financing revitalization-related tasks was possible through means allotted to this purpose in operation programs, both on the regional and national levels, which spanned the years 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.

The aim of the present elaboration is to identify effects of revitalization within the space of a region, that is those obtained in the programming period (2007-2013) and also to determine the significance of the effects for the policy of development of a region in the period of 2014-2020. Opolskie Voivodeship was chosen as a case study.

Because of the application of the case study method in the present work, it is important to outline the problem of revitalization in programming the development of the selected region. Revitalization was included in “The Regional Operational Program for Opolskie Voivodeship 2007-2013” (RRP OP) in Priority 6: “Activation of urban and degraded areas” and its basic goal was defined to be: “developing new socioeconomic functions and enlivening urban and degraded areas with the aim to raise their spatial and economic attractiveness, as well as create conditions for increasing employment in these areas” [Regionalny Program... 2009, p. 29, pp. 157-163]. Thus two actions which were directly connected with revitalization were assigned to defined priority and its aim. They were as follows:

- 6.1 Revitalization of urban areas,
- 6.2 Management of degraded areas [Szczegółowy opis... 2015, pp. 139-155].

As regards defining revitalization as a process and, also, formalizing it within the RRP, it was possible to achieve determined effects. In the studies relating to revitalization in Opolskie Voivodeship, the identification of effects resulting from actions 6.1 and 6.2 was executed, as well as those aimed at revitalizing, yet carried out through other types of projects within national operation programs or outside them.

The sources of information about the effects of tasks realized within revitalization programs are the following:

- documentation of projects co-financed in the years 2007-2013 from the RRP OP 2007-2013 within actions 6.1 and 6.2,<sup>4</sup>
- documentation of projects realized outside the RRP OP 2007-2013 (including those resulting from Local Revitalization Programs), which are characterized by

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<sup>3</sup> The Act of 9 October 2015 on revitalization (the text of the bill, after considering amendments by the Senate, was passed for acceptance to the President of the Republic of Poland) [www.mir.gov.pl (access 21 October 2015)].

<sup>4</sup> In total, there were 45 projects realized. The analysis of the projects was carried out according to the state of their advancement as on 30 June 2014.

a substantial scale of influence in the context of revitalization process and also the objective connection with actions 6.1 and 6.2,

- focus studies conducted in 12 cities of Opolskie Voivodeship,<sup>5</sup>
- survey research among units of local government on the local and county levels (responses were provided by 67 units).

Revitalization in the space of Opolskie Voivodeship has been regarding both big and small cities. Its expressions are associated with the process of gentrification [Polko 2011, p. 20]. Moreover it is important to take into account the crisis of the public spheres in this process [Polko 2012, p. 9].

### **3. Revitalization as a dimension of the development policy**

Revitalization is a notion describing the process of re-shaping the socioeconomic functions within a determined space. Thus, it is a process that follows in consequence of the loss of functionality of the given area. According to Domański and Gwosdz [2010, pp. 45-55], revitalization makes a reaction to progressing social, spatial and economic degradation of the urban space. Due to the considerable importance of this process for the development of cities and regions, it occupies a vital place in contemporary scientific studies and – at the same time – in the policy of development of territorial units. In the light of the establishments of the First Congress of Revitalization of Polish Cities, which was held in 2010, “[...] revitalization is a coordinated process carried out jointly by territorial authorities, local community and other participants. It is an element of the development policy and aims to prevent degradation of urbanized space, to stop crisis phenomena, to induce development and qualitative changes through increasing social and economic activity, improvement of the living environment, as well as protection of the national heritage, with the principles of sustained development being simultaneously preserved” [Ziobrowski 2009]. In compliance with the guidelines provided by the Minister of Regional Development, the issue of revitalization – in the practice of development applied by units of local government – should be interpreted as: “[...] a complex, coordinated, many-year, and conducted in the given area, process of spatial, technical, social and economic changes, initiated by the territorial government (mainly local) with the aim to lead this area out of a crisis state through investing it with a new functional quality and creating conditions for its development on the basis of characteristic endogenous conditionings” [Narodowe Strategiczne ... 2008, pp. 69-72]. It is a significant fact that the definition has been adapted on the ground of scientific research, which indicates the importance of the process also within the cognitive, interpretative and explanatory spheres [Jarczewski 2009, pp. 45-55]. Presently, the Act on Revitalization, which is currently being introduced, defines revitalization as: “a process of bringing

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<sup>5</sup> The study covered all the county towns and Niemodlin which is located closest to Opole.

degraded areas out of a crisis state, conducted in a complex way through integrated actions for the benefit of local community, space and economy, concentrated territorially, executed by the stakeholders of revitalization on the basis of the revitalization program in the commune,” which shows continuity in defining this issue [The Act on Revitalization, Chapter 1, Art. 2.1].

Revitalization, which refers directly to the space of cities and degraded areas, has been assigned a prominent place in the policy of regional development. It was defined as the fundamental process of influencing directions of changes in the RRP 2007-2013 by all the provinces in a similar manner. In the case of a large number of provinces, including Opolskie Voivodeship, the definition indicated in the Strategic National Reference Frameworks 2007-2013 was applied. The decisive majority of provinces treated revitalization in a similar way, that is conceived it very broadly. The analysis of program documents in the scope of defining revitalization allows differentiating its overall characteristic elements. In consequence, the RRP treats revitalization as a process:

- aimed at inducing changes within the social, economic, spatial and environmental spheres in the area subject to revitalization, and also in its environs;
- generating both quantitative and qualitative effects;
- referring to crisis areas, ones retarded in development or marginalized spatially and/or socioeconomically.

It is worth underlying the fact that revitalization was included in the structure of actions performed within the RRP 2007-2013. It was written in as a priority or an action in the scope of the priority axis. In none of the provinces was revitalization neglected in the process of programming the regional development and in none of them was it qualified lower than an action. This means that its significance for the regional development is substantial.

#### **4. Effects of revitalization-oriented actions – foundations of defining and identifying**

Effects of taken renovation action are understood as results, or results of these undertakings. In practice it is a visible change on the given area which is shown in the quality of surrounding space and the smooth running of the social and economic sphere [Lessaer et al. 2010, pp. 161-183]. They can be identified in a short stretch, as well as in the long-term horizon. They should result directly from the purpose of the revitalization and refer to all its dimensions. Aleksander Noworól regards revitalization as one of the processes of the local development, of which the effectiveness depends on correct defining purposes and assigning appropriate instruments of managing it [Noworól 2010, pp. 47-64].

A purpose of revitalization is to make an economic boom and a change of functional-spatial structure of degraded areas of cities [Kaczmarek 2001, p. 16]. This

purpose is being transferred into tasks, which should lead to improve the quality of life, developing the spatial order, improving the beauty of cities, preserving the cultural legacy for future generations [Parysek 2015, pp. 9-25]. Exchanged tasks should be seen in results. Due to a multidimensional nature of renovation action [Kaczmarek 2001, p. 16; Kaczmarek 2015, pp. 27-36; Billert 2004, p. 8; Prusik, Żróbek 2014, pp. 69-78; Parysek 2015, pp. 9-25] their effects also concern all aspects of functioning of cities: social, economic and spatial. Complexity and diversity which are possible to achieve effects cannot be standardized, which also causes problems with their unambiguous estimate ([Henderson et al. 2007; Sztando 2008, pp. 41-57; Kaczmarek 2015, pp. 27-36]. The literature on the subject shows numerous examples of results of the revitalization, but which refer to specific areas of research [Garrod et al. 1996, pp. 423-430; Kaźmierczak et al. 2011; Chądzyńska 2015, pp. 89-101; Frank, Petersen 1999; Gonzalez 2016]. All research confirm positive influence of received results on the development of revitalizing areas. However, they are more clearly and more quickly noticed in the local development than regional one.

Effects of revitalization-related actions can result from several conditionings of either the general or specific character. In the present elaboration, we consider the former to be the formal-legal requirements behind the realization of tasks. It needs stressing that they took on a similar form in all Polish regions. Additional conditioning was defining revitalization in documents that program the development of provinces which delineated the directions of relevant actions. On the other hand, specific conditioning result, first of all, from the organizational efficiency in the scope of realization of revitalization-oriented tasks by units of local government on the local level, as well as on the regional one – in the latter case – the Institution Managing the RRP (Management Institution of RRP). Important aspects here were, among others, requirements of competitions, which were set for beneficiaries as regards the possibilities of their applying for financial support, and – subsequently – conditions of realization of projects selected in the open competition, including the required indexes of the product (P) and the result (R). The product (P) indexes refer to the number of projects with a precisely defined target and have the general dimension, which does not offer bases to determine effects of revitalization. The result (R) indexes are more differentiated in individual provinces and are, to a great extent, adjusted to the accepted priority themes. Within their scope, there are, among others, indexes of social changes which are pointed to: the number of people inhabiting the areas covered with revitalization, the number of the population taking advantage of objects and infrastructure included in the support program. The second group is that of economic changes, e.g., the number of new enterprises based in the area being supported and the number of workplaces created in degraded areas. The third one concerns directly the general measure regarding the surface of the area covered with revitalization, e.g., the surface revitalized/regained in consequence of realization of supported projects and the surface of areas covered with revitalization projects. The

determined indexes (R) should be regarded as an important contribution to the selection of revitalization-related projects, as well as setting the direction for tasks executed within their framework and expected effects. The projects financed within the RRP of every province had to declare the satisfying values of individual indexes (P) and (R) indicated by the Institution Managing the RRP as assumed effects.

Accepting the indicated frameworks of the revitalization process, it turned out viable to write different projects into them. They could be differentiated as regards the type of area (urban, rural), spatial scale (large-size areas, e.g., housing districts, post-industrial areas, or small-size areas, such as squares, football pitches, etc.), scope of activity (spatial-environmental, social, economic or complex transformations). With reference to the types of realized projects it is possible to identify effects of revitalization-oriented actions.

## **5. Effects of revitalization-related actions – a case study of Opolskie Voivodeship**

Identification of revitalization effects was carried out in two frameworks – effects and expectations – assumed at the stage of programming revitalization-oriented actions and as results obtained (completed) upon finishing the execution of tasks.

Assuming formal-legal and organizational frameworks for revitalization tasks, it has to be concluded that they were successfully accomplished almost exclusively in the urban areas. The areas of small towns and rural areas were practically excluded from the possibility of having revitalization co-financed through the RRP OP 2007-2013, despite the existence of places requiring such actions within their structures.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, effects of revitalization could be seen mainly in cities, which did not offer the possibility to improve either the socioeconomic or spatial situation in other areas. In the context of regional development, this can be treated as an expression of lack of influence on leveling developmental disproportions between centers and peripheral areas. Marginalization of peripheral areas in the process of revitalization contributes to their stronger developmental stagnation.

An important dimension of identification of effects is their complexity. It ought to consist in acknowledging improvement in the situation regarding social, economic and spatial frames of the realized project.

On the basis of the analysis of 45 applications of projects selected for realization, it was found out that 49% of them were on a way to achieve effects in the complex system, that is they included all the three dimensions of revitalization, i.e. spatial-environmental, economic and social, 38% made reference to two of them (in different configurations), and the remaining 13% contained only one of the dimensions of

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<sup>6</sup> Detailed establishments were accepted for this group of areas, relating solely to Action 6.2. The basis of the possibility of applying for financing of tasks in these areas was approving the applications by the Board of Provincial Department of Local Program of Revitalizations.

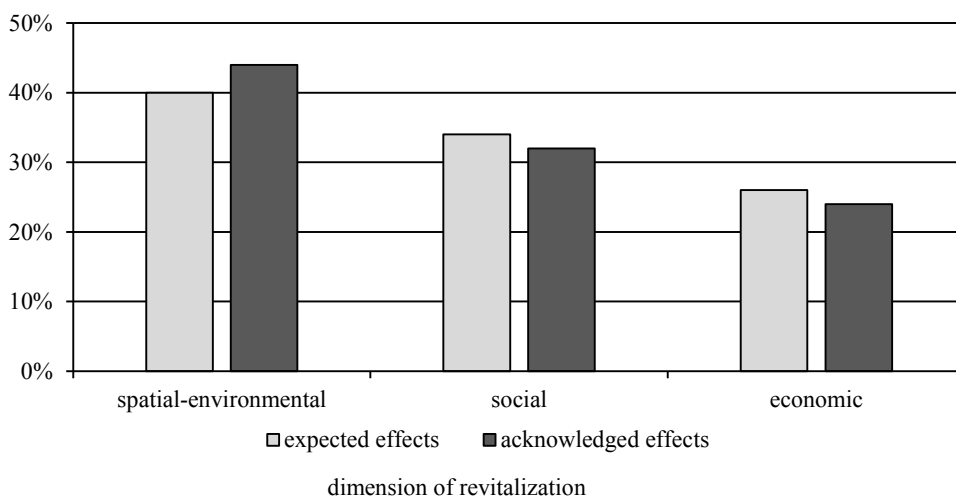


revitalization. This structure points to a relatively large share of projects that – already at the stage of planning – did not take into account improvement in the situation in each of the dimensions of revitalization, which does not point to a proper understanding of the whole idea. The realization of selected projects contributed also to attaining a low share of these effects, in the scope of which complexity was observed. In the opinions of units of territorial government, which were expressed in the survey, only 36% of the relevant actions brought about a change or improvement in the socioeconomic and spatial spheres. This situation demands encouraging initiatives of the multi-dimensional and multi-entity character in the future. Complex projects are characterized by a greater effectiveness of influencing the local development and – simultaneously – engaging a larger number of entities participating in the process of development.

Another dimension of diagnosing effects is the type of actions, in the framework of which they were realized. It is vital to see whether projects undertaken within RRP OP 2010-2013 (Actions 6.1 and 6.2) brought about the same or different effects than projects realized with the use of different methods.

In the case of Actions 6.1 and 6.2, the dominant share in the domain-based category of effects declared in applications for their realization concerned the spatial-environmental sphere. Almost in all of the applications, attention was paid to the enhancement of the esthetic aspect of the revitalized space, and also to the improvement of the image of the space, shaping the spatial order or tidying the space. The second element, regarding this aspect, was social dimension. It was closely connected with the improvement of the quality of life and it is this effect that was most frequently pointed as necessary to achieve. There were 31% of the projects which referred to it, including – primarily – those aimed at bettering the living and housing conditions. Among other effects directed at the social dimension of revitalization, the following were indicated: preventing social exclusion, enhancing social integration and activity of inhabitants of revitalized objects and areas, raising the sense of public safety, preventing unemployment and social pathologies, and also securing a better access to educational services health protection, recreation, leisure or culture for inhabitants. The least frequently indicated were the economic effects which related, first of all, to improving the economic and investment-related attractiveness, and – at the same time – economic revival of the revitalized areas. Moreover, the following were formulated as expected economic effects: increasing the opportunities of employment, raising the level of local business activity, developing service activity and building economic potential in various domains of the economic development (chiefly the sectors of culture and tourism).

The identification of effects regarded as attained was made on the basis of focus and survey studies, from which it follows that there occurred a similarity between the generic structure of the effects declared in the proposed form and the achieved ones (Figure 1).



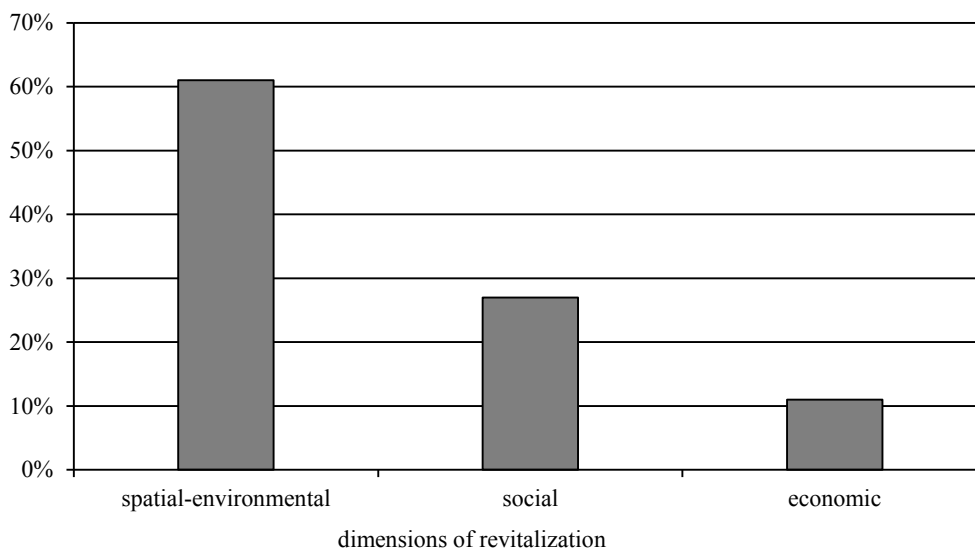
**Figure 1.** The generic structure of effects of revitalization within Actions 6.1 and 6.2 in Opolskie Voivodeship

Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of the analysis of applications for funding, survey studies (units of territorial government, n=82/67).

In the case of both assumptions and identification of effects, the largest part were those concerning changes in the spatial-environmental sphere. Their share, in relation to all examined cities, amounted to over 40% in the case of declared effects and those acknowledged to have been achieved. A considerable share of the effects, over 30% in the group of all the cities, the expected ones and those perceived, concerned the social sphere. It is worth drawing attention to the lowest share of the effects of the economic significance, both in the sphere of planning the realization of projects and also after their completion. It can thus be assumed that in the opinion of units of territorial government and other recipients of projects realized within Actions 6.1 and 6.2, revitalization does not lead, in the direct manner, to improvement in the economic situation of areas in which it is implemented.

While identifying the effects of projects directed at the needs of revitalization, yet realized outside Actions 6.1 and 6.2, the results of survey studies conducted in units of territorial government were used as the basis. In this case, only effects achieved in individual areas were identified (Figure 2).

In a similar way as in the case of projects going in line with Actions 6.1 and 6.2, the distribution of supplied responses points to a dominance of effects in the spatial sphere (61%). The remaining groups of effects were indicated decidedly less often and, among them, effects of the economic dimension have a greater share (27%) in the whole group. The smallest part is made of economic effects (11%), which equals an equally low significance of this sphere in the process of defining goals and needs of revitalization.



**Figure 2.** The generic structure of acknowledged effects of revitalization outside Actions 6.1 and 6.2 in Opolskie Voivodeship

Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of survey studies (units of territorial government, n=82/67).

The largest number of effects connected with spatial changes indicates that in the opinion of units of territorial government, projects within revitalization had an influence on changes in the spatial structure, the image and enhancement of aesthetic side of the areas or objects subjected to these actions. The effects pointed by units of territorial government as attained within the spatial sphere, testify to the fact that the undertaken actions contributed, first of all, to improvement in aesthetics and functionality of public spaces (47% in the group of spatial effects). To a large extent (35%), implementing changes in the scope of spatial order and shaping the spatial cohesion were confirmed. A relatively small number of indications referred, in turn, to improving aesthetics and functionality of buildings.

The second, as regards its number, group of effects declared by units of territorial government, was that relating to the social sphere. Out of the social effects declared by the units, the greatest part referred to creating new cultural activities (33%). An important part in this dimension of effects was made also by recording a higher social activity and development of non-governmental organizations (27%). Preventing social exclusion and a new educational offer, as well as development of human capital, made the same share of indications among the social effects (20% each).

The economic effects have the lowest share in the group of the indicated ones. Their percentage in the total number of effects declared by units of territorial

government amounted to 11%, which is, at the same time, a lower result than in the case of projects realized within Actions 6.1 and 6.2. This fact proves that the economic sphere in revitalization processes has been marginalized. There were 4 specific types distinguished within this group of effects, the largest part of which is made of setting up new business activities based on services, including trade (43%), and creation of new workplaces (29%). Moreover, raising the level of inhabitants' entrepreneurship was noticed, as well as development of industrial activity (14% each).

The studies indicate that the realization of revitalization projects, irrespective of the type of actions, has contributed to the enhancement of the spatial (urbanistic) and social conditions of the areas in which they were implemented. Practically, it has had no influence on economic changes or achieving high economic viability of the undertaken investments. The study results also reveal low complexity in the scope of revitalization effects. On the other hand, marginalization of rural areas and small urban centers is a fact that is not conducive to regional development.

## **6. Significance of the effects for the policy of region's development**

The identified effects of revitalization should constitute the starting point for shaping the policy of development of the region regarding the range under analysis.

The acknowledged problem is the low share of effects having complex character. As far as this sphere is concerned, it is imperative that actions within the regional politics should be directed at the need to respect the integrated approach already at the stage of preparation of revitalization-oriented projects and should also focus on selecting such projects by administrative competitions, in compliance with the principle of the domain-related and geographical (spatial) concentration. In the fairly common situation today, that is in view of the lack of financial means to cover the whole of a given task or the impossibility of realizing it within the frames of one EU fund, it is postulated that the tasks of the whole intended enterprise should be fragmented, according to the possibilities of the application.

Another question which results from the identification of effects of revitalization, which should be taken into account in the regional politics, is privileging areas in the procedure of open competition due to their size and importance for the development of regions, and not because of problems which occur there and which require taking revitalizing actions. In Opolskie Voivodeship, there are large and medium-sized cities in regional scale. As far as this sphere is concerned, it is required to carefully and reliably mark out degraded areas which are in need of revitalization already at the local level. Moreover, the regional authorities are also required to define the explicit parameters of identification and assessment of these areas. According to the accepted recommendations, such projects that satisfy the required criteria would be

qualified by open competition. A helping instrument in this sphere could be the regional bases of degraded areas, whose foundation should be a local standardized register of such places.

The main problem relating to the sphere of revitalization, which is assessed through the identification of its effects, is the marginalization of the economic dimension in planning and carrying out tasks of the revitalizing character. This fact should result in re-formulating the guidelines referring to the mode of open competition which is connected with the selection of projects realized within the RRP. The need can be postulated for indicating recommendations, through the Institution Managing the RRP 2014-2020, to work out local revitalization programs in the scope of the sphere which has been marginalized so far. (In the case of Opolskie Voivodeship – the economic one – in the process of preparation of program documents, especially those of local revitalization programs.) Information meetings with potential beneficiaries of the projects, as well as extensive social consultations, ought to make an auxiliary mechanism in implementing this postulate.

The attained effects of revitalization correspond not so much to its conceptual assumptions and the overall idea as to the manner of its realization, which, in turn, is conditioned to a great extent by formal-legal aspects. They are largely organizational and administrative conditions which were decisive in starting projects and which determined the scope of their implementation. The applied guidelines, including indexes (P) and (R), delineated the directions of revitalizing actions in individually qualified cities. It was vital that the achieved results should confirm reaching the assumed values of indexes, which created the possibility of accounting for and finalizing the given project by a beneficiary. Marginalization of the indexes (R) referring to the complexity or economic vitality of projects was decisive in the low share of effects of this type. This did not concern projects realized without a financial contribution from the means allotted by the EU. An example of such a project is the revitalization of the Market Square in Olesno. That was a task undertaken and implemented within the cooperation between local community and the authorities of the district (*gmina*). In that particular case, the limitations of the formal and legal nature on the part of units of regional development and national policy did not interfere in the task in any significant way. The effects of that project have indeed been complex and the effectivity of the project has been confirmed by the following prizes awarded in recognition of the final outcome.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Prof. Wiktor Zin Prize awarded by the Association of Protection of the National Material Heritage in the final of the contest “Modernization of the Year 2013” and the main prize in the “Best Public Space in Opolskie Voivodeship” contest in 2014.

## 7. Conclusions

Revitalization was one of the most important processes and tasks to execute in the 2007-2013 programming period in all the voivodeships of Poland. The decisive majority of tasks which were undertaken within this sphere of activity has already been completed, which facilitates identifying their effects. Research conducted in the Opolskie Voivodeship shows that owing to the diagnosis of the effects it is possible to influence the shape of regional development policies in a way that the efficiency of revitalization activities was higher and suited to its idea and assumptions. However, their scale of positive influence most often regards only the most immediate environment of an area which is revitalized. It is shown in the improvement of aesthetics, the image and the safety of the public spheres and living conditions. Actions which were taken in this case, had a lesser degree and influence on the economic situation. These effects are either not noticed or become apparent after long time. Thus it is possible to regard that revitalization through the improvement in the environmental-spatial and social sphere can have an influence on an economic boom. The effects of the revitalization in the development dimension of the region are noticed later than in case of cities and communes, but it is necessary to form the development policy of the region including renovation action.

The studies conducted in Opolskie Voivodeship indicate that it is possible to influence the shape of the region's development policy through a diagnosis of effects so that the effectiveness of revitalization-oriented actions would be most possible and compliant with the idea and assumptions of the policy. The identification of effects enables determining the needs in the scope of instruments, guidelines and principles relating to revitalizing actions on both the local level and the regional one. The achieved results of revitalization cannot influence the visions, directions or the goals of the region's development accepted in the documents of the strategic programming character. On the basis of the applied case study it can be concluded that for revitalization to bring about assumed effects it is imperative that the process should be planned and implemented in a rational and responsible way. This requires correcting or introducing new mechanisms into the regional policy. It is also indispensable to use the element of social participation in the course of elaborating on local revitalization programs, to adhere to the principle of engaging many subjects to realize revitalization projects and to create data bases containing information on degraded areas. On the basis of the effects of revitalization implemented in the period 2007-2013, it is evident that it is possible and sometimes even required to make corrections to the policy of region's development regarding the application of instruments of planning, in particular those enhancing information flow and promotion.

The starting point to obtain the optimal effects is the optimization of management and organization of regional development in the scope of revitalization process.

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