

CHOSEN ASPECTS OF THE TOURIST FUNCTION DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIEVAL CASTLES IN THE SMALL TOWNS IN POMERANIA AND WARMIA-MASURIA REGION, ACCORDING TO OPINION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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***Abstract.** During last 20 years we can observe in Poland intensive process of changes in functions and the ownership of medieval castles. The strongholds as the main tourism centers has an extraordinary impact on the social and economical life of small cities in analyzed region. We may easily notice growing tourist influx, tourism infrastructure development, formation of the new places of work, or renovation of historical estates. Except positive changes, some problems like restricted access to the castles for the local community or monopolization of the tourism market, may occur. The main goal of the article is to present respondent's opinion about the role of castle's tourist function in the six examined cities in Pomerania and Warmia-Masuria region.*

***Мусіяка Л.** Окремі аспекти розвитку туристичних функцій середньовічних фортець у малих містах регіону Померанії та Вормії-Мазурії згідно думки місцевих громад. Протягом останніх 20 років ми можемо спостерігати в Польщі інтенсивні процеси зміни функцій і власності середньовічних замків. Фортеці як основні центри туризму мають надзвичайний вплив на соціальне та економічне життя малих міст в досліджуваному регіоні. Ми можемо легко помітити зростання туристичного потоку, розвиток туристичної інфраструктури, формування нових робочих місць, або реконструкцію історичної нерухомості. Крім позитивних змін, можуть виникати деякі проблеми, як обмеження доступу до замків для місцевих громад або монополізація туристичного ринку. Основною метою даної статті є представлення думок респондентів щодо ролі туристичних функцій замків у шести містах Померанії і Вармінсько-Мазурського регіону.*

Pomerania, Warmia and Masuria are the areas of particular importance for the history of contemporary perception of both northern part of Poland and other southern Baltic states. In these areas in the Middle Ages, on the lands of the Prussian tribes, there was established the State of the Teutonic Order and the bishoprics of Warmia. The remnant of a bygone era is a regular settlement pattern of towns and villages founded by the Teutonic Knights (Czaja 2000, Kulesza 2011) and unique on European scale concentration of military architecture (Dygo 2008). Settlement complexes as castle-town ones were in close spatial and functional connection for centuries. In addition to the military role castles were of political, administrative, economic, social and cultural importance. Moreover, functions, role and importance of towns and castles evolved over the centuries. Some features have changed or developed, others diminish and disappeared.

Completely new feature of towns and castles began to develop in the twentieth century. Consequently, both castles and towns gained new, tourist function. The growing popularity of cultural tourism has contributed to increased interest in monuments (Liszewski 1999) including military heritage (Kowalczyk 2003). The historic towns with medieval castles within their borders have become popular tourist attractions. Parallel to increase of tourism demand its supply area has also transformed. Development of infrastructure and tourism was required as well as creation of new tourist products, advertising and promotion.

Tourist function of medieval castles in northern Poland entered a new phase in the last few years. One can see that the spatial development for local communities, with such facilities as offices, agencies or cultural institutions is slowly giving place to tourism development.

Functional changes occur next to ownership ones. Maintaining monuments in good condition requires considerable funding. Therefore, some local governments as Ryn, Gniew, Lidzbark Warmiński¹⁹ or Elk which can not afford to maintain the surface of architectural monuments, put castles up for sale. The new, private owners are investing lump sums of money in the castles' adaptation to modern standards of customer service. Strongholds are rebuilt and adapted in order to provide a high level of hotel services. Moreover, private owners (like former proprietors) organize in historical monuments events inspired by rich historical and architectural heritage.

The transformation did not also spare the towns in region. The exceptional nature of this phenomenon was affected by the changes that have taken place in former strongholds. Castles' impact on the surrounding space is diverse. Economy affects development of towns tourist function (e.g. new working places, investments, capital inflows, cooperation with local partners) and their social sphere (the feasibility of inhabitants' cultural needs and interests, local patriotism). Renovation works in castles are accompanied by old towns restoration. This process can be clearly seen in small towns, where the number of inhabitants is less than 20,000.

The article is largely based on the results of survey conducted among residents of six selected small towns, as: Bytów, Gniew, Lidzbark Warmiński, Nidzica, Reszel and Ryn. Research results are fragmentary and they should be treated as an introduction to in-depth analysis of the subject. It is a small part of the research process, carried out by the author during his works on a doctoral thesis on the impact of tourism functions of medieval castles on the economic and social life of small towns.

The number of visitors and their territorial origin can provide the position of mentioned castles and their importance for tourism development. Number of tickets sold per annum range from 4,700 in Reszel to 37,600 in Bytów (Table 1). Taking into account the number of overnight stays in the castle hotel facilities these values range from 2,800 in Reszel to 46,500 in Ryn²⁰.

¹⁹ The castle remains in the hands of the Museum of Warmia and Masuria. The castle's wards were sold (<http://www.hotelkrasicki.pl/>).

²⁰ Data for 2008.

Table 1 – Number of overnight stays in hotels and the number of museum tickets sold in castles in Bytów, Lidzbark Warmiński, Nidzica, Gniew, Reszel and Ryn in 2008

Data/towns	Bytów	Lidzbark Warmiński	Nidzica**	Gniew	Reszel	Ryn
Nr of overnight stays	5,088	-	5,000	9,488	2,830	47,500
Nr of sold tickets	37,680	31,417*	12,900	26,322	4,723	11,204***

*data for 2007, ** estimates of the Gregorovius and NOK hotel employees; the number of tickets sold in 2006, *** the number of people who took part in a guided-tour in the castle.

Source: (Musiaka 2012).

Although, the author conducted his research on the castles which are not amongst the most popular ones and the most frequently visited in the country, (contrary to the Royal Castle in Warsaw and the Malbork Castle Museum²¹, where the annual number of visitors reaches 400,000 and 500,000 people a year), the castles mentioned by the author are an important element of the Polish tourist product. According to surveyed population, in the years 2008 and 2009 (Musiaka 2012), the largest group represented domestic visitors. They can be divided in two groups. The first group consists of travelers who take summer trips from the center and the south of the country to the sea through the lake districts and they are resting in Warmia, Masuria and Pomerania. The second group consists of local inhabitants. Among foreign travelers, a large number of visitors came from Germany and German-speaking countries as well as Russia, Lithuania, the United States and Canada.

The main objective of the research was *the role of castles and tourism in the life of local communities, as well as desired changes in the functioning of castles and towns and their changes under the influence of tourism over the last twenty years*. Selection of the research sample can be defined on a degree of availability. The surveyed population is diverse in terms of social and demographic features. However, according to some assumptions, respondents may be divided into three groups:

- a) inhabitants with a university degree who take an active part in towns' social and cultural life,
- b) inhabitants working in tourism and castles,
- c) other inhabitants.

It was assumed that in every town there will be carried out at least 100 surveys among the residents. In total, in 2008-2009, the author conducted 661 questionnaires. In order to achieve the research objective surveys' results were analyzed and they present respondents' answers to questions about the reasons for supporting tourism development in towns, castles' impact on personal life and their role in the socio-economic situation, benefits of castles' activities, expected changes in castles and towns, and transformations observed under tourism influence.

²¹ Data on the size of tourism for the castle in Warsaw provides i.a. Pluta 1994, and for the castle in Malbork i.a. Kostrzewa (1991).

The vast majority of respondents (80%)²² declare support for tourism development in town. Respondents mention the following benefits: funds inflow, towns' advertising and promotion in the country and abroad, more working places for residents, towns' increased attractiveness as well as the development of infrastructure and improvement of aesthetics (Figure 1 1). Declared level of local patriotism also increases. Interestingly, respondents who do not support tourism development cannot justify their opinions.



Figure 1 – View of the castle in Ryn before and after renovation.

Source: Hotel Castle Ryn materials, the author's photography.

Only a third of respondents felt castles' impact on their personal life. These are usually inhabitants working in a castle or people active in cultural and social matters, who take part in events which occur in castles. It should be emphasized that effects of castles' existence and operation to a large extent depend on their contemporary development, and whether the entities within the castle are set to support residents and tourist movement. The majority of respondents who do not normally come into direct contact with tourists do not feel visitors' impact on their life.

Despite this, it can be stated that medieval castles play an important role in life of explored towns. Additionally, high percentage of respondents (almost 74%) notices castles' impact on the place of residence. According to respondents, castles play an important role mainly in such spheres as tourist services, town's promotion and advertising, and its cultural activity. More than half of respondents identifies castle's role in town's activity as large or big (Figure 2).

As for tourism impact on a town respondents identify it mainly with economic effects. A small group of inhabitants, who usually work in tourism, derive personal economic and non-economic benefits. Town as a unit gets greater benefits from tourism as a result its impact is more visible (mainly through tax revenues, working places, investments).

²² Averaged data for all analyzed cities.

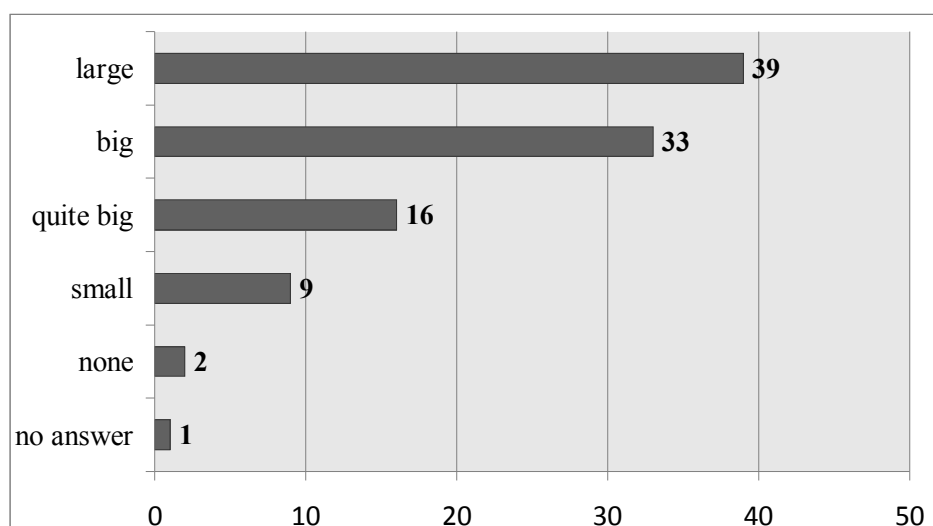


Figure 2 – Castle's role in town's activity (percentages)

Source: own study based on the survey.

Consequently, castles' impact on towns can be perceived twofold, as direct one (working places, taxes, other public events) and indirect – a result of tourism (Musiaka 2012).

When asked about desired changes in town, most respondents mentions: roads quality improvement and traffic organization, tourism development, need for restoration of historic urban areas, greater number of cultural events and attractions, and infrastructure improvement. Moreover, respondents list also such spheres of life as aesthetics improvement, increased number of working places, grater variety of leisure activities (especially for children and young people), promotion improvement, change of town's local authorities and more investments.

According to respondents, the most anticipated changes of castles include: wider range of events and attractions, property revalorisation and its accessibility, richer museum exhibition, promotion, information and advertising improvement, lower ticket prices, tourism infrastructure development, increase in service standards, infrastructure improvement (including car parks construction, reorganization of label directions to monuments).

It should be emphasized that mentioned by respondents areas of improvement are not only important for quality of life, but they are also important from visitors point of view. They are both a part of the so-called "hard investments" as technical infrastructure, spatial development, as well as "soft investments" which occur within the community.

Nearly 50% of respondents notes that all changes took place under the tourism influence in last twenty years. There are primarily beneficial changes, mainly in urban area. Towns' aesthetics and their infrastructure significantly improved. Inner city areas, which along with castle hills are explored tourist space, were subjected to revalorisation (details: Figure 2).

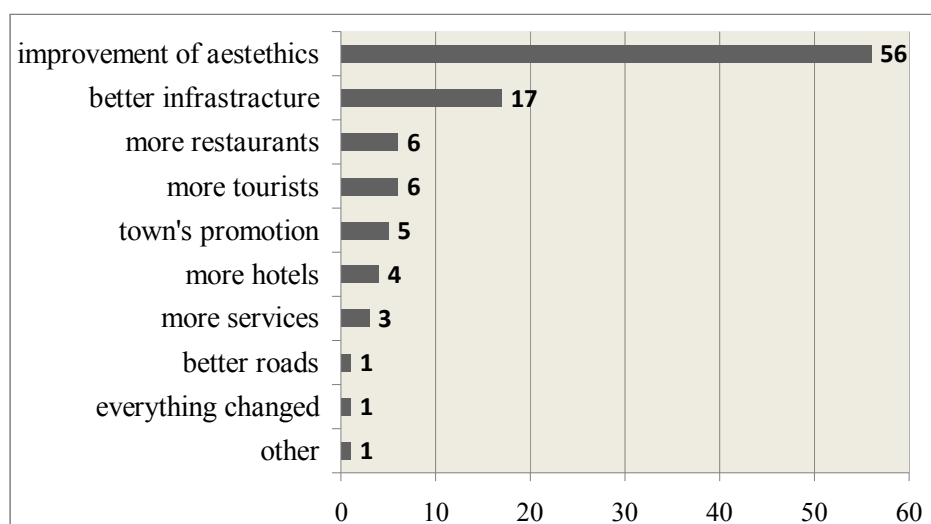


Figure 2 – Town's changes perceived by respondents in last twenty years (%)

Source: own study based on the survey.

At the same time these are the areas in which, according to surveyed inhabitants, the largest changes are yet to be done. Respondents when asked about observed changes frequently point out that there are: more visitors, more gastronomic and accommodation facilities. Additionally, there is an increase in town's fame and its reputation, increase in number of different types of service facilities, and roads' quality improvement.

In conclusion, respondents usually positively estimate changes which occur due to castles' existence and activity as well as tourism development. Positive image is, however, distorted by critical opinions. In spite of complaints about the traffic problems in the summer period, mainly local tourism entrepreneurs voice heavy charges. These are for example such issues as the local tourist market monopolization by castle entities, difficult access to castles-hotels for local residents, creating in castles a "tourist ghetto", where tourists spend most of their time and do not benefit from the goods and services available in town. Therefore, the competition between castle and town deepens.

In spite of mentioned factors, both the author and respondents positively assess changes which take place in towns and cities under the influence of tourism and castles' tourist function development. At this point, however, one must note that in order to prevent further deepening of differences between private castles-hotels and the rest of towns, there is government action needed aimed at creating new tourist attractions outside the castle hill. Such investments should be regarded not as a competition for castles, but as an important addition to their services. Due to the author Lidzbark Warmiński may be an example of such good practices where arise Warmia Baths which are perfect complement to the tourist offer of the town.

According to the author, co-operation between castles and towns should be carried out locally and regionally, so as to create a strong and attractive tourist brand of Pomerania, Warmia and Masuria as an area rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage. The benchmark to follow should be the French castles of the Loire or the Rhenish castles.

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HOTEL CHAINS IN SLOVAKIA

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Abstract. Slovakia's accession to the EU have been lift travel restrictions on persons and increased demands for quality services, which increased competition in the tourism market, as reflected in hotel industry of SR. Development of tourism in the world and thus in Slovakia is influenced by globalization, which is one of the landmarks of the 21st century. Globalization is a multi-layered process in which the most important role is played by megacorporations, international companies, but this process also involving the small and medium business as well as the tourism industry customers. Globalization starts when the internationalization of economic life develops in the space across the planet.

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