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Public policy on city center revitalization based on the Town Centre Management concept

Abstract

Nowadays, it is impossible to ensure sustainable development of the state without using innovative policies of territorial development, one of which is a city revitalization policy. This article defines the main causes of city center degradation and typical approaches to revitalizing city centers in Europe and North America. The New Urbanism principles are outlined as regards city center revitalization, with an emphasis on their potential importance for sustainable urban development. The evolution of Town Centre Management (TCM) and the features of its application are characterized by authors with a focus on the mechanisms of anti-crisis management professionalization in the conditions of degrading city centers.

A model of the public policy on city center revitalization based on the TCM concept is presented, which envisages the functioning of a TCM manager (office) of (with a list of the main tasks); objectives and the sequence of policy implementation stages; application of tools for public participation and a public-private partnership in this process; city center revival through an integrated effect on various spheres (community, economy, space and environment), and, as a result, achievement of a multiplicative effect for the promotion and development of the entire city. The study used a set of general scientific and specialized methods that are based on the modern scientific principles of public administration and its related sciences (geography, economics, sociology, culturology, etc.), and interdisciplinary and systematic approaches.

Keywords: city center revitalization, Town Centre Management (TCM), New Urbanism, suburbanization, sustainable development

Introduction

Degradation of urban areas is one of the challenges for numerous contemporary cities. This concerns not only the physical dimension, but also social, economic, spatial, ecological, and cultural problems of crisis phenomena (Roberts et al., 2016). Having encouraged rapid city development, the global urbanization trend has led to accumulation of crisis phenomena such as social and spatial exclusion, unemployment, unsatisfactory living conditions, crime, etc. on a local level. Urban revitalization is intended to eliminate the degraded areas and create preconditions for their sustainable development.

Recognizing the transformational contribution of urbanization and the vector of global changes 'from the bottom', the 11th SDG formulates the task of ensuring inclusiveness, safety, resilience and sustainability of cities and residential settlements (United Nations, 2015). This objective calls for urban governance to play a leading role in implementing the global sustainable development agenda. At the same time, the existing and new challenges of supporting urban life are addressed by the New Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2016), which emphasizes the need to introduce public policies in various urban fields, designed to solve socially significant problems.

In fact, the policy of city center revitalization is increasingly practiced, having its own principles, tools and features (De Magalhães et al., 2017; Wojnarowska, 2017). First, this concerns the understanding of the city center as a focus of the governance

response to crisis phenomena of territorial development. After all, the city center has always played a key role in the overall urban development. However, the suburbanization processes have caused the situation to deteriorate: the central parts of cities are losing their functions and significance.

The development of the public policy on city center revitalization requires scientific substantiation and innovative approaches. The present article aims to introduce a model of this policy based on the TCM concept. To achieve this task, the subjects of suburbanization impact on city center functioning, as well as the New Urbanism principles regarding their revitalization, are considered. Ultimately, this allows research into the causal relationships in this process and grounding the use of the mechanisms of professionalization of city centers' management in the face of their degradation.

Literature review

Urbanization is one of the most important factors of territorial development, covering the world (Gu, 2019). Understood as a long-term process, urbanization leads to an increase in city territories and a share of urban population, spatial concentration of economic and administrative activities, and development of the spheres of services and advanced technologies. Its consequences are reflected in various dimensions, in particular demographic, social, cultural, economic, spatial, ecological, legal, managerial dimensions, etc.

The current state of urbanization has its own peculiarities. Leo van den Berg, alongside traditional urbanization, named a separate stage of city development – suburbanization. Its essential features include resettlement of residents to smaller suburban settlements with better living conditions (clean environment, low population density, private building, etc.). At the same time, a close connection with the urban agglomeration center is maintained, because residents continue to work and receive most services there (Berg et al., 1982).

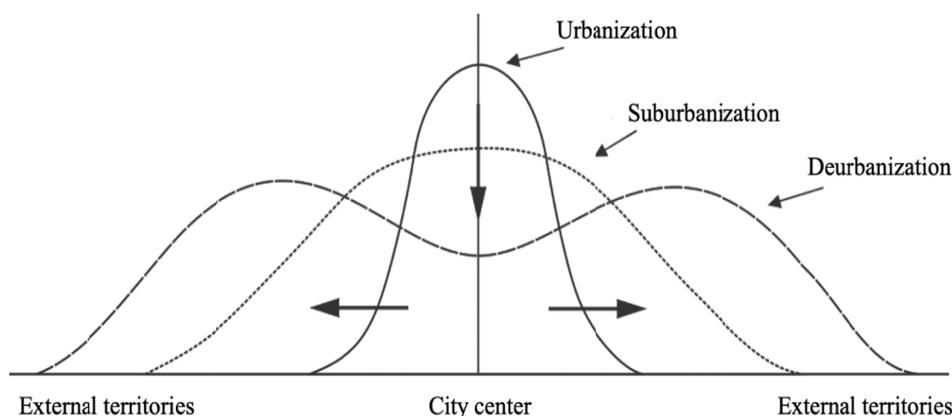
As a rule, urbanization is characterized by higher dynamics of population growth in the central urban areas than on the periphery, and a more uniform expansion of the city at the expense of adjacent territories. Meanwhile, suburbanization consists in a growing number of inhabitants and size of suburban territories, which is mostly a consequence of a reduction in the number of residents in the central urban areas. Thus, suburbanization is regarded as a factor of a gradual depopulation of city centers in favor of large suburbs (Majer, 1999, p. 7). Over time, suburbanization moved into the next stage – deurbanization, which consists in a gradual dispersion of residents who moved to small and medium-sized cities located outside the metropolis. At this stage, a decrease in the number and density of the population of large cities is observed not only in central parts, but also in suburban areas (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 2008). The processes described above are presented in Figure 1.

The development of urban areas on suburbanization principles took place in the United States and United Kingdom in the first half of the twentieth century. Formation of urban agglomerations as a result of suburbanization and popularization of individual transport had a significant impact on city center development. Gradually, they ceased to perform the function of providing inhabitants with housing. Instead, city centers became attractive locations for offices (including those for public administrative functions), and trade and service enterprises. A growing concentration of capital contributed to extensive construction in central urban areas, often chaotic and uncontrolled. Along with this, sub-centers that perform housing, commercial, social, and other functions are emerging with increasing frequency in suburban territories. City centers began losing ground due to this trend.

The problem of ensuring quality of life for residents in the process of urban planning and revitalization was highlighted by the supporters of the New Urbanism, founded by a group of American urbanists in the 1980s. They criticized new residential complexes of

Figure 1

Influence of urbanization, suburbanization and deurbanization on the growth of urban areas



Source: *Planowanie procesów rewitalizacji miast. Teoria i praktyka* (p. 22), K. Olbińska, 2020, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

the same type, built in the United States, that were designed for private car owners, not for pedestrians, without proper public transportation or public spaces. Instead of multi-lane highways, the representatives of the New Urbanism proposed to design small streets with a compact trade and service area in the main street surrounded by parks, children's playgrounds and offices. The founders of the Congress for the New Urbanism (1993) Andres Duany and Elisabeth Plater-Zyberk, advocated revitalization of the existing cities and city centers within their territories, as well as a thorough planning of internal city districts based on the traditional neighborhood structure (Duany & Plater-Zyberk, 1994).

The basic provisions of this movement are outlined in the Charter of the New Urbanism, which was approved by the 4th Congress for the New Urbanism in 1996 (Fulton, 1996, p. 10). The provisions include:

- revitalization of city centers making them more attractive, in particular by eliminating high-speed roads in this territory, marginalization of car traffic;
- desire to diversify the functions of urban areas, ensuring the quality and accessibility of public spaces, and their adequate aesthetic appearance;
- following local traditions in architectural design and formation of the urban space landscape;
- introduction of low-speed traffic zones and development of infrastructure, suitable for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transport, and elimination of crossings and overpasses;
- implementation of pro-ecological actions, expanding urban green spaces (parks, squares, street plantations), etc.

The principles of the New Urbanism were explicated in the Second European Charter of Cities – “Manifesto of New Urbanism” (Council of Europe, 2008), adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Along with the needs to form a higher-density urban environment and ensure stable mobility, the Charter singles out the following areas: preservation of uniqueness of cities based on their culture, traditions and architecture; ensuring sustainable development of territories and environmental protection; encouraging innovation and local knowledge economy; promoting solidarity within an urban territory and among territories; building an effective system of city management based on participation.

These areas are reflected in the modern policy of city revitalization. For instance, Andrew Tallon (2020) introduced it as a combination of four interrelated factors: economic (generation of employment), socio-cultural (improving the quality of life and level of public services), physical (infrastructure development and environmental protection), and management (getting local communities involved in management decision-making).

Michael Leary and John McCarthy substantiates the six major aspects of the modern approach to under-

standing the revitalization of cities, which include: 1) goals (appear predominantly as compromises between focusing on the community, real estate and economy); 2) management (focused on partnership and public participation); 3) incentives (intended to ensure equilibrium between social needs and competitiveness); 4) areas of interference (internal city areas and suburbs); 5) sources and mechanisms of financing; 6) integration and wholeness (shifting from separate sector-oriented actions to formation of integrated measures embedded in a wider strategy and adapted to local specifics) (Leary & McCarthy, 2013, p. 121).

For further studies, consolidation of the modern understanding of the city center revitalization policy based on the New Urbanism principles remains an actual scientific task. This consists in the application of the TCM concept, which is an innovative approach to city management.

Methodology of research

During the study, interdisciplinary and systematic approaches were used. When substantiating a public policy on city center revitalization, the interdisciplinary approach provides the interpenetration and synergy of various sciences (geography, economics, sociology, ecology, political science, law, urbanism, etc.), since city revitalization is an interdisciplinary subject that cannot be described within the limits of a single discipline. The system approach means that the city can be considered as an open life-supporting social and territorial system, formed by people who are integrated with the ecosystem and have a common internal identity, for which the city center is a lower-level system of special importance.

The study was based on analysis of scientific thought in the field of city center revitalization. Using research methods such as logical-semantic, comparative, abstract-logical, decomposition and deduction, the essence, and characteristics of the public policy on city center revitalization, as well as challenges that made it more relevant under suburbanization, were investigated. With the help of the structural and functional method and the methods of comparison and analogy, the principles of using the TCM concept in the process of city center revival were revealed.

The study presents a model of public policy on city center revitalization, which specifies the typical initial conditions for the restoration of a degraded territory, and identifies the subjects and object of this policy, its goals, principles, and main stages. The authors applied the methods of abstraction, modeling, idealization, and the graphical method in the process of developing the model of city center revitalization policy based on TCM. The conceptual model is a tool for establishing a connection between theory and empirical observations. It is used as a guide that is evolving as new knowledge is acquired. To summarize the research provisions and formulate conclusions, extrapolation and abstract-logical methods were used.

Vision of city center development in light of the concept of New Urbanism

The New Urbanism, which is increasingly finding supporters in the United States, is similar to traditional European urbanism. Its main objective is to counteract the urban sprawl, streamlining the habitable territory and defining urban growth boundaries. Degraded city centers are one of the key challenges that have a negative effect on quality of life of inhabitants, which leads to their resettlement from central to suburban areas, and causes chaotic development of cities. Formation of compact, multifunctional, and vibrant spatial structures is intended to satisfy the needs and interests of their inhabitants. Consequently, in contrast to standardized functional zoning, urban development adopted the concept of spatial planning with an emphasis on the importance of city centers.

From the start of city formation, city centers played a major role in exchange of goods, services, and information. In the present conditions, when large shopping and entertainment complexes are quite often located beyond city boundaries, city centers need to maintain their function as meeting-places and points of exchange (information, views, impressions), which is an important task when revitalizing them. This is facilitated by dominantly pedestrian traffic in this part of the city; consequently, numerous social and cultural interactions occur in central public spaces. In this way, the social capital of the city is formed, which, among other things, attracts people from other territories.

In addition, the center is also the main expression of the city's cultural heritage, being a medium with the highest degree of individuality and character (Wojnarowska, 2017, pp. 36–37). Thanks to unique architectural objects and historical public spaces of different purposes, the center gives people the feeling of connectedness with their social environment and the community. It is their common area, which is used for conducting various activities and strengthening the inhabitants' sense of belonging to the city. The center is an exclusive medium for the formation of urban identity, representativeness, and concentration of social, economic and cultural life. Therefore, city center revitalization should be considered in terms of its influence on the urban development in general. Implementation of a well-developed program to revitalize a territory can help build a modern city and stimulate further development processes, namely:

- introduction of new (or recovery of lost) city functions;
- growth of entrepreneurship and creation of new jobs;
- increasing the city's attractiveness for accommodation, recreation and labor;
- strengthening the city's brand and competitive advantages in the external environment.

Thus, the public policy on city center revitalization should be formulated in compliance with an urban development strategy. In this approach, great importance is attached to the choice of a city-planning concept,

or a combination of concepts, among them: compact city, green city, smart city, creative city (Landry, 2012), inclusive city (Anttiroiko & de Jong, 2020), cittaslow (Jang & Jung, 2015), happy city (Montgomery, 2013), etc. The core of the modern urban revitalization policy should comprise people-oriented programs of sustainable renewal of areas, aimed to form an urban environment which is multifunctional, with places of residence, work, and recreation placed close to one another; environmentally friendly as a result of expanding green plantations, sustainable nature management, and pro-ecological educational measures; comfortable due to the introduction of innovations and modern technologies; favorable for the life of creative people; available to all inhabitants without exception; harmonious with nature, the surrounding environment, and local traditions; provides comprehensive lifelong learning. At the same time, it is important to seek to ensure a happy life for inhabitants, which requires, among other things, support for networks and emotional ties within the community (Horbliuk & Dehtiarova, 2021, p. 54). In each of these cases, the city center has a potential for accelerating positive changes in various areas of urban life, and providing a multiplier effect of the introduced activities on the entire city territory.

Causes of city center degradation and approaches to city revitalization

The crisis phenomena, which accumulate in city centers, have become more prominent due to centers losing their regular functions. Presently, the following are the main causes of central urban area degradation:

- progressive depopulation, caused by suburbanization, which leads to a growing amount of unused land and abandoned sites, deterioration of the economic basis for the functioning of urban infrastructure;
- aging of the population living in these territories; most migrants from city centers are young people, families with children, and middle-class representatives; as a result, city center districts have a higher proportion of the elderly in the total population (Jarczewski et al., 2019, p. 88), which affects the formation of the territory's consumer profile;
- weakening of business activity, primarily in the field of trade and services; due to decreased attractiveness of city centers, inhabitants prefer to spend their leisure time in peripheral trade and entertainment complexes;
- deterioration of the environmental situation as a result of atmospheric air pollution by private transport, unsolved parking problems, and shrinking green areas;
- loss of city centers' representative character due to deterioration of the technical condition of buildings and public spaces, as well as the development of service and administration spheres in other parts of the city.

The concentration and mutual reinforcement of crisis phenomena in central urban districts stipulated the need to develop and implement a public policy of revitalizing these very territories. In this sphere, the United States and the EU have many years of experience which is based on the local urban planning specifics. To restore the viability of the American city centers, revitalization measures focused, in the first place, on construction of trade and entertainment complexes, which ensured among other things the provision of recreational, business and other services. Eventually, they became multifunctional lifestyle centers which met the expectations of their residents. These centers differed from traditional shopping malls and markets in their design, covering large trading and service areas and being quite freely modeled in the cities' central streets. The architecture of these public spaces incorporated both traditions (City Place in West Palm Beach, Santana Row in San Jose) and modernity (East Twenty-Ninth Avenue Town Center in Denver, or City center in Reston, Virginia) (Bernaciak, 2015, p. 268). Further diversification of the functional structure of American city centers took place through the development of the real estate market and the introduction of innovative urban development solutions.

The approach to revitalizing European city centers is substantially different compared to the relevant measures in American cities, especially as regards the placement of shopping and entertainment complexes. This is influenced to a large extent by the structure of European city center planning, which is dramatically different from the rectangular street grid dominating in the United States. A popular trend in the European model of using city centers is restriction of car traffic, which often applies to the entire central area (while in the United States, only parts of some streets are intended for pedestrian traffic). A striking example of these urban transformations is Copenhagen, where as early as in the 1960s the city authorities opened the main street for pedestrians. According to Jan Gehl, a leading Danish architect of that time, cities needed to expand their pedestrian zones and develop public spaces, which would encourage communication between residents (Gehl, 2010, p. 13). In general, the policies of European city revitalization pay considerable attention to local identity, tourist attractiveness, spatial accessibility, and environmental stability. An important role of cultural heritage objects of city centers and the efforts made to revitalize them are the focus of the relevant policies.

The emergence of Town Centre Management and its features

The importance of city center development required the city governance bodies to devise special approaches to fulfil that task. TCM has been implemented in European countries over the past 30 years (Belgium, United Kingdom, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Germany and Poland). It dates as far back as 1987, when the town of Ilford established the position of

center manager, responsible for integrated management of the development of the central part of the city. This focus on city centers was stipulated by the crisis phenomena of the 1980s: the economic, social and cultural activity increasingly developed in the urban periphery, while the central areas gradually degraded, turning into slums (Kamiński, 2006, p. 8). Ilford and other cities sought to ensure that their centers could perform, effectively and beneficially, for the residents, the functions of a place of the residents' daily life, labor, recreation, as well as commercial and service activity.

TCM emerged as a local entrepreneurs' initiative (bottom up), who failed to compete with large trading centers, created in peripheral parts of cities. This created an economic threat to city main streets and old markets, because social activity, leisure, and shopping were moved outside their historical centers. Private sector representatives were forced to coordinate their efforts to improve the situation in city centers, first of all in trade. A vivid example might be the British companies Marks & Spencer and Boots, and Chemistry (Gawłowski, 2018, p. 2) who began to develop promotional events, encouraging residents to return to the city center. Their activities were aimed at attracting customers using marketing tools used in managing large trading complexes, which successfully operated outside the central areas. Therefore, the initial idea of TCM was to achieve special marketing and sales objectives, its initiators being private sector representatives interested in increasing their profits.

In the 1990s, the application of the TCM concept consisted not only in the cooperation of entrepreneurs of degraded central areas, but also in getting local authorities involved in this activity. Thus, the possibilities of enhancing the social and spatial dimensions of city center revitalization have expanded. Coordination of public and private sector activities required the development of tools for participative city management, including those for promoting public and private spaces located in central urban areas, and encouragement of social and economic initiatives. In the long run, the aim of joint actions was city center sustainable development and improvement of quality of life of residents. To achieve that, a mutually beneficial public-private partnership was formed. The changed understanding of TCM has led to expansion of the scope of its tasks (from promoting private entities to spatial development, cultural life, public security, social assistance and counteracting social exclusion). Thus, as Georgina Whyatt (2004, p. 346) pointed out, it gradually evolved from tactical marketing activities to strategic cooperation, aimed at city center revival.

Implementation of TCM techniques in different cities of the world showed that the existing differences depend on the level of partnership formalization, governance structure, and sources of financing of revitalization measures. For example, in Birmingham, there was a local government division responsible for

the revitalization of the city center, which coordinated the activities of all stakeholders. The aim of the revitalization measures was to create an attractive, clean and safe central part of the city. To this end, revitalization of public spaces was conducted, bridges were built, and the access of pedestrians to the city center expanded; pilot infrastructure projects were implemented, including the construction of an international congress center, which became an impetus for private sector investments.

Another British city, Wigan, established the Economic Regeneration Office to revive its center based on TCM, which was outside the direct control of the city authorities. The Office focused on improving the residents' socio-economic situation by investing in education, training and employment opportunities (Boryczka, 2013, pp. 125–126). The independence of the governance agency, which coordinated and implemented the measures of the city's revival, facilitated formation of effective partnerships and depoliticization of joint activities.

The process of city center revitalization based on Town Centre Management

To revive, develop and enhance the value of the city center, TCM should be aimed at the four key areas of territorial development: (1) community (level of social capital development), (2) space (state of infrastructure functioning), (3) economy (business activity level), and (4) environment (environmental condition).

1. City revitalization measures should be aimed at overcoming or alleviating crisis phenomena of a social nature (poverty, crime, low public trust, etc.). The measures of developing human and social capital in a degraded territory (a variety of programs for training, integration, improvement of residents' skills and qualifications) are currently gaining in importance.
2. Spatial changes are aimed at demolishing or upgrading outdated facilities, constructing new buildings, and creating or improving public spaces. These changes may be aimed at modernizing the existing infrastructure of the historical and cultural heritage while accounting for contemporary needs and improving its aesthetics and functionality.
3. City center revitalization requires creation of new jobs and promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation. The in which such support is provided depend on the local capacities of the territory, as well as on the interests of business entities and the population.
4. The city center should be characterized by a high level of environmental development, which involves targeted energy efficiency measures, a rational use of land, water and other natural resources, introduction of environmentally friendly public transport, arrangement of green zones, adequate lighting, improving public safety, etc.

In the context of these spheres (community, space, economics, environment), it is necessary to analyze internal and external factors that have led to the concentration of crisis phenomena in the city center. The internal factors are those which make it possible to describe the true situation in a specific territory (unemployment, living conditions, providing trade and services for the population, degradation of technical infrastructure, the quality of atmospheric air and drinking water, the level of landscaping, the presence of improvised waste dumps, etc.); the external factors explain the weaknesses and miscalculations of urban policies, which caused degradation of the territory (migration, availability and quality of public services, the levels of budget financing of social and technical infrastructure, external investment, spatial planning).

The public policy on city center revitalization is realized by the TCM manager in partnership with all stakeholders through preparation for city center revitalization, elaboration of a relevant program, its implementation, monitoring, and policy assessment. The model of this policy is shown in Figure 2.

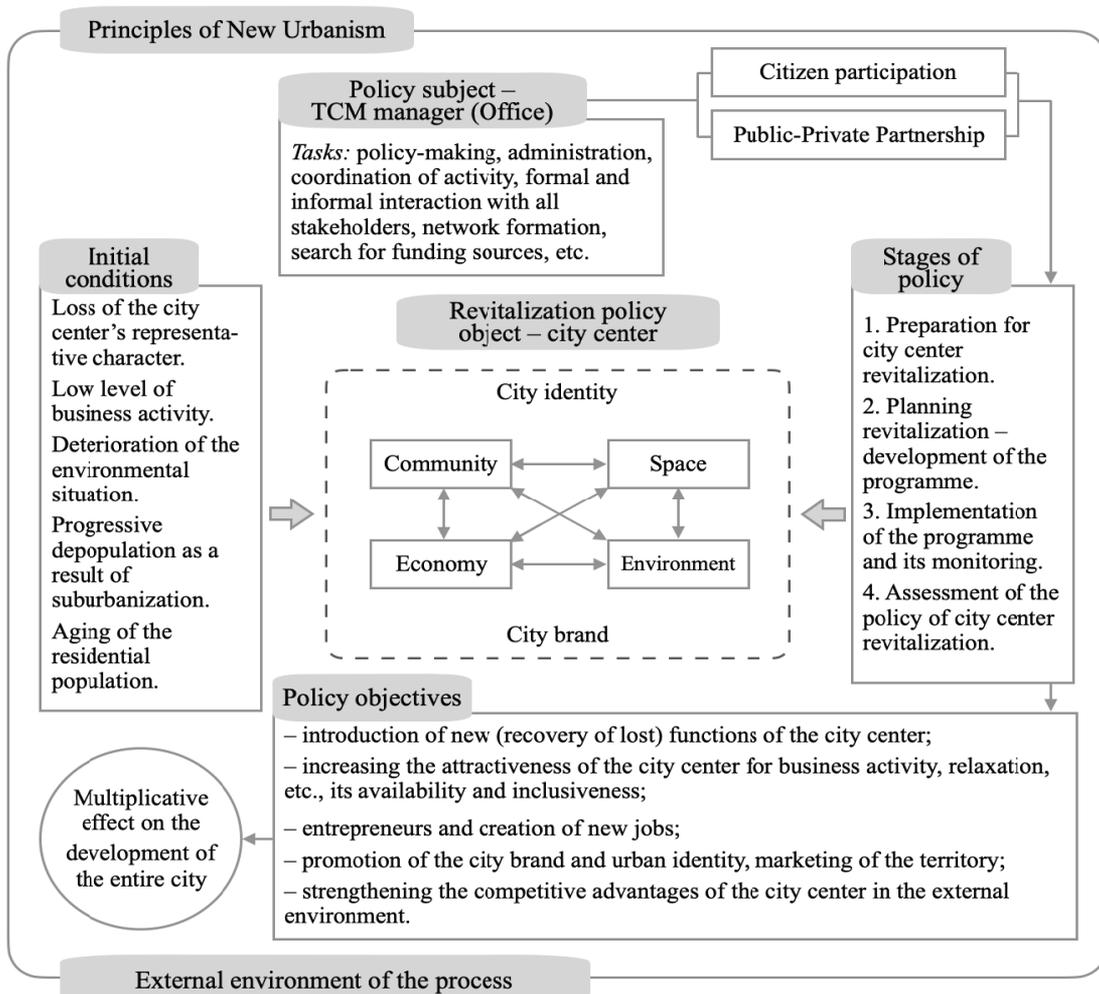
The proposed model can be used as a practical guide for: developing a city revitalization policy; analysis of the effectiveness of previous policies and their compliance with the proposed approach; substantiation of the role and tasks of the manager (office) of TCM; determining step-by-step actions and justifying participation of stakeholders (existing and potential entrepreneurs, inhabitants of degraded city areas, representatives of non-governmental organizations, etc.) at all stages of public policy formation and implementation.

TCM performs a function of collecting and exchanging market information, which allows different interest groups to participate in strategic planning. In this case, concentrating joint activities and resources for the revitalization of the central part of the city, the TCM manager (office) together with all the stakeholders should strive to achieve a multiplicative effect on sustainable development not only of a separate area, but of the city as a whole.

The experience of the Polish city of Lodz in overcoming the degradation of its central district, specifically the main city street of Piotrkowska, is interesting. Applying the TCM methodology, an interdisciplinary team "Piotrkowska Headquarters" (pol. Sztab Piotrkowska) was gathered under the city mayor, which consisted of public officials, university professors, entrepreneurs, media representatives, non-governmental organizations, experts, and residents of Piotrkowska. The Strategy for the development of Piotrkowska Street, devised by the team, aimed to restore its status as the most popular place for secular gatherings and family walks, a center of culture and entertainment, and an important tourist route, by building among other things a pedestrian zone and embankment in the city center. Upon the approval of the Strategy, the post of Piotrkowska Street Manager and his supporting staff (pol. Zespół Obsługi Piotrkowskiej) was introduced by the headquarters.

Figure 2

A conceptual model of the public policy on city center revitalization based on Town Centre Management



Source: author's own work based on „Town Centre Management – koncepcja zarządzania centrum miasta na przykładzie miast europejskich”, E. M. Boryczka, 2013, *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Zarządzanie*, 12, pp. 120–122; „Town Centre Management jako narzędzie zarządzania procesem rewitalizacji”, R. Gawłowski, 2018, *Ekspertyzy i opracowania*, 64, pp. 3–5; „TCM – zarządzanie centrum miasta”, J. Kamiński, 2006, *Biuletyn ZPORR*, 5, p. 8.

Their duties included continuous monitoring and evaluation of the tasks performed; initiation of joint street development actions; and establishing cooperation with residents and entrepreneurs. Later, the position of the manager was reorganized into the mayor's authorized representative in charge of the Piotrkowska Street development, nominated by the city's entrepreneurs (Boryczka, 2013, pp. 126–127; Gawłowski, 2018, pp. 6–7). He coordinated the implementation of the measures outlined by the Strategy for the development of Piotrkowska Street, and cultural, tourism and other initiatives under the city center revitalization policy.

Based on the above, the main tasks of the TCM manager (office) are as follows:

- development and coordination of implementation of the policy of revitalizing the central part of the city, and administration of the process;

- organization of cooperation between public and non-public partners, applying the tools of public participation (Falanga, 2020) and public-private partnerships;
- providing support for sustainable development of a degraded territory through projects aimed at making the city center more attractive, functional, and accessible (for example, initiation of the necessary legal changes, expansion of cultural and tourist options, physical planning of public spaces), looking for ways to finance them;
- launching joint campaigns to market the city center, implementation of a consistent information policy and promotion of the city center, development of its brand and urban identity;
- finding solutions to problems, on which non-public partners report in their contacts with city authorities;

- forming networks of stakeholders in city center revitalization and development.

For its part, TCM is realized through formal and informal partnerships, aimed at developing and implementing the city center revitalization program. Notably, the development of informal interconnections distinguishes TCM from a traditional administration model, characterized by a mostly hierarchical organizational structure and formal relations. The informal communications help to establish an effective partnership for achievement of TCM objectives, in particular professionalization of the city center management, diversifying the functions of the central territory, making trade and service more efficient, forming a positive image of the city center, etc. Establishment of long-term cooperation between public and private partners, sharing know-how, and growth of social capital favor successful city center revitalization through active work of entities of various sectors: retail, services, tourism, culture, housing, environmental protection, etc.

Conclusions

Suburbanization has led to formation of urban agglomerations and a gradual cumulation of crisis phenomena in city centers, specifically: progressive depopulation; aging of the population and formation of the corresponding consumer profile; weakening of business activity, primarily in the field of trade and services; deterioration of the environmental situation; loss of the representative nature of city centers due to deterioration of the technical condition of buildings and public spaces, etc. The need for comprehensive countermeasures to stop urban sprawl gave rise to the concept of the New Urbanism, which, among other things, justifies the strategic importance of city center revitalization for sustainable urban development. As a rule, the center is regarded as the most important part of the city, the main focus of urban life, considering the number of cultural monuments, historical places, remarkable public spaces, etc., located in it. The following features of the city center are singled out: a key role in the system of the city's vital activity, uniqueness, presentable appearance, and contact with residents.

City center revitalization requires adequate organizational and institutional support. The experience of using TCM in some European cities proves the expediency of introducing a position of city manager (office) to be responsible for purposeful development of the territory. In the case of city revitalization, the functioning of an entity responsible for the policy implementation is aimed at professionalization, openness and predictability of this activity.

When modeling a public policy on city center revitalization based on TCM, it is necessary to consider the basic factors of its success. Regardless of the adopted organizational form and the mode of operation of the TCM manager (office), the key task is to develop a city center revitalization policy, which requires the

relevant staff to acquire competencies, knowledge and expertise in this area, and the stakeholders to have trust in the process. Public participation and a public-private partnership are the pivotal tools in the work of the TCM manager (office), since the revival of the city center needs to establish intensive cooperation (formal and informal) between the public and private sectors, as well as between the local community and other stakeholders in this process.

A public policy on city center revitalization should be implemented according to certain stages: preparation for city center revitalization, revitalization planning – the development of a program of joint actions, introduction and monitoring of the revitalization program; assessment of the city center revitalization policy. The object of a public revitalization policy is a city center which is regarded as a system, formed by four subsystems: community, economy, space, and environment; their condition and the broken relationships between them cause crisis phenomena in the territory; whereas revitalization can be achieved, using TCM, only through a comprehensive and integrated effect on each of them. Taking into account the potential value of the center for the entire city, its revitalization not only must meet the needs of inhabitants and business entities of a degraded territory, but also stimulate positive transformations in other urban areas (for example, through marketing of a territory, evolution of urban identity and brand), creating prerequisites for comprehensive sustainable urban development.

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WE RECOMMEND



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The digital ecosystem of education has experienced both challenges as well as innovation boosts within the last two years in Europe. This situation is a potential for EDEN as the hub of professionals dealing with digital transformation of educational organisations.

EDEN Digital Learning Europe has a long history of supporting educators in online and distance education, providing a forum for discussion, learning, and refinement of best practices in this area. This pandemic has been no exception. This year's conference is intended as a continuation of the efforts of EDEN to support educators by providing a space to explore the issues and insights that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Annual Conference will be hosted by Tallinn University (Estonia) in **hybrid mode**.

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