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REVITALIZATION AS A TOOL OF MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS ON THE EXAMPLE OF KARLINO MUNICIPALITY

Abstract: The article discusses the issue of the development of rural areas. It refers to the question of revitalization of degraded areas with a special emphasis on the rural areas. The aim of this study is to outline the concept of creating revitalization programs, taking into account their role in establishing the foundations for the development of local communities.

Keywords: revitalization, local development, rural areas

JEL Classification; O10, O12, O21

INTRODUCTION

The political changes in Poland, initiated in the early 1990s, were connected with very dynamic socio-economic changes which took place over a relatively short period of time. The results of those changes influenced all branches of the economy; however, as numerous research shows, rural areas had been especially affected. The dynamics of the economic processes taking place all over Poland made the economic, social, and mental weakness of Polish agriculture visible, and at the same time constituted a stimulus to search for new directions of development. Statistical data concerning the Polish food export in the second decade of the twenty-first century indicates that Polish agriculture and processing industry managed to build, not without effort, a competitive position on international markets. It especially concerns the export of Polish food to the EU member states. The research conducted by the author and encompassing the West Pomeranian and Lubuskie provinces indicates, nonetheless, that the success in food export is not synonymous with building the competitiveness of the entire Polish agriculture, which is dominated by small semi-subsistence or social farms (Malkowski, Malkowska 2017). The lack of a consistent, long-term policy creating the foundations of agricultural development in Poland in a special way affected also rural areas, which are abundant in the country. The aforementioned political changes in the case of numerous areas resulted in the emergence and perpetuation of unfavorable socio-economic phenomena occurring in those areas. In particular, this applies to: unemployment, devastation of technical infrastructure, the exodus of young educated people

The aim of this study is to use the Local Revitalization Programs as an example of a tool which can be used to plan the development of rural areas. In the article, the author presents the results of research conducted in 2017 in the urban-rural Karlino municipality located in the West Pomerania province. The research was done while creating a participatory project of the Local Revitalization Program. The article presents the results of qualitative research conducted in the process of revitalization in Karlino municipality. It uses the results of surveys and focus studies conducted among the residents of Karlino municipality. Those results served to verify the following hypothesis: the Local Revitalization Program can be an effective tool activating the communities in rural areas, as well a tool for managing the development of those areas.

In the process of delimiting the degraded area, various sources of information were used, so that the employed approach is holistic, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. For the indicated analytical units statistical material was obtained from the resources of the Main Statistical Office (Bank of Local Data), the Municipal Office of Karlino, MGOPS (Municipal Social Services Office), the District Employment Agency, the police. Additionally, a survey was used to examine the opinions of the residents on the emergence of degraded areas and the reasons behind their emergence.

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THE QUESTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS IN ECONOMICS

Rural areas are territories outside of the administrative boundaries of cities. This means that rural areas constitute more than 80% of Poland's total area. According to the data of the Main Statistical Office, rural areas are inhabited by over 30% of Poland's population. This means that in comparison with other EU states, the percentage of countryside residents in the overall population in Poland is relatively high. We can assume that Poland is a country with a high potential located in the rural areas. This concerns particularly the number of people but also other endogenous development factors, such as the unique character of cultural heritage, the natural resources, and the economic potential. The changes that took place in Poland in the time of socio-economic transformation affected rural areas in a particular way, by exacerbating certain socio-economic phenomena, such as: aging of the rural population, high unemployment rate, exodus of young people to the cities, changes in the character of use of rural areas. This prompted a search for new directions of development of rural areas and contributed to a revival of old and appearance of new concepts of development of those areas. Literature on the subject extensively describes concepts of sustainable development as well as those which assume that the direction of the necessary changes in the functioning of rural areas is polarization of their development. According to Churski (2005), the polarization and diffusion model is one of the "old" theories of regional development. Already in 1955, Perroux (1995) introduces the notion of growth poles into the economic discourse. He points to the role of strong, sector centers in economic development, at the same time emphasizing the scope of the diffusion of their growth. A similar view is shared by Williamson (1965), who, in his works on regional development, argues that due to the peripheral regions' lower capacity to absorb and create investments, as well as to their limited budgetary resources, the development of centers and urban regions with a relatively bigger development potential should be supported.

The opponents of this concept in their works point to the inevitability of peripheralization of areas located outside the growth centers (Strzelecki 2011, Barro, Sala-i-Martin 1991, Henley 2005). This is supposed to result from the time shift between the success of a growth area and the appearance of the first transfers (diffusions) of benefits to the environment. In this case, peripheralization of weaker areas seems inevitable.

The contemporary approach to the development of agriculture and rural areas is based on the concept of multifunctional development, relating to a consistent connection of social, environmental, and economic goals. The beginning of such a perception of development in the EU states dates back to the 1970s. The concept originates from the doctrine of J. M. Keynes which assumed the necessity of state's intervention in regions where developmental barriers accumulate (Strzelecki 2011). A multifunctional development of rural areas consists in departing from the agricultural function as the only one or dominant role, and a decidedly greater diversification of economy (Rosner 1997). In his works, Rosner highlights the strong correlation between the mono-agricultural character of rural municipalities and the high unemployment rate. The concept of multifunctionality of the development of rural areas emphasizes the necessity to develop the traditional agricultural function and all forms of industrial and service activity which are not harmful to the environment (Kłodziński 1996, Hall, McVittie, Moran 2004, Adamowicz 2005, Malkowska 2014). The process of change and the management of that change is the essence of revitalization programs (Malkowski 2016).

REVITALIZATION OF RURAL AREAS

The subject of research was Karlino municipality, located in the West Pomerania province. The problems connected with the underdevelopment of rural regions, and particularly the post-state farm communities, affected this region quite severely. A characteristic feature of rural areas in West Pomerania – including Karlino municipality – was a large participation of state farms (the so-called



PGR) in agriculture. Apart from their productive function, these units organized social life in the rural areas and maintained the socio-economic activity of small and medium towns.

Many families and even entire rural communities were helpless in confrontation with market economy. In the case of the entire West Pomerania province, the regression of former state farm villages lead to the exclusion of the local communities residing in them. The exclusion has primarily a social dimension (high unemployment rate, depopulation of rural areas), but also an economic (low income limiting the access to many goods and services), and a spatial one (difficult access to urban centers, limited communication). Therefore, it is necessary to design new tools which would facilitate a reversal of the processes of marginalization of rural areas. An example of new solutions implemented with the aim of reviving the development of degraded regions are the revitalization programs (Espinosa, Hernandez 2016).

In the most commonly used sense of the word, revitalization comprises activities focused on reviving degraded areas of cities, e.g. post-industrial ones, whose aim is to find a new purpose for them and to create conditions in which the areas change their function (Skrzypczak, Łukowski 2011). The very term revitalization is derived from Latin: "vitalis" – "proper of life, capable of living." It is a paradigm of development referring not only to spatial categories, but above all to economic development and the improvement of living conditions of local communities. The residents of degraded areas constitute a territorial community which is a subject of various activation concepts and programs. The main objective of a revitalization program is to bring a given area out of the state of crisis (Ziółkowski, Górniak 2007) by removing the causes of its degradation.

The revitalization process entails bringing the degraded area out of the state of crisis. A degraded area is a space in crisis due to the concentration of negative social phenomena, in particular unemployment, poverty, poor education or social capital, as well as inadequate level of participation in public and cultural life. An element of the revitalization process is drafting a strategic document presenting specific actions leading to bringing the area out of crisis.

RESULTS

The conducted focus research showed that with the liquidation of the state farming system and the development of the private sector in the countryside, the functions of rural areas in Karlino municipality have been greatly transformed. Within the rural areas of Karlino municipality remain devastated livestock buildings, abandoned warehouses and offices, residential buildings, but above all: the people – former state farmers and their families. A specific symbol of that state farming past of the area is the abandoned and decaying palace in Karścino. While it used to be a symbol of the region's strength, today it exemplifies the situation of post-state farming areas in Karlino municipality.

Creating a revitalization program in Karlino municipality was preceded with quantitative and qualitative research. The aim of the research was to indicate the degraded areas within the municipality. Identifying the negative social, economic, spatial, and infrastructural phenomena is key to a proper diagnosis of crisis areas. Indicators adopted for the purpose of assessing the situation in Karlino municipality were selected to illustrate the situation in various areas of the municipality in several categories. A set of 15 indicators was used in the analysis²⁴. The municipal area was

²⁴ Indicators selected to delimitate the degraded area: W1. Depopulation, W2. Percentage of people in pre-working age in the overall population (per 1000 persons), W3. Aging index, W4. Number of people using social assistance per 1000 persons, W5. Number of people using social assistance – permanent benefit per 1000 persons, W6. Number of people using social assistance – temporary benefit per 1000 persons, W7. Number of people using social assistance – special-purpose benefit per 1000 persons, W8. Supplemental nutrition for children – number of children per 1000 persons, W9. Number of crimes per 1000 persons, W10. Ratio of people in the post-working age to the total number of population per 1000 persons, W11. Number of business owners per 1000 persons, W12. Number of newly registered business operators per 1000 persons in working age, W13. Ratio of the unemployed to the number of persons in working age, W14. Overall housing resources per person, W15. Number of residential buildings constructed before 1970.

divided into 4 analytical units. Ratio analysis was conducted based on standardization method to determine the intensity of negative social phenomena in particular areas. The method allows to hierarchize the areas of a given municipality according to the degree of degradation.

The conducted research allowed to delimit the degraded area in Karlino municipality, encompassing all rural areas (area number 4) and part of the urban area (area number 2). For the purpose of distinguishing the area for revitalization, a summary of standardized indicators in particular analytical units was used – Table 1.

Table 1. Social sphere indicators

Name	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
AREA I	-0.14	-0.94	-0.71	1.09	1.384	1.20	1.35	1.29	1.46	-0.69	0.97	0.89
AREA II	0.81	1.40	1.45	-0.80	-0.554	-0.69	-0.68	-0.81	-0.78	1.42	-0.51	-0.76
AREA III	-1.37	-0.11	-0.14	-0.90	-0.880	-0.94	-0.82	-0.78	-0.24	-0.03	-1.15	-0.97
AREA IV	0.69	-0.35	-0.61	0.60	0.050	0.44	0.16	0.30	-0.44	-0.71	0.68	0.84
Name	W13	W14	W15									
AREA I	0.97	0.18	-0.03									
AREA II	-0.85	0.84	-0.57									
AREA III	-0.88	0.42	-0.82									
AREA IV	0.75	-1.44	1.41									

Source: own study.

The in-depth studies conducted as part of the revitalization process in Karlino municipality showed that the largest accumulation of negative processes and phenomena connected with the post-state farming past of the areas affect the following towns in particular: Mierzyn, Karścino, Poblócie Wielkie, Ubysławice, Karlinko.

Observation and interviews as well as statistical analyses allowed to identify the most important problems of the local community.

Karlino is an urban-rural municipality and as such is characterized by a qualitative and quantitative diversification of problems in its specific areas. Owing to the research conducted, the main directions of development of rural areas could be identified.

- Creating conditions conducive to increasing the number of residents in the revitalized area and in the entire municipality. Depopulation is the main issue in Karlino municipality. In a special way it affects the area of revitalization;
- It is crucial to initiate actions which would stop the migration and result in increasing the attractiveness of the degraded area for the new residents;
- Creating attractive conditions for young people so they will want to stay and work in the revitalized area;
- Creating conditions for the development of high quality educational services for children, adolescents, and older people. It concerns also the part of the community which had been hitherto excluded from social life;
- Creating a high quality space conducive to integration of the community in the revitalized area;
- Increase in the economic activity of the residents. A low level of economic activity resulted in the accumulation of negative socio-economic phenomena in the revitalized area;



- Acquisition of new investors creating high quality attractive workplaces;
- Thermal efficiency improvement of residential buildings;
- Solving the problems connected with water and sewage management in the revitalized area;
- Improving the aesthetic and safety in the entire revitalized area;
- Caring for public space which should be friendly and accessible to everyone;
- Improving the technical condition of buildings in the revitalized area;
- Improving the technical condition of roads and sidewalks in the revitalized area;
- Development of communication connections within the municipality and outside of it;

CONCLUSIONS

Rural areas in Karlino municipality have been particularly affected by the changes which had taken place in agriculture in West Pomerania within the last twenty years, when state farms and the so-called production cooperatives were liquidated. Changing the resulting situation of rural areas in Karlino municipality requires taking long-term measures to identify and solve the main issues. The revitalization program is an example of a tool which allows the rural community to express their needs and at the same time to encourage activation in the realization of submitted revitalization projects. Unlike many similar strategic programs functioning in municipalities, revitalization is clearly social in character. It allows every resident, entrepreneur, association to engage in the process of development programming. The success of revitalization projects lies primarily in changing the mentality of the residents in rural areas. It is showing that their issues are important and possible to overcome. In the author's opinion, the experiences connected with the preparation of the revitalization program showed that it can be an effective tool in implementing a long-term development strategy in rural areas. The success of the revitalization process in Karlino was the very conception of the program, but most of all the revitalization projects designed and submitted by residents, entrepreneurs, and social organizations. Quantitative and qualitative research conducted by the author indicates the need to redefine the directions of development for the rural areas in Poland, to specify the tools of regional policies which would allow to use the potential of rural areas.

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