

## MALBORK REVITALIZATION PROCESS

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**Abstract:** *Malbork is a medium-sized town that arose in the middle ages, near the Teutonic Castle upon Nogat River, one of UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town layout is an expression of its turbulent history, reflected in the mix of new residential and service structures with old industrial buildings and monuments, an urban chaos that caused negative aesthetic feelings among residents and tourists. The following paper presents the key investments made in the town, since 2007, when Malbork adopted a Local Revitalization Program, and their impact upon its residents and tourists.*

Key-Words: revitalization, town centre, investment, Malbork

### 1 Introduction

Malbork, founded in the 13th century, by the Teutonic Knights, around the fortress of Malbork Castle (also known as Marienburg Castle), the Teutonic stronghold at Nogat River, which covered an area of 21 hectares. Konrad von Theberga issued the foundation document of the town in 1286.

In 1466, the town, entered for a period of 316 years under the possession of Polish Crown. During this time, plagued by wars, the town underwent a period of stagnation. It was not until the second half of the 19th century that brought, along with the industrial revolution and the Prussian governments, economic recovery and spatial-functional development. In this period, factories developed in the town, Malbork obtaining as well a train connection to Berlin (W. Jedliński, 2000).

Another major change of the town, took place at the end of the Second World War. In the late 40s Malbork Old Town remains were systematically demolish and used for the reconstruction of Warsaw. The effect of this planed action was that in the early 50s in the Old Town of Malbork remained no buildings except for the medieval church, the Town Hall, two gates and fragments of the defence walls. During the years 1962-1968, in the Town Hall

was located the „Settlement of 20th anniversary of People's Republic of Poland". The town lost in this way its historical centre.

The spatial and functional layout of Malbork is a reflection of its turbulent history. The centre area of the town inherited an urban chaos, in a mixture of new residential and service structures, with old industrial structures and a number of monuments. Town centre arrangement caused negative feelings among inhabitants and tourists, creating a functional conflict in the practical life conditions and economic activities of the town.

In 2007, the local authorities started to revitalize the town, by launching a series of investments in its centre. Their purpose was to improve the image of the town and the living conditions of its residents. Amount the most important investments, we have the reconstruction of the communication system in the town's centre, renovation of several historic buildings, modernization of the railway station, development and modernization of service structures, as well as the thermo-modernization of many residential buildings. Work, on a large part of the projects, was successfully completed, while on the rest it continues. The purpose of this paper is to present the ongoing process of Malbork revitalization process and its impact on

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the town's image and living conditions of its residents. The paper brings into discussion some example of investments, which should have positive effects on the town's urban space and on its centre appearance. Additionally, the paper assesses the change of the factors affecting the quality of the inhabitants' life in specific neighbourhoods.

## 2 Revitalization plan of Malbork

By the term revitalization, we understand comprehensive actions taken up in different areas of a municipality, particularly in the old districts and in selected areas, involving activities such as repairs, upgrades and restoration with the action aiming at socio-economic recovery (P. Lorens, 2010). The specific goals of the revitalization process are different in each case and mostly depend on the situation and the problems of the area, which relates to redevelopment. During the work on the creation of a Local Revitalization Program for the town of Malbork, in the period 2007-2013, several social consultations were conducted, aiming to identify the problems that appeared on the territory of the town. The most important ones concerned:

- socio-economic problems (a high level of unemployment, social pathologies, a high number of crimes and offences in the town area);
- infrastructural problems (degraded communal housing resources, too little service and tourism infrastructure in town centre, degraded residential substance in the town centre, degraded road infrastructure, lack of a ring road, wasteland of railway station, degraded areas near Solna Street, in Old Town and Kościuszki Street, not enough parking spaces for tourists, bad state of town);
- problems associated with the state of the environment (poor condition of the watercourses in the town, exceeded levels of the noise, the old landfills sites requiring restoration);

The analysis of the above problems allowed setting the main objectives of the revitalisation program. Main objectives of the program were:

- technical infrastructure conditions improvement, in order to provide attractive conditions for the development of the tourism and small or medium-sized enterprises;
- environmental condition enrichment via the modernization and development of infrastructure and the revitalization of valuable natural sites;
- renovation of buildings with high architectural value and historical importance, located in the targeted area and their adaptation for the economic, social and cultural aims;
- improvement of the public space aesthetics;
- renovation and construction of infrastructure, serving for the development of cultural, educational and recreational activity;
- systematization of the „old urban tissue” through harmonious building of the empty spaces and implementation of green spaces and recreational facilities;

In the town, there were determined five main areas designated for the revitalization process [Figure 1].

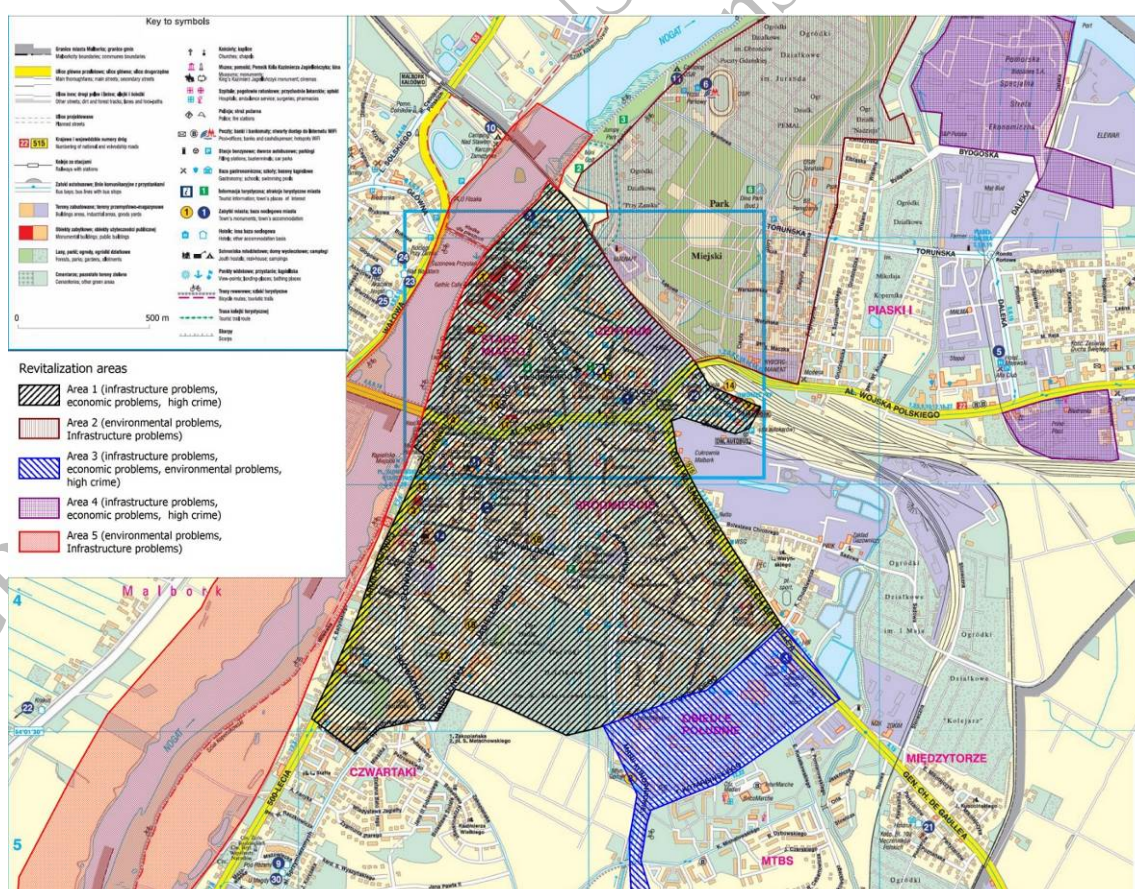
Area 1 included the districts: Stare Miasto (Old Town), Centrum (Centre) and Śródmieście. A concentration of the socio-economic problems, were observed here, starting from the high level of unemployment, which resulted in a high level of poverty and need for social welfare support. Because, this part of the town is often visited by tourist, in this area was reported a high level of petty crimes and offences (e.g. thievery). A major problem in this area was the degraded resources of the residential substance, either belonging to communal units or privately owned, and the general bad appearance of the town centre. All this factors discouraged the tourists from staying here longer. The investors were as well, reluctant to launch their businesses here. However, the Area 1 showed great potential for the concentration of services, both intended for tourists (like accommodations and restaurants) and residents.

Area 2 represents mainly the Town Park, with fields of the high ecological value. After

land and buildings located within the zone. The major problems of this area include the lack of infrastructure, economic problems and a high level of crime.

Area 5 is located near to Nogat River, being of important environmental value to the town. This area can play an important role in the tourism development in Malbork. The Nogat River receives its waters from the side streams of the river Liwa and the canals Uśnicki, Juranda and Ulgi, as well as from the water transfer of Vistula River through the weir in Biała Góra. The Revitalization Program planned the usage of lands near the river through the hydro-technical, ecological and landscape edges and the creation of tourism infrastructure facilities, among others the construction of an inland marina on Nogat. Part of the plan included port facilities revitalization, along with the revitalization of the historically and environmentally valuable canals Juranda and Ulgi.

Area 4, belonging to Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, is design for the development of industry. Its attractiveness stems mainly from the proximity of communication routes and junctions. Malbork municipality has pledged to introduce an exception from property tax for



**Source:** own research based on the Local Revitalization Program for Malbork in the period 2007-2013

The revitalization Malbork, constitute from the implementation of over 114 projects and tasks. Most of them, 89% are located in the Area 1, the rest, representing on 11%, being located in the areas two, three, four and five [Figure 2].

The major investments planned under the program included:

- Renovation and thermo-modernization of around 90 multi-family buildings belonging mainly to the condominium and municipality;
- Renovation of the servicing buildings, among others Hotel Dedal and railway station, along with the development of two water towers, one on Słowackiego Street and the other near the railway station;
- Renovation of the public facilities connected with culture, like the construction of buildings designated to

concerts and the restoration and adaptation for cultural purposes of the Jerozolimski Hospital;

- Modernization of public buildings connected with sport activities, on Toruńska and Mickiewicz streets;
- Regeneration of green spaces in the town centre and foundation of flower beds in the Old Town area;
- Development of infrastructure, including construction of a pedestrian zone and traffic system changes along Kościuszki Street, market place development, renovation of plumbing and lightning installations, modernization of water treatment station, revitalization of Jan Paweł II route and preparation of industrial sites for investment;
- Protection of historic buildings;

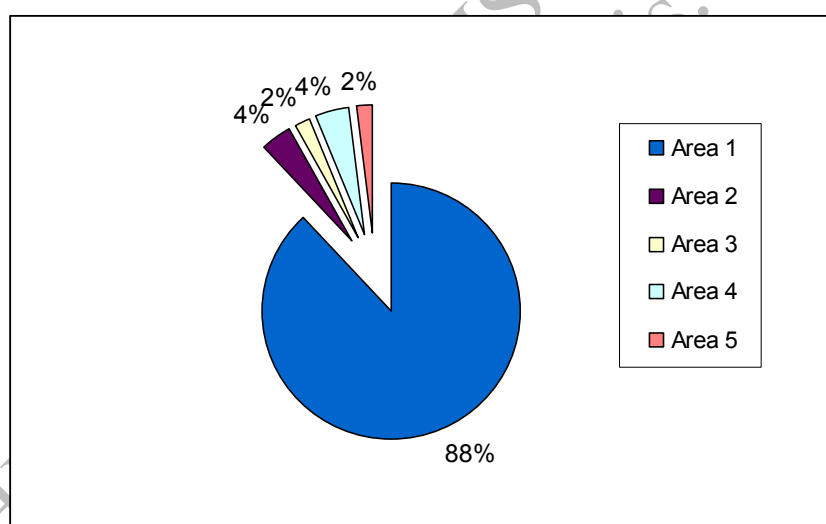


Fig. 2 The share of projects scheduled for implementation in Malbork

**Source:** own research based on the Local Revitalization Program for Malbork in the period 2007-2013

The total estimated costs for all projects amounted to over 160 million PLN. The largest proportion of these funds would be earmark for the renovations and thermo-modernization of residential buildings. The most expensive projects focused on the protection and adaptation for cultural purposes of buildings belonging to the European Cultural Heritage (14.5 million PLN), the construction of pedestrian zone along Kościuszki Street (12 million PLN), the modernization of the water

treatment station (9.9 million PLN) and the redevelopment of sport facilities on Toruńska and Mickiewicz streets.

### 3 The major investments in the town centre and their impact on the town imagine

Malbork centre is the place, which in the assumption of the local authorities should be the visit card of the town. Due to this, several

investments were made in this area [Figure 3].

The major goal was to create public spaces that will have a positive impact over tourists and will be leisure locations residents.

The most important investment in the centre was the transport system reconstruction on Kościuszki, Piłsudskiego, Mickiewicza, Piastowska and Narutowicz streets. In order to improve the traffic flows, two roundabouts were created, the number of parking places near the castle and in the town centre was increased, the

surface of roads was changed and the sidewalks were reconstructed. In the first conception of reconstruction was also planned the complete exclusion of traffic from Kościuszki Street, however, this conception was later abandoned and only partially traffic was excluded, due to practical necessities. In the area excluded from traffic was built a square with fountain and a monument of King Władysław Jagiełło. They completion took place in 2009.

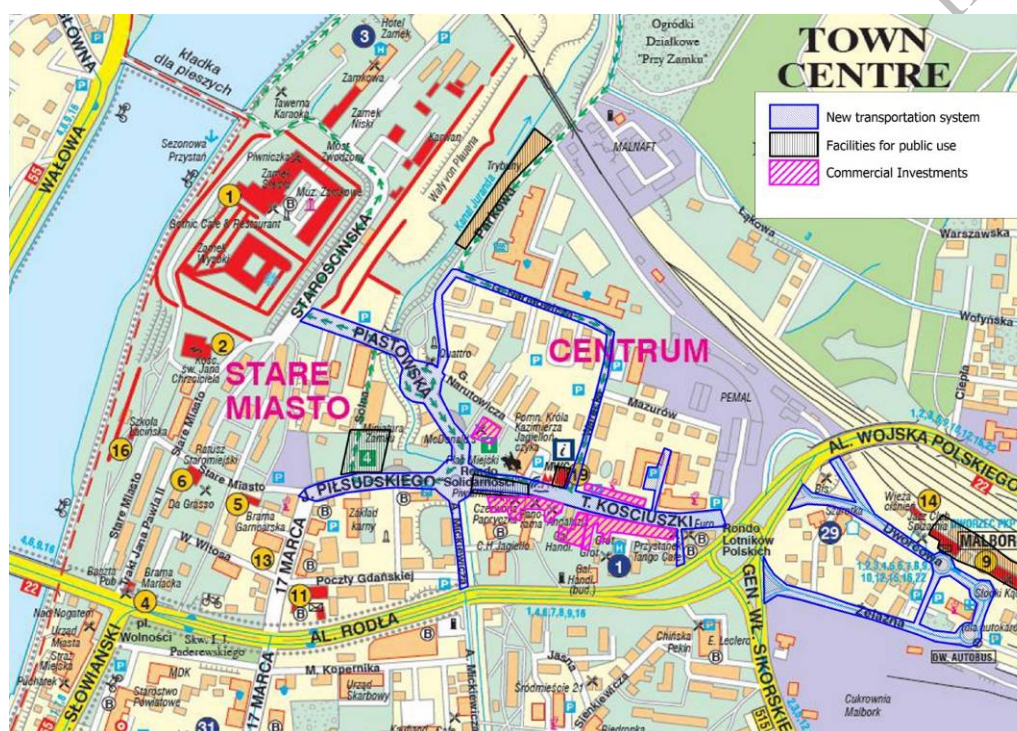


Fig. 3 Major investments in the revitalization centre of Malbork

**Source:** own research based on the Local Revitalization Program for Malbork in the period 2007-2013

Significant impact on Malbork centre image had the liquidation of the market square in Solna Street. The revitalization program research found that tourists perceive its existence negatively. The liquidation, however, was associated with numerous protests, made by the traders working in this area, as for many of them the existence of the market was the only source of income. Despite the protests, the market was removed. In this area were initially located hotel services, but the investments were blocked due to archaeological discoveries from the Second World War. On the spot market place, there is so far only a bus parking and a model of Malbork Castle.

Along Kościuszki Street were conducted

renovations and thermo-modernization activities, targeting public buildings (like The Municipal House of Culture), service buildings and residential buildings. The changes in the town centre attracted investors from services sector. Shopping malls and new food services (like the first McDonald's restaurant from Malbork) were located here.

The major investments in the town centre included also the modernization and improvement of communication system near railway station. The road surface was changed, was constructed a roundabout and the car park and sidewalks were extended. The modernization of railway station buildings is still ongoing.

The evaluation of investments effectiveness it is a complex task. There are many factors, which influence the appearance and the quality of newly created spaces. Such factors are often difficult to identify. The article „What Makes a Successful Place?”<sup>1</sup> highlights some major features of successful public spaces, like availability, comfort and image, functionality and the social value.

The assessment of changes concerning the above-mentioned elements from Malbork centre, are based on a personalised surveys, conducted on an investigation group composed from residents of this area.

The first analysed element refers to the

availability of newly created spaces. A place is successful only if it is visible and easy reachable. It is also important that the place is easy for people to move around within it, which allows convenient use of its various parts. Easily accessible public places have an efficient usage of parking lots rotation and offer convenient access to public transport.

In order to assess the improvement of accessibility, citizens were asked to evaluate the impact of the communication system reconstruction on the movement of vehicles and pedestrian traffic [Figure 4].

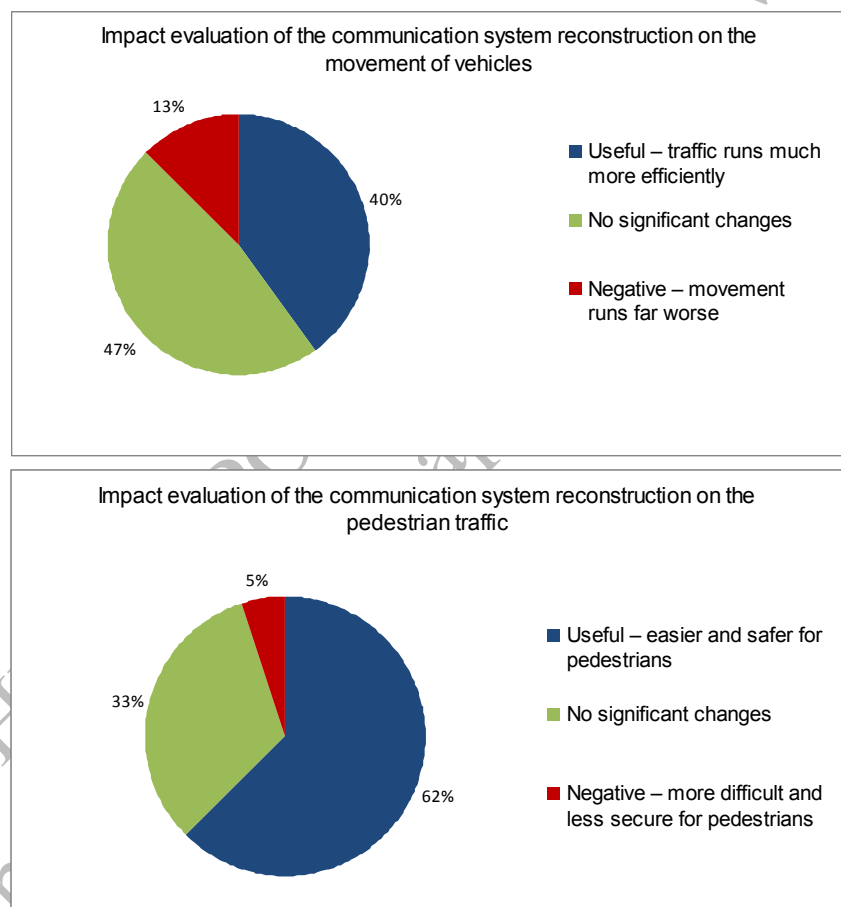


Fig. 4 Changes effect of the communication system reconstruction on the movement of vehicles and pedestrian traffic

Source: field research

The study found that 40% of the respondents view the changes in the communication system beneficial for traffic and communication accessibility of the area. 62% the of respondents considered that the changes had a positive

influence on the movement of pedestrians. 47% of the respondents said that they do not feel significant changes in the availability of vehicle communication in the town centre, while 33% do not feel noticeable changes in pedestrian traffic.

<sup>1</sup> Project for Public Spaces, Inc, [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

Small amounts of respondents perceive the changes as unfavourable, 13% in regards to the vehicle movement and 5% in regards to pedestrian traffic.

Therefore, we consider that the rebuilding of the communication system had a positive influence on the accessibility of the centre and the newly created public spaces. During the survey, some respondents made additional remarks about the traffic organization on Kościuszki Street. They express disappointed with the fact that the street has not been entirely except from vehicle traffic.

The feeling of security and cleanliness, the scale of the adjacent buildings, the character and charm along with features such as the equipment elements on which one can comfortably sit or play, are the most common factors to influence our unconscious decision whether to use a certain places or not. During the survey, the citizens were asked about the comfort and appearance of pedestrian zone and recreational square, created in the centre, along

Kościuszki Street. 65% of the respondents claimed that they find the comfort and appearance „very good”. It means that they feel safe in this place and they find it aesthetic and comfortable, with sufficient seats. Part of the interviewees (25%) responded that they find the comfort and appearance „rather good”, their remarks targeting mainly the inadequacy of seats and the small number of catering places. The rest of the respondents, 10%, did not have any opinion on the subject. We noticed that any respondent did not assess the comfort and image of the place as „rather bad” or „very bad”.

A basic element of a place represents its functions and activities. These give us the reasons why people choose to come to this place for the first time and why they return. Activities may also render the place uniqueness. When there is nothing to do, the place remains empty and useless. During the survey, the citizens were asked to mark their most common reasons why they choose to go to the revitalized centre [Figure 5].

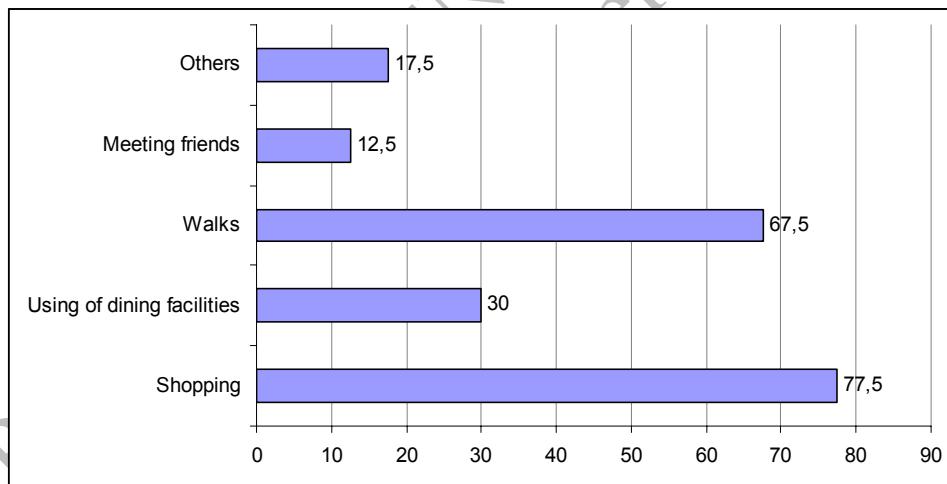


Fig. 5 Reasons for spending time in the centre of Malbork

Source: field research

The main reasons why the respondents choose to spend time in the town centre is for shopping activities (chosen by 77, 5% of the respondents) and walks (indicated by the 67, 5% of the respondents). On a lower scale, we have the dining facilities (indicated by 30% of respondents) and the possibility of meeting friends (indicated only by 12, 5% of the respondents). 17% of the respondents declared also other reasons for choosing this area, most

of which connected to concerts and cultural events. Overall, we notice a positive manifestation public space usage in Malbork, which became after the revitalisation process a location accessible and attractive for all inhabitants.

The survey debated also the decision of market square liquidation from Solna Street and its new destination usage as a car park. Some previous survey results show that the centre of Malbork

fulfils mainly the service functions, so the liquidation of a lively place such as the market square and its transformation into a car parking lot could have a negative effect among residents. That is why we directly asked the resident to evaluate this decision. The poles indicated that most of the respondents considered the decision positive, 25% evaluating it as „very good” and 47% as „rather good”. Only 15% of the respondents are regretting the old market square. The biggest part of the residents underlined that the new function of the place is not proper, the usage of this urban area having small effectiveness in the form of a car parking lot, which is hardly used except during the touristic season.

The social value of a space is the most difficult element to achieve and measure, but an irreplaceable constituent of public spaces. When people meet their friends, greet their neighbours and have no problems with making new acquaintances, they feel the character of the place and a stronger connection with the community. The proof of this value space element in Malbork is the fact that numerous residents choose this place to spend their free time, walking and meeting with their friend. Other proofs provide the number of seniors and groups of children that spend their time here, as well as the underlining sense of the pride and value connected with the town public spaces, revealed by the residents during the survey.

To sum up, Malbork centre revitalizations results emerge from the significant improvement of the town aesthetics. Special meaning in this process had the new spaces created along Kościuszki Street and the transport system reconstruction. Some elements of the new created spaces could improve more, especially the spot left after the market square in Solna Street. As a confirmation of the positive impact of the revitalization process, we can use the survey results, where town citizens were asked whether the new public spaces influenced the frequency of their visits in this part of the town. 57% of the respondents admitted that after the renovation they visit the centre more often, 38% declared that the renovation did not influence the frequency of their visits and only 5% stated that after the renovation they visit the centre rarely.

#### **4 The impact of revitalization process on the life conditions of the residents**

The speciality literature defines the concept of living conditions in different ways. According to S. Liszewski (2004), we should understand through this term the general state of satisfaction concerning all the necessities of life and human activities needs. J.J. Parysek (2004) notes, however, that about the living conditions decides everything that lies in the spatial-functional structure of a town, which contributes to the satisfaction of residents' collective needs.

In order to investigate the changes in living conditions of Malbork we applied a modified version of the method proposed by B. Jaszczuk-Skolimowska (2008). The research focused on the main administrative districts of the town. The selected districts in which was conducted the investigation were Centrum, Stare Miasto, Śródmieście, Os. Południe, Wielbark, Piaski and Kałdowo.

The residents of these areas were questioned concerning to the changes taking place from 2007 until 2011, in regards to ten relevant factors for their living conditions.

The selected factors were:

1. Building status of housing stock;
2. Technical infrastructure equipment and access to sanitary network, electricity, gas and district heating system;
3. Environmental conditions, pollution level and organic matrix;
4. Education access and accessibility to primarily schools within a range of 10 minutes walk;
5. Commercial services access and accessibility to basic products and services, within a range of 10 minutes walk;
6. Public green areas equipment, their prevalence, diversity and quality of greenery;
7. Public transport, the presence of urban public transport lines and bus stops accessibility;
8. Roads and streets quality, the state of roads, streets and sidewalks, as well as the presence of separate cycling lines;
9. Cultural heritage and its preservation;
10. Development potential and the possibility of investment in particular areas;

Residents' answers were marked on a scale from -2 to 2, where -2 represents the biggest deterioration, -1 a small deterioration, 0 no change, 1 a small improvement and 2 the biggest improvement. We measured each factor separately in every district, its value being given by the arithmetical average of all the answers [Figure 6].

The research revealed that the biggest part of the questioned residents are positively evaluating the changes occurred in their living conditions. The residents that feel the greatest improvement are from Centrum and Stary Miasto districts. This is not surprising, as both districts are located in the Area 1, being subject

to the majority of investments. The common factors, which are view as the most improved in both districts, concern the building conditions, commercial services access and public green areas equipment.

The Centrum district is the only district that registered entirely positive changes for all 10 factors.

The residents of the Stare Miasto district noted as well big improvements in the matters of technical infrastructure and development potential and no changes in the matters of environmental conditions, education access and roads and streets quality.

<b>Factor</b>  <b>District</b>	Building status	Technical infrastructure	Environmental conditions	Education access	Commercial services access	Public green areas equipment	Public transport	Roads and streets quality	Cultural heritage	Development potential	Amount
Centrum	0,71	0,29	0,86	0,43	0,71	0,86	0,43	0,48	0,14	0,29	5,19
Stare Miasto	0,75	0,75	0,00	0,00	1,25	0,75	0,43	0,00	0,25	0,75	4,83
Śródmieście	0,83	0,42	0,08	0,17	0,42	0,42	-0,33	-0,58	0,08	-0,08	1,42
Os. Południe	1,00	0,71	0,43	0,43	0,86	0,43	-0,14	-0,29	0,29	0,29	4,00
Wielbark	-0,33	0,33	0,33	-0,33	0,33	0,33	-0,67	-0,33	-0,33	0,33	-0,33
Piaski	1,00	0,50	0,25	0,00	0,50	1,00	0,50	-0,50	0,50	0,25	4,00
Kałdowo	1,50	1,50	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	-0,50	-1,00	0,00	0,50	2,00

Fig. 6 The synthetic evaluation of living conditions changes taking place in Malbork, in the period 2007-2011

Source: field research

The residents of the Wielbark district appreciated that their living conditions suffered the biggest deterioration, in matters of the building status, educational access, public transport, roads and street quality and cultural heritage. All these factors registered average negative scores. Wielbark is the only district with a total negative score, its residents being the most discontented with the revitalization process.

After Wielbark, the next most discontented residents are from Śródmieście and Kałdowo districts. In Śródmieście district, the public transport, the roads and streets quality and the development potential registered negative scores, while the building status changes registered the highest positive score. This is not

surprising because in this district, belonging to Area 1, most investment focuses on thermo-modernization of residential buildings. Located in an industrialised area, the district's residents are unhappy the about environmental conditions and the high degree of pollution.

The residents of Kałdowo district noted the smallest amount of changes, declaring five of the ten factors not changed at all. Residents view positive changes in regards to the building status, technical infrastructure and development potential, while negative ones affected the public transport and roads and streets quality.

The residents of the Piaski and Os Południe districts have a very similar view regarding the changes that took place in their living

conditions, appreciating the building status as the biggest improvement and the roads and streets quality as the biggest deterioration.

Overall, the survey concluded that in the opinion of most residents, the biggest improvement factor emerged from the revitalisation Malbork centre is the building status, followed by the technical infrastructure and commercial services access. The revitalisation brought the biggest deterioration in the status of roads and streets quality, followed by the public transport accessibility.

## 5 Conclusions

Revitalisation is a long-lasting process and its complete impact can be assessed only in long-term results. In spite of this, an important element of revitalization process is the constant supervise of changes taking place in urban space, which enables the municipality to verify the accuracy of taken actions.

In the case of Malbork progressive revitalization process, we can see already the first results. The area subject to the biggest number of changes is by far the town centre. The investments in this area resulted mainly in the improvement of the town appearance and creation of public spaces, which serve both residents and tourists. We should note that the municipal authorities succeeded in creating public places that came to play important roles in the life of Malbork residents. The top places are the square and promenade along Kościuszki Street, which has become a real vibrant meeting place for leisure and entertainment activities.

In the Centre and Old Town areas, we can find however, places managed in a less effective way, like for e.g. the premises of the former market square on Solna Street.

The revitalization contributed to the improvement of living conditions not only in the town centre, but also outside it. A clear improvement of living conditions declared the residents of Piaski and Osiedle Południe districts. In Śródmieście and Kałdowo districts, the living conditions suffered slight changes.

The residents of these districts are still forced to endure inconveniences of air pollution, caused

by the sugar-refinery activities, the bad condition of roads, streets and pavements, alongside with the insufficiency of parking spaces.

In Wielbark district, the residents noticed a deterioration of the living conditions associated with the revitalization program. This is a clear sign for the authorities that this part of the town needs more changes.

The image of a city it is not determined solely by the image of its centre. Malbork authorities should keep in mind the spatial-functional development balance and pay more attention to the peripheral areas.

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