

REVITALIZATION OF URBAN SPACE – CASE STUDY OF GHENT, BELGIUM

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ABSTRACT

Revitalisation is a natural consequence of social, economic and spatial transformations taking place around the world. This process seems to be particularly dynamic in Europe where it is a reaction to the appearance of degradation processes and negative socio-economic consequences related to them in the urban space. In the study, authors considered the urban revitalization as the case study of Ghent. Ghent, the second-largest city in the Flamish Region in Belgium after Antwerp (253,266 residents as at 2017) is among the first cities in Europe to have noticed the opportunities related to the correct planning of revitalization. The main source of data for this paper consists in an on-site query performed between August and September 2016. During the query, the researchers confronted information contained in the zoning plans with the facts, and carried out a questionnaire survey. Four different parts of Ghent implementing revitalisation projects were covered by the study, including The Sint-Pieters Station site, Brugse Poort, Oude Dokken, Dampoort. In order to follow the manner in which revitalisation is perceived in different parts of the city, respondents were asked what they thought were the problems present in the discussed parts of the city and, consequently, what projects were implemented there; what were the advantages of the implemented projects; and finally how they assessed prior activity in this field and what else should be done in the future within the implemented revitalisation projects in the discussed areas. In our study we have shown that Ghent's authorities have created a good vision of the revitalisation process with significant support from the city's inhabitants.

Key words: revitalization, dysfunctional areas, urban, Ghent, Belgium

INTRODUCTION

Modern urban space is undergoing incessant transformations (Cuthbert 2007). On the one hand, they result from changes which make up the global urbanisation process (Jiang and O'Neill 2017). In this context, cities located in the so-called highly developed regions of the world, including Europe,

are currently primarily experiencing suburbanisation (Antrop 2004). It causes the depopulation of centres and an accumulation of unfavourable socio-economic phenomena and processes in city centres (Kantor-Pietraga, 2014, Krzysztofik et al. 2017). On the other hand, the said transformations are an effect of the succession of functions which underpin city development (Kovacs and Brade 2014, Dymitrow et al.

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2017). The fact that European cities function in a global city network largely determines the shifts related to the economic base of a city. In a way, this forces cities to replace economically unprofitable functions with functions yielding profit (Raźniak et al. 2017). As a result, post-industrial, post-harbour, post-military, post-railway areas commonly need to be adequately developed and given new functions that are significant in global conditions (Haase et al. 2013). Revitalisation, understood as a reaction to the appearance of degradation processes and negative socio-economic consequences related to them in the urban space, seems to be the answer to adverse phenomena and processes taking place in the urban space, in particular in highly developed regions of the world (Fanea-Ivanovici 2013, Rogatka et al. 2015). If adequately planned and efficiently implemented, comprehensive revitalisation projects may not only improve the quality of residents' lives or the competitiveness of certain city districts, but also help a city become an important tourist destination, an exemplar of recovery measures, or shape the image of the entire city (Otto and Chmielewska 2014).

Gent, the second-largest city in the Flemish Region in Belgium after Antwerp (253,266 residents as at 2017) (Statista) is among the first cities in Europe to have noticed the opportunities related to the correct planning of recovery processes. The first plans aimed to introduce improvements in the city space date back to mid-19th century. It is assumed that when in 1852 Paris introduced the revolutionary Haussmann's plan whose purpose was to demolish cramped residential zones, construct wide streets, large boulevards and technical facilities, and to improve the city's sanitary conditions, similar actions in Ghent had already been ongoing for several years. These works were also continued at the end of the 19th-century (Zollikofer-De Vigne plan of 1882). Large projects aimed to boost the aesthetics of urban space were implemented in Ghent before the World Exhibition of 1913. After World War II, the city began to profoundly experience the suburbanisation process which was seen as an opportunity to unburden the densely populated city. Two subsequent plans provided a significant impulse

for the suburbanisation process: the De Taeye law of 1948 which provided subsidies for the construction of new houses, mainly in the outskirts of the city, and the Brunfaut law oriented at funding collective housing projects, including social housing (Gosseye and Heynen 2010). However, further social projects (including a garden city project connected with the idea of social housing of 1950, or a project from 1955 for huge water sports infrastructure surrounded by apartment blocks in a parkland), the strengthening of Ghent's position as an industrial centre in the 1960s (covering, among other things, the establishment of a new steel plant, Volvo's cars and trucks plant built in 1964, the extension of the existing paper mill, the construction of several power plants and some chemical companies, finally the development of northern port and cooperation between industry and the University), and the influx of migrants (primarily from Turkey) were not able to stop the outflow of the city's population (De Decker and Pannecoucke 2004). Moreover, new problems emerged in the city space, including reduced livability of the downtown, related to the movement of the better-off inhabitants to the suburbs, increased traffic in the city centre, dilapidation, soaring vacancy rates, the stench of canals functioning as sewers, as well as issues concerning the provision of the right living conditions and the organisation of space in the 19th-century neighbourhoods (Boussauw 2014). A response to those and other problems came with the next plan: the 1968 Patershol district revitalisation plan. The aim of the plan was to restore the 17th-century historical character of the area and to increase its tourist attractiveness. As early as in the 1990s, the Patershol district was a symbol and a prototype of successful revitalisation, with its trademark streets dominated by picturesque façades and quality restaurants. Half of a century has passed since the introduction of the first Ghent revitalisation plan; it is therefore worth studying how revitalisation projects are implemented in a city considered the pioneer of recovery measures. Moreover, since the city's residents boast tremendous social involvement in the implemented projects, the analysis will also include their assessment of the main

projects aimed to renovate urban space in Ghent. In light of the above, this paper aims to scrutinise how the revitalisation process is perceived by inhabitants and visitors within the city.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Revitalisation is a natural consequence of social, economic and spatial transformations taking place around the world. This process seems to be particularly dynamic in Europe where it is a reaction to the appearance of degradation processes and negative socio-economic consequences related to them in the urban space.

There are many terms referring to recovery measures, increasing the attractiveness and quality of areas in cities. And thus, *urban space restructuring* is a general economic term related to a system transformation of the economy and referring to rebuilding and transforming in the general sense of the words. The term *restoration* is closely related to degraded areas and it consists in restoring once-existing values and qualities characteristic of a given object or fragment of space. Another term, *renovation*, is understood as the restoration of past greatness, good shape in order to boost the quality of a given object. In the case of *rehabilitation*, we work on an existing function, striving to restore its grandeur in terms of architecture and, importantly, the socio-spatial structure (Ziobrowski 2008, Kaczmarek 2001, Urban regeneration 2017). The rehabilitation of social, cultural and architectonic urban space is also called reurbanisation, primarily consisting of the following actions: intensified use of space in the city, supplementation of incomplete structures, proper selection of new functions, adequate standard of modernised objects, buildings and facilities. Reurbanisation may be defined as a complex and long term process of reviving city centres consisting in the optimisation of economic, social, environmental, legal, and construction conditions. Thus understood reurbanisation is an action directed at ensuring living space in the centre of the city while maintaining its identity and cultural heritage, both material, and partially immaterial.

According to Parysek (2008), reurbanisation in the spatial sense consists in countering urban sprawl and is expressed through the movement of the population and businesses into the centre (Leaf 1995, Web and Webber 2016).

The nomenclature related to city revival is abundant, and revitalisation itself has many synonyms. Referring to prior considerations, revitalisation should be treated as a comprehensive and complex phenomenon depending on an array of factors, and which can be compared to “healing” cities, their pathological, or “ill”, districts. On the other hand, S. Kaczmarek (2001) states that “revitalisation is a sequence of planned actions aimed at economic revival and a change of the spatial and functional structure of degraded urban areas. It is a process which may be applied to urban areas with different intended uses, e.g. industrial, military, harbour, residential or transportation” (p. 16). Therefore, revitalisation is a process which in its nature consists in the improvement of urban space quality. This improvement is related to functional changes which involve the adaptation of old built environment and the construction of new objects which remain in dialogue with the existing tissue. Revitalisation also brings an added value in the form of the protection of cultural heritage: buildings, facilities, elements of machines, engineering infrastructure, urban structures, etc. We can therefore consider revitalisation in the spatial, economic, and social aspects, and – consequently – the cultural aspect (Yau and Chan 2008). With respect to the multifaceted nature of revitalisation, the relevant terminology is present in the works of researchers from various fields: geography, sociology, economics, architecture, urban planning, ecology (Kaczmarek 2001, Wise and Clark 2017).

According to T. Kaczmarek (2001), revitalisation as a process and as a notion stems from the New Charter of Athens of 1998 which tackles the issues concerning the restoration of the city structure and urban form. The first pivotal impulse inspiring deliberations on the revitalisation of central districts was purely sociological. It related to the renovation of devastated residential resources in English city centres by

the middle class, called the new urban gentry. This process was called gentrification. Within it, affluent spheres penetrated city centres or their direct proximity, what led to the gentrification of space or its selected fragments (Jadach-Sepioło 2009, Wu 2016). “Therefore, the onset of revitalisation should be associated with a change of the behaviour and decisions made by those looking for new homes”.

The idea to revive cities in the spirit of revitalisation is also supported by arguments underlining economic, social, ecological, spatial (understood as spatial order shaping), and cultural effects consisting in the protection of historical monuments and the preservation of the *genius loci* (Ashworth and Tunbridge 2017). The essence of economic arguments referring to the discussed processors is the sparing use of land and a broadly-understood economic mobilisation of previously “dead” areas, an increase in the value of land and real property in the revitalised areas, new jobs, new market outlets, impact on the development of different local activities. As for social arguments, it is pivotal that the revitalisation process aims in its essence to maintain or restore social balance because the emerging new workplaces improve the broadly-understood quality and standard of life. In the context of culture, revitalisation is associated with creating a new, positive image of a city through focusing on its cultural wealth and heritage. Movable and immovable resources which constitute the heritage are protected for the benefit of society: people gather anew in the centre and the historical suburbs. Ecological argumentation refers to the broadening of biologically active areas, limited use of new areas, including primarily greenfield land (Coolen and Meesters 2012). The shaping of a new spatial order, and the integration of recently-developed areas with the city that creates a continuum in urban space are the two central spatial premises supporting the revival of cities in the spirit of revitalisation. Therefore, the process has a multi-dimensional impact on the city. Despite obvious benefits of revitalisation, there are, however, numerous barriers, including in particular:

- mental barrier – a need to make changes in public awareness and pay more attention to the possibility

- of expanding and adapting old, substandard, and often devastated built environment (e.g. post-industrial, post-harbour, post-military areas, downtown districts),
- capital barrier – limited funding capabilities of the local government, a need for support, e.g. through EU funding,
- political barrier – lack of coordinated financial policy and government schemes dealing in revitalisation,
- conflict of interest – antagonisms between tenants, real property owners, neighbours, the local government,
- staff limitations – lack of adequately qualified personnel to manage revitalisation processes,
- environmental barrier – restrictions resulting from the need to protect and shape the natural environment (e.g. Natura 2000, protected areas) (Kaczmarek 2001, Easthope et al. 2013, Wu 2016).

The efficient performance of the revitalisation process requires a dualistic approach, i.e. one applying the top-down mechanism (implantative revitalisation) along with the bottom-up mechanism (integrative revitalisation) “It involves a synergy of activities originated by local authorities (administrative approach) and grassroots (community) actions. On the one hand, the revitalisation process has its formal framework related to the opportunities for obtaining EU funding for the revival of cities, what requires an administrative background; on the other, it is critical to focus on the microscale of the process dedicated to local communities. Revitalisation is equally a responsibility of city authorities, non-governmental organisations, cultural organisations, entrepreneurs. It also seems important to raise the role of social participation, i.e. the active participation of residents in the developed plans, programmes and strategies regarding revitalisation. Social participation consists in meetings with residents, consultations of issues and ideas referring to the revival of a district or a city block, and the joint development of revitalisation programs. Such approach, promoting synergy, coherence and cooperation of different groups, guarantees that the process will be successful. Moreover, each process requires adequate administrative and legislative tools.

The most popular of them include: the introduction of preservation zones, relevant provisions of zoning plans (areas earmarked for the rehabilitation of existing built environment and technical infrastructure), the delineation of special zones in municipal strategic documents, and the implementation of the provisions of relevant statutes and ordinances” (Kaczmarek 1999).

Revitalisation should therefore be treated as a *signum temporis*. This process concentrates, as in a lens, the current expectations of society in the context of the physiognomy and functioning of urban organisms. A revitalisation process that is carried out correctly guarantees the protection of cultural heritage, the creation of a city brand and new jobs, counters urban sprawl and improves the life quality of city dwellers (Lehrer et al. 2010, Kaczmarek and Kowalczyk 2016).

Successful revitalisation projects can be found in most European cities. They include, among others, the fruitful revival of the London Docks, treated as an example of waterfront revitalisation; the revival of the Zollverein mine and coking plant complex in Essen; the eco-revitalisation of the Templehof airport in Berlin; the comprehensive revitalisation of Bilbao; the revival of the Old Brewery in Poznań which changed it into a centre of trade, art and business; or the abovementioned revitalisation of the Patershol district in Ghent.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main source of data for this paper consists in an on-site query performed between August and September 2016. During the query, the researchers confronted information contained in the zoning plans with the facts, and carried out a questionnaire survey. The PAPI (Paper and Pencil Interview) method was applied during the survey study. 98 questionnaires were collected this way. Sampling was non-probabilistic, primarily due to the availability of the sample which was highly limited as a result of the dysfunctional nature of most of the analysed areas and the fact that the survey was performed in English. Nevertheless, the authors assumed that the sample

size was sufficient for prudent reasoning and generalisation of the obtained results. The collected raw data were encoded and verified in the PS Imago software, which also served to make further statistical breakdowns.

The survey covered 36.7% of men and 63.3% of women. The respondents were predominantly young: 45.6% were aged 20–29, 39.2% were 18–19, 8.9% – 30–39, and only 6.3% were 40 years old and older. The main source of income of the surveyed population was paid work: 25.3% worked full-time, 8.9% part-time, and 7.6% run their own company. Almost half of the respondents (49.4%) lived on a scholarship or were supported by their parents. A small percentage was on disability pensions or other forms of social assistance. The respondents reported predominantly tertiary (60.8%) and secondary (38.0%) education. The vast majority came from Belgium (94.7%), and several persons from Germany, Poland and Turkey. Moreover, as many as 60.8% of the respondents reported that they lived in a city, 10.1% the suburb, and 29.1% the countryside. 51.9% of the surveyed were residents of Ghent, 8.9% tourists, and 39.2% gave another reason for a visit in the city (most of them studied in the city, worked there, came shopping or were visiting friends/family). It is worth noting that every third respondent declared that they were keenly interested in recovery processes in the city that made up revitalisation, every third that these matters were partly of interest for them, and every third that they were not interested in the issue.

Four different parts of Ghent implementing revitalisation projects (Fig. 1) were covered by the study, including:

1. The Sint-Pieters Station site – located in the southern part of Ghent. The old station building was originally established for the 1913 World Expo. At this moment, it is the biggest station in Ghent and Flanders, as well as one of the biggest in Belgium. Over 54,000 passengers depart here every day. The revitalisation and modernisation of the station began in 2007, and it is planned to be finished by 2024. It seems to be one of the most important projects in the city. Due to the rising number of passengers,

the station is to be rebuilt as a modern public transport hub which enables a comfortable and swift transfer for a train, bus, tram, bicycle or car (solutions encompassing Park & Ride, Kiss & Ride, an indoor car park for 13,500 bicycles and 2,700 cars). The project also includes the construction of a new multifunctional high-quality building which will be a combination of housing, working and leisure spaces, with plenty of space for pedestrians and cyclists (Project Gent Sint-Pieters) – Figure 2a.

2. Brugse Poort has been used as an industrial working-class neighbourhood in the so-called 19th-century belt located in western part of Ghent.

Diverse problems were diagnosed there: negative public image, poor housing conditions and a lack of public spaces. These issues were the focal points in one of the most important Ghent's renewal projects, started in 2002. The aim of this plan was to make the Brugse Poort site more likely to live in by improving the quality of housing, making new greenery and open spaces, creating new streets offering multiple services with pavements, bike lanes and parking spaces. The project also consisted of educational and cultural activation of inhabitants by constructing a new library opened in 2004, creating some artistic projects like "The Photo Project", and developing a new site con-

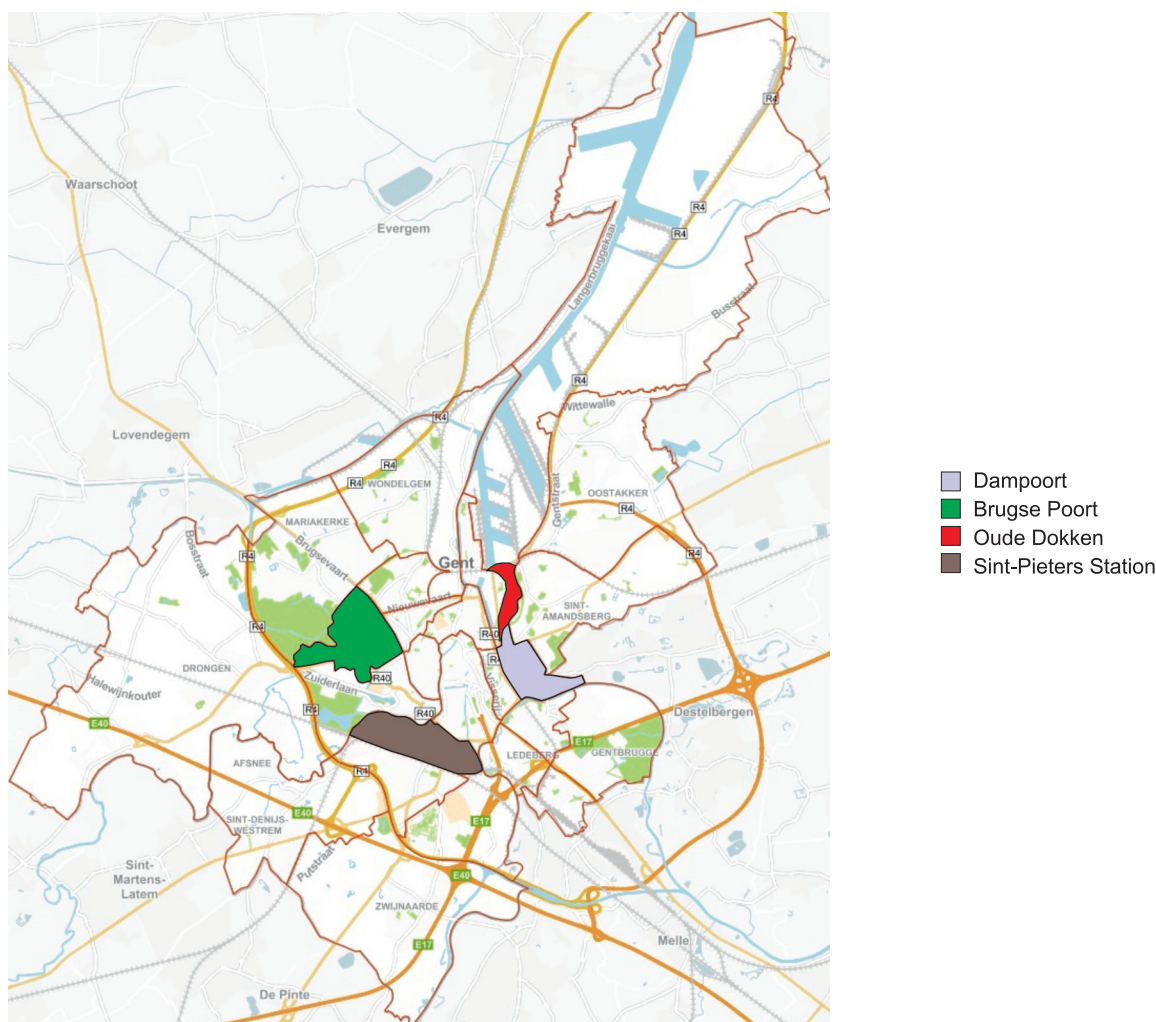


Fig. 1. Study areas

Source: own study on the basis of Google Maps

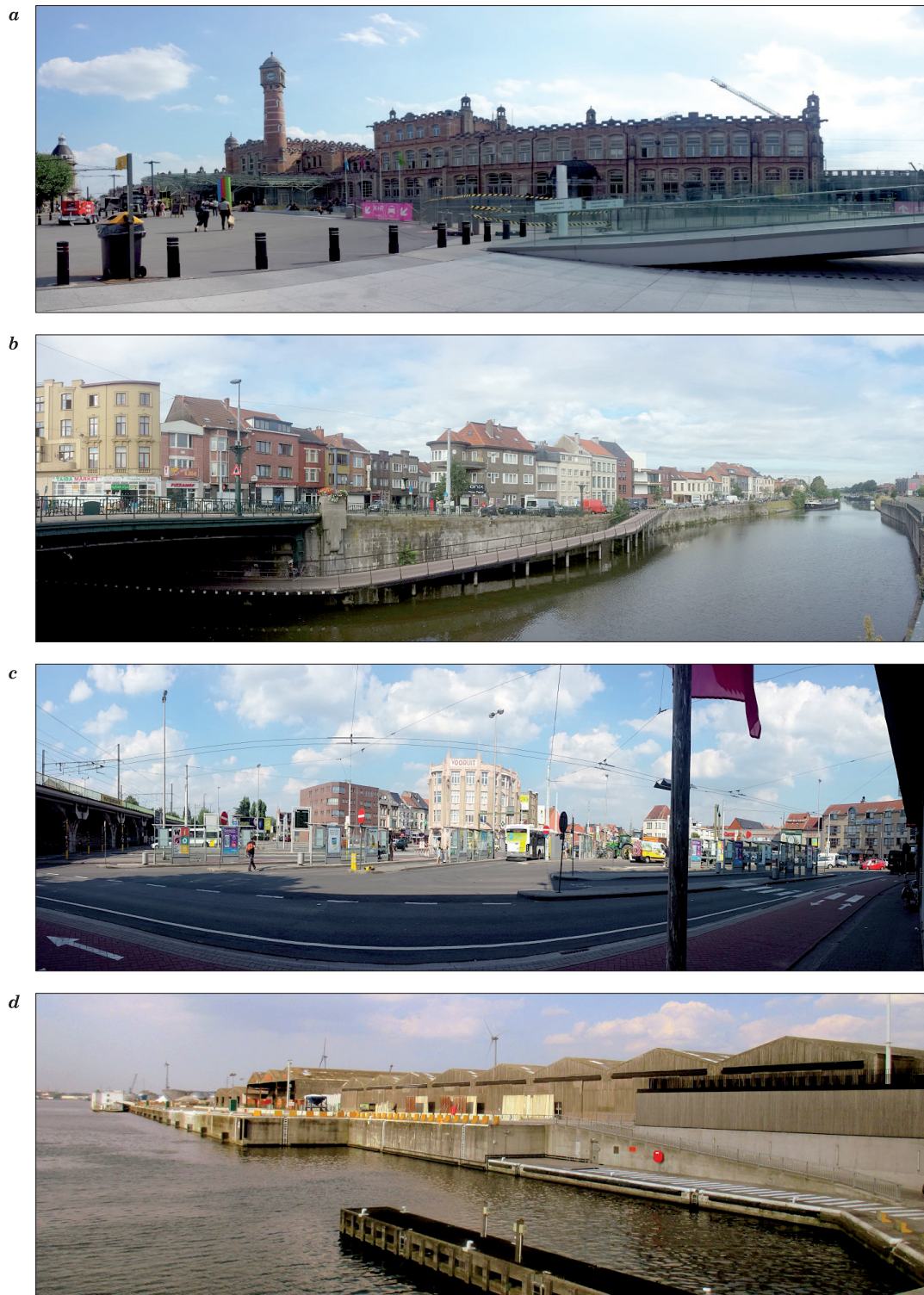


Fig. 2. Study areas: *a* – Sint-Pieters Station; *b* – Brugse Poort; *c* – Oude Dokken; *d* – Dampoort
Source: own study on the basis of Google Maps

taining a theatre, a restaurant, greenery, handcraft shops in an attractive area called “Piekespark project” (Groupe Chronos) – Figure 2b.

3. Oude Dokken, unlike other Ghent’s districts, can be considered an area full of free space. The site is located in the northern part of the city, relatively close to the city centre. However, the area looks completely different than the surrounding sites. Low-density buildings, lack of housing, lots of warehouses and industrial buildings – Oude Dokken looks very unkept by the city. The renovation project of the Oude Dokken site is focused on creating new housing, public space with greenery, offices and shops (Nieuw leven in de Oude Dokken, Juwet) – Figure 2c.

4. The last analysed area, Dampoort, is located in the eastern part of Ghent. The site includes the second biggest station in the city – Dampoort Station, a densely populated and relatively poor neighbourhood full of small shops, and the Quantum Building. This building is the main object for revitalisation in the area. It is a part of the European Program of revitalisation of old industrial ports to create new areas. The building contains 10,000 m² of offices and 2,000 m² of parking space. The site is well-connected through public transport but suffers strongly from serious traffic problems. Here, revitalisation will consist in facilitating road traffic and erecting a new office building with car parks (cf. Stad Gent: Dampoort) – Figure 2d.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In order to follow the manner in which revitalisation is perceived in different parts of the city, respondents were asked what they thought were the problems present in the discussed parts of the city and, consequently, what projects were implemented there; what were the advantages of the implemented projects; and finally how they assessed prior activity in this field and what else should be done in the future within the implemented revitalisation projects in the discussed areas.

The authors began the survey regarding the perception of revitalisation by asking the respondents

what they thought were the main problems present in the analysed parts of the city/in each of the analysed areas. The results of the study show that each of the studied areas was marked by different visible problems (Table 1). In Brugse Poort, the issues most often indicated by the respondents as diminishing the site’s attractiveness were post-industrial areas, mentioned by 33.3% of the respondents. The surveyed persons further pointed to the lack of greenery – 24.7%, the bad condition of the infrastructure, traffic jams and street noise – 16.7% indications each. In the Dampoort area, the respondents most often indicated problems related to traffic – 35.6%, and the bad condition of the infrastructure – 21.4%. The participants of the study stated that unattractive built environment was the most problematic aspect of the space in Oude Dokken and St. Pieters Station. This answer was selected by 54.1% and 54.5% of the respondents, respectively. Post-industrial areas in Oude Dokken (33.3%) and unattractive landscape in St. Pieters Station (27.3%) also received a high percentage of indications.

Table 1. The structure of answers to the question: “In your opinion, what is the main problem in...?” (every site sums up to 100%)

	Brugse Poort	Dampoort	Oude Dokken	St. Pieters Station
Lack of greenery	24.7	6.3	0.0	18.2
Dirty/industrial places	33.3	12.5	33.3	0.0
Traffic jams and noise	16.7	35.6	12.6	0.0
Bad infrastructure	16.7	21.4	0.0	0.0
Unattractive buildings	0.0	0.0	54.1	54.5
Unattractive landscape	0.0	17.6	0.0	27.3
Robberies	3.4	5.2	0.0	0.0
Devastations	5.2	1.4	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: authors on the basis of the survey

Once the respondents provided their opinions on the main problems in each of the analysed parts of the city, they were asked what projects were implemented there and whether they corresponded to the indicated issues (Table 2). According to the surveyed population, in Brugse Poort projects are implemented in the scope of road modernisation (50.0%) and social

Table 2. The structure of answers to the question: “In your opinion, what revitalisation projects are mainly implemented in Ghent in...?” (every site and every answer sums up to 100%, multiple choice)

	Brugse Poort	Dampoort	Oude Dokken	St. Pieters Station
Modernization of buildings	33.3	45.5	11.1	68.2
Modernization of roads	50.0	27.3	0.0	26.1
Winterizing blocks of flats	0.0	12.1	0.0	0.0
Planning new greenery	33.3	51.5	22.2	47.8
Complex projects	0.0	12.1	0.0	21.7
Social projects	50.0	51.5	33.3	52.5
Economic activation	0.0	15.2	22.2	30.4

Source: authors on the basis of the survey

matters (50.0%). Projects regarding the modernisation of buildings (33.3%) and planning greenery (33.3%) were also deemed significant. With respect to Dampoort, the respondents signalled that the projects principally implemented in the area were related to planning new greenery (51.5%), social matters (51.5%) and building modernisation (45.5%). Projects indicated much less frequently included: road modernisation (27.3%), economic activation (15.2%), or blocks of flats (12.1%). 12.1% of the respondents stated that the projects implemented there were of a comprehensive nature. In Oude Dokken, the surveyed listed in particular projects concerning social issues (33.3%), and slightly less frequently economic activation (22.2%), planning greenery (22.2%) and building modernisation (11.1%). In turn, with respect to St. Pieters Station the answers revealed that projects carried out in that area were primarily thought to cover building modernisation (68.2%), social matters (52.5%), and planning greenery (47.8%). There were also some opinions stating that this location had projects related to economic revival (30.4%) and road modernisation (26.1%). 21.7% of the respondents believed that the bulk of the projects were of a complex character. In consequence, the study performed demonstrates that the projects carried out in the city predominantly approach existing problems. Moreover, city authorities pay much attention to social projects which,

on the one hand, are to activate the revitalised areas and, on the other, aim to include the local community in the organisation of space.

The respondents were also given an opportunity to discuss the advantages of the implemented revitalisation process (Table 3). A comparison of the answers provided with regard to the four discussed areas reveals that Dampoort (50%) and Brugse Poort (37.5%) are the most frequently suggested new leisure sites. According to the respondents, the positive image of the city is mostly the result of actions taken in Dampoort (47.7%) and St. Pieters Station (36.4%).

Table 3. The structure of answers to the question: “In your opinion, what are the advantages of revitalisation in...?” (every answer sums up to 100%)

	Brugse Poort	Dampoort	Oude Dokken	St. Pieters Station	Total
New leisure site	37.5	50.0	12.5	0.0	100.0
Positive city image	11.4	47.7	4.5	36.4	100.0
Development of tourism	13.8	37.9	13.8	34.5	100.0
Place of inhabitants' social integration	29.6	37.0	11.2	22.2	100.0
New site to invest	50.0	37.5	0.0	12.5	100.0
Attractive place to live	12.5	50.0	12.5	25.0	100.0
New greenery	12.8	40.4	6.4	40.4	100.0
New milieu	0.0	52.2	8.7	39.1	100.0

Source: authors on the basis of the survey

Changes related to the development of tourism received a similar percentage of answers: 37.9% and 34.5%, respectively, in the analysed areas. With respect to the role of the discussed places in the integration of inhabitants, 37% of the respondents indicated that an area that can boast this characteristic is Dampoort, 29.6% – Brugse Poort, and 22.2% – St. Pieters Station. Brugse Poort received the most indications assessing a site as good for investment as 50% of the surveyed gave such an answer. Dampoort received a hefty 37.5% of indications. Among the analysed areas of the city, Dampoort proved to be the most attractive place to live after revitalisation, securing 50% of the answers. Two areas, Dampoort and St. Pieters Station, received

the best acclaim for the effects of revitalisation process is in the form of new greenery: both received 40.4% of the indications. The last of the assessed elements was the creation of a new milieu, with 52.2% of the respondents pointing to Dampoort, and 39.1% to St. Pieters Station. It is worth noting that among the analysed areas, Oude Dokken received the worst opinions regarding the advantages of revitalisation. This primarily results from the fact that revitalisation processes in that site are at a relatively early implementation stage.

The survey also contained a question about the general assessment of revival processes carried out in Ghent with respect to each of the studied areas (Table 4). Revitalisation activities in Brugse Poort were assessed as average in 66.6% of the cases and as good in 33% of the cases, in Dampoort the answers stated average (50%), good (43.8%) and very good (6.3%).

Table 4. The structure of answers to the question: “How do you generally assess the revitalisation in Ghent in...?” (every site sums up to 100%)

	Brugse Poort	Dampoort	Oude Dokken	St. Pieters Station
Very good	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.5
Good	33.3	43.8	55.6	48.1
Average	66.6	50.0	33.3	42.9
Bad	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Very bad	0.0	0.0	11.1	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own study on the basis of the survey

In the case of both areas, there were no answers expressing a negative opinion regarding the discussed processes. Activities carried out in Oude Dokken were graded as good in 55.6% of the cases, in 33.3% as average and in 11.1% as very bad. The revival processes performed in St. Pieters Station received the following grades: 48.1% – good, 42.9% – average, and 6.5% – very good. Answers expressing a bad or very bad opinion of the revitalisation of that area were given by 1.3% of the respondents each. The attempt to obtain an assessment of the revitalisation processes that are carried out shows that in all of the analysed parts of Ghent they are graded as good or average.

This means that the actions taken by city authorities are accepted by the users of urban space.

In the last part of the survey, the respondents could indicate additional elements which they thought should be revitalised in the analysed parts of the city (Table 5). In Brugse Poort, further recovery of greenery was seen as the most important: it was indicated by 41.7% of the respondents. The surveyed population also specified road infrastructure and the renovation of buildings – 16.7% each. The insufficient number of revitalised parks and natural areas was seen as an issue also in Dampoort (26.5%). In this area, there are much fewer indications opting for the revitalisation of buildings (8.8%), creation of new sports and cultural facilities (7.8%), as well as tourist and cycling infrastructure (2.9% each). Also in Oude Dokken, the respondents noticed that greenery required revitalisation (44.4%). Other issues indicated in the study in this location included the revitalisation of buildings and empty spaces (22.2% each), and renovation of infrastructure (11.1%). Similar to other analyses areas, the interviewees pointed to the need to revitalise greenery and infrastructure in St. Pieters Station

Table 5. The structure of answers to the question: “What in your opinion should be the object of revitalisation in Brugse Poort in the future?” (every site and answer sum up to 100%)

	Brugse Poort	Dampoort	Oude Dokken	St. Pieters Station
More safe space for children to play	8.3	0.0	0.0	8.3
More greenery/parks	41.7	26.5	44.4	12.5
Road infrastructure	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Revitalisation of buildings	16.7	8.8	22.2	8.3
Empty places	0.0	0.0	22.2	0.0
Revitalisation of infrastructure	0.0	0.0	11.1	12.5
More shops	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3
Bike routes	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Sports and cultural facilities	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.0
Tourist infrastructure (hotel, restaurant, cafes)	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0

Source: own study on the basis of the survey

(12.5% each) and then to revitalise buildings, increase the number of shops and places for children to play safely (8.3% each).

CONCLUSIONS

In our study we have shown that Ghent's authorities have created a vision of the revitalisation process with significant support from the city's inhabitants. The residents are willing to provide social consultations regarding any idea proposed by the authorities and policy makers. The inclusion of the inhabitants in the revitalisation process of the city may reduce the number of failed projects. The inhabitants have the expected knowledge and recognition of the city's problems and a vision of how revitalisation should be implemented. This observation was proved during the questionnaire survey when the authors had a chance to interview inhabitants. They identified the main problems of the city and gave evidence that they have a vision for further directions of development.

The issue of revitalisation is related to incessant social and economic transformations, as well as financial instruments, all of which require implementing recovery measures in order to eliminate flaws stemming from urban development. The problem of the degradation of cities and the need for their renewal was presented in other European countries, for example in Germany, the United Kingdom and France. In Germany, the main problem was to rebuild the economy after WWII and combine the economies of the developed West and less developed East Germany in 1990s. The aim was to revitalise the construction sector – to stabilise the real property and social services markets and to counteract the decline of birth rates. Revitalisation was vested in municipalities which cooperated with the industry at government level (Rewitalizacja miast... 2009). In the UK of the 1970s, as a result of the marginalization of industrial production there was a need for deindustrialization and deglomeration with the transition to a service economy. The economic transformation left many people with primary education, and there was a lack of people with specialist education. It caused

the growth of unemployment and increasing property maintenance costs which forced residents to emigrate into the suburbs. In the late 1990s, birth rates decreased by up to about 40% (e.g. Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester). The access to cities was hampered by traffic and required the implementation of new transport (the underground, among other means), the revitalisation of water channels and the formation of lofts. Nowadays, the aim of the authorities at the government level is to fight against urban transformations by stimulating financial growth and economic development. The Regional Development Agency was included in the revitalisation process and its task was to impact urban development (Rewitalizacja miast... 2009). The destructions in France after WWII were not dealt with for several decades causing a housing crisis. They then contributed to the development of the real estate industry through the reconstruction of existing cities (mainly city centres), and later revitalisation of historically important areas. In the 1980s the state was decentralised. This increased the significance of cooperation at the municipal, regional and government level. Central administration abandoned its policy of interventionism in favour of supporting, mobilizing, coordinating or creating and supervising or informing. In 2000, the Local Urban Plan was formed, and it set the trends and determinants of urban development (Skalski 2009).

The Belgium government before the 1990s supported the anti-urban policy. City development was directed at suburbanisation instead of the inner-city neighbourhood. The takeover of power by an extreme-right party was a turning point initialising the urban space revitalisation policy. It was operated by the SIF, the Social Impulse Fund, and became one of the main goals of the Flemish government. In 2003, the SIF was replaced by the City Fund. The government decided to reduce the depopulation of urban areas by improving the quality of life (Loopmans 2007). The assumption of power by the social-democratic party in Antwerp in the 2006 indicates a return to the model of extensive suburbanization (without the anti-urban discourse) (Maesschalck 2010).

Due to the migration of Ghent's residents to the suburbs, the revitalisation of the city should be primarily addressed at visitors: tourists, businessmen and students, young families. The revitalisation project should include the development of the services sector (shopping, business) and the education sector (qualified manpower). The spatial aspects of Ghent's revitalisation should involve: an increase in the (presently small) percentage of green areas, the revitalisation of residential buildings, the reduction of the proportion of transport that uses fossil fuels (reduction of traffic jams, air pollution), as well as the creation of leisure facilities (parks, child infrastructure) (Boussauw 2014). The revitalisation of Ghent concerns the important issues of policy in the context of spatial order. It generally refers to interventions into spatial, socio-cultural development and socio-economic regeneration. Previously, the following neighbourhood revitalisation programs were implemented: "Bruggen naar Rabot", "Zuurstof voor de Brugse Poort" and "Ledeberg Leeft". Nevertheless, we must be aware that social participation and gentrification play an important role in the spatial policy of Ghent.

The first successfully implemented revitalisation project in Ghent referred to the **Oude Dokken**. Revitalisation activities have been undergoing in the district since the 1980s. At this moment, noticeable effects of gentrification are already visible, such as waterfront developments, lofts and car dealerships. **The Dampoort** is an example of the declining importance of rail transport. The area has been revitalised for passenger transport, and has experienced the development of new buildings – mostly lofts. The Dampoort district represents a key hub in Ghent (Oosten 2000). The authors observed a large proportion of Turkey-based population in the district. This phenomenon shows a high degree of probability that a ghetto will form there in the future. The proposed solution may be the gentrification of new ethnic groups in the studied area. **The Ghent Sint-Pieters Station** was built in 1913 and its current business activity is associated with: office and store sectors and the extension of the existing railway network (van Beek 2012). The Sint-Pieters Station has a high

investment potential because of its visitors and the young community that meets in the greenery areas and the waterfront square which is located opposite to the railway station. The analysed area should boost its services sector (shops, offices) and catering sector. **The Brugse Poort** area is named after the city's gate function. The studied area is a part of the 19th century housing development. The Brugse Poort district is home to a high percentage of population with foreign origin. People with Mediterranean origin have been spreading throughout the district since the 1990s. Nowadays, a population of Turkish or Maghrebian origin is inhabiting Brugse Poort (Botterman 2011). The studied area requires the gentrification of the new ethnic groups (human capital, new residential housing). An additional solution could consist in the construction of industrial facilities that may contribute to the reduction of the number of people living in the streets.

Cooperation between European, government and Flemish policies coupled with a broad access to funding sources (and taxes, European projects, foreign capital investors) has streamlined decision-making centres in spatial planning. Revitalisation is perceived as an important tool with an impact on the increased quality of residents' lives and the attractive image of the city.

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REWITALIZACJA PRZESTRZENI MIEJSKIEJ – STUDIUM PRZYPADKU GANDAWY (BELGIA)

ABSTRAKT

Rewitalizacja jest naturalnym następstwem przemian społeczno-gospodarczo-przestrzennych, które zachodzą na całym świecie. Wydaje się, że proces ten szczególnie dynamicznie przebiega w Europie, w której jest swoistą odpowiedzią na procesy degradacji i związane z nimi niekorzystne zjawiska i procesy społeczno-gospodarcze obserwowane zwłaszcza w przestrzeni miejskiej.

W opracowaniu przeanalizowano rewitalizację miasta na przykładzie Gandawy. Gandawa jest drugim pod względem wielkości miastem we Flandrii w Belgii (po Antwerpii), w którym jako w jednym z pierwszych w Europie dostrzeżono szanse stworzone przez odpowiednio zaplanowaną rewitalizację. Głównym źródłem danych do artykułu była kwerenda terenowa, którą przeprowadzono na przełomie sierpnia i września 2016 r. W jej trakcie skonfrontowano informacje zawarte w planach zagospodarowania przestrzennego ze stanem faktycznym oraz przeprowadzono badanie ankietowe. Badaniem objęto cztery różne części Gandawy, w których realizowane są projekty rewitalizacyjne, w tym: dworzec kolejowy Sint-Pieters Station, Brugse Poort, Oude Dokken i Dampoort. W celu prześledzenia, jak postrzegana jest rewitalizacja przez respondentów zapytano: jakie problemy są obecne ich zdaniem w analizowanych częściach miasta i w związku z tym, jakie projekty są tam podejmowane, następnie jakie korzyści wynikają z tych przedsięwzięć, wreszcie jaka jest ocena dotychczasowych działań w tym zakresie i jakie działania powinny być zrealizowane w ramach kolejnych projektów rewitalizacyjnych w przyszłości.

W opracowaniu wykazano, że władze Gandawy tworzą dobrą wizję rewitalizacji miasta ze znaczącym wsparciem ze strony mieszkańców.

Słowa kluczowe: rewitalizacja, obszary dysfunkcyjne, Gandawa, Belgia

