

**COURSES OF DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNES IN SWIETOKRZYSKIE
VOIVODESHIP IN THE OPINION OF ITS INHABITANTS**

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Abstract. The main aim of this article is to present courses of development of the communes in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship in the opinion of its inhabitants, expressed in a questionnaire. The research regards the situation after the integration with the EU.

The protected areas cover 33.1% of the territory of Poland, and the region with the highest proportion of those areas is the Swietokrzyskie voivodeship where 62% of the land are classified as a protected area. There are 72 municipalities (gminas, communes) in the Swietokrzyskie voivodeship among which in 49 the protected areas cover more than a half of the territory. These areas are usually landscape parks and protected landscape areas.

The poll was conducted among 102-178 inhabitants who expressed their opinions in questionnaires after the EU integration. This paper presents the courses of development preferred by the inhabitants of communes in Swietokrzyskie. **The research was based on inhabitants' opinions concerning particular courses of development, i.e. tourism, services, handicraft, industry, agriculture, food processing, and environmental protection.**

The results show that agriculture and tourism after the integration with the EU are the most preferred courses of development in the rural areas of municipalities.

Key words: courses of development, opinions of inhabitants, instruments, Swietokrzyskie voivodeship.

JEL code: Q15, Q56

Introduction

At the end of 2003, spatial forms of nature and landscape preservation constituted 33.1% of total country area (in Poland). Landscape parks together with national parks, nature reserves, and protected landscape areas make up the system of protected areas as a set of mutually complementary forms of nature preservation. Because of their specificity, protected areas are subject to particular legal statutes, which define admissible human activity depending on the level of protection. The conditions of the development in the protected areas result from the potential of natural resources in this area as well as from objective conditions shaping their position in the region.

As a protected area, a landscape park is supposed to protect nature on its territory in accordance with the legislation in force; whereas, the development of rural areas located in such parks is usually closely connected with agriculture. The two elements are frequently a source of conflict between farmers and park management. The directions of correct development of these rural areas are, thus, an essential argument for looking into possibilities of development of protected areas. The findings of studies on the

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possibilities of developing these areas in line with nature conservation objectives and with an appropriate consideration for all the aspects of the development may solve or at least alleviate such conflicts. The interests of all parties involved in a certain protected area should be carefully considered and taken into account, while also observing the legislation in force.

The need to conduct studies on the development of protected areas situated in rural areas was the impulse for addressing this problem in this research project. An additional argument for pursuing this problem was the fact that the literature on the subject, in the case of the protected areas in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship², was either very scarce or addressed only selected aspects. In Poland, the only areas where studies on the development of rural areas in landscape parks were conducted are the "Green Lungs of Poland" territory and Wielkopolska voivodeship. There are also very few publications on the development of landscape parks in Mazowieckie and Malopolskie voivodeships.

The necessity of carrying a research on the development of protected areas was a reason to refer to this problem in this publication, and its aim is to show the courses of development preferred by the inhabitants of communes in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship after the EU accession.

Materials and methods

The research composed of setting the courses of development of protected areas in Swietokrzyskie voivodeship includes, among others, recognising nature and landscape value of protected areas in the Swietokrzyskie voivodeship. This research has been carried out since 1998. The stock-taking of environment components was limited to basic factors conditioning multifunctional and eco-development of rural areas and agriculture.

Residents who showed initiative and were interested in the development of their municipality were selected to participate in the questionnaire, similarly to participating farmers. The selection of residents was made after obtaining preliminary information from gminas offices and with their participation, and as a result of consultations with municipality authorities.

The basic research instrument was an interview using a questionnaire prepared by the author, supplemented by direct observation and meetings with residents and authorities, concerning the development of the gminas. The survey was prepared specifically for the purpose of examining the possible development of protected areas; the respondents included municipality residents with various levels of education, mainly persons considered to be community leaders (including representatives of farmsteads). This type of questionnaire can be regarded as a quota sampling of the whole population of the area; even though it is not random, in the case of such an approach to the problem, this kind of a procedure is possible and correct, and frequently used in English-language literature.

This paper is based on the author's own research, in particular: survey results, meetings with authorities of municipalities and inhabitants, which concerned the development of the area. The surveys were prepared to present the prospects of the protected areas' development. People of different levels of education took part in it, including mainly people considered as leaders according to the notion presented by Siekierski (2004) and Zawisza & Pilarska (2003) who claimed that mainly such people set the courses of development actions within a particular rural community.

² *Voivodeship* is one of the sixteen provinces in Poland

The carried out survey concerned: favoured courses of development of the research area, ecological awareness, possibility of maintaining agricultural and tourist activity, problems of everyday life hindering the development, some demographic aspects, development chances and obstacles. The research was based on inhabitants' **opinions concerning particular courses of development, i.e. tourism, services, handicraft, industry, agriculture, food processing, and environmental protection.**

The study also used publications issued by statistical offices, conservation plans (finished or in preparation), and the documentation of the voivodeship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in the city of Kielce.

The obtained data were examined by analysing the structure of results, especially questionnaire results which were checked for interrelations by means of a chi-squared test applied to qualitative features for the 45 municipalities in which the survey was conducted.

Research results and discussion

The very idea of the local self-government in rural municipalities having an influence on the local development is extremely important since no other institution is more aware of what needs to be done urgently and what should not be developed in a particular territory. Economic factors play the most important role in local development; their structure, shape, height, or all these elements combined, can encourage or discourage development. Economic factors should be shaped in such a way as to encourage entrepreneurship and local development in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The task can be implemented by means of correctly using the instruments available to self-government authorities. The instruments that influence budget revenues of a self-government unit, i.e. duties and taxes, play an important role here. Taxes are essential in influencing entrepreneurship and development, as they go into the municipality budget which finances investments and, mainly, the **gmina's** current activity. It should be taken into account that the development of municipalities would be restricted in a situation of a lack of financial means. It should be emphasised that restrictions connected with the EU directives on supporting and protecting competition enforce the introduction of only those instruments which are based on fiscal policy (mainly tax reductions and exemptions).

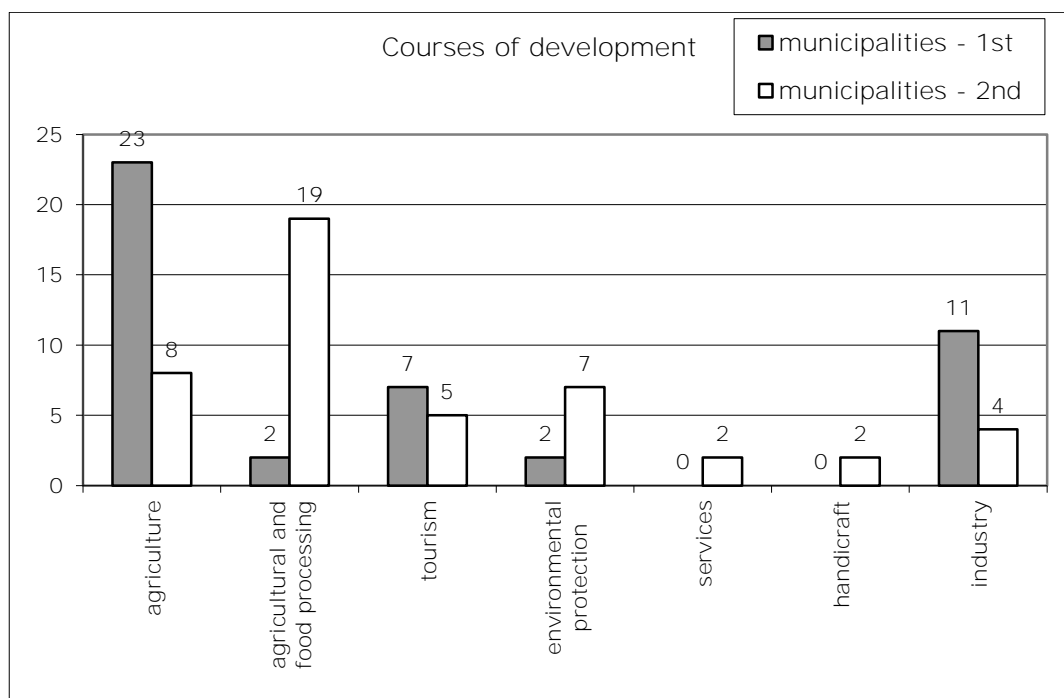
According to the Polish law, the most important local taxes include property tax, motor vehicle tax, land tax, agriculture income tax, forest tax, inheritance and gift tax, and flat-rate income tax paid in the form of tax card. Each of the listed taxes brings revenues to the budget to a different extent, and some of the taxes do not have an influence on local development at all. The idea of using the instruments of stimulating local development by means of tax reductions and exemptions, i.e. by lowering the tax burden, is somewhat conflicting, since it is assumed that by sacrificing the current income one will achieve its increase in the future, e.g. through the growth of entities obliged to pay taxes. In many cases, increasing the number of entities is a positive effect in and of itself, since fully satisfying the needs of a community (the number one objective of a municipality), e.g. achieving a lower unemployment rate or a bigger number of jobs outside agriculture, is paramount to the growth of municipality revenues as such. These instruments (reductions, exemptions) enable the municipality to increase targeted revenues in the future, without which it would be difficult to accomplish the main objective (i.e. the maximum

possible satisfaction of the needs of a given community) which is supposed to lead to a better standard of life for the inhabitants.

Restrictions following from the EU directives on supporting and protecting competition mean that only instruments based on fiscal policy can be introduced, mainly tax deductions and exemptions as well as fixing tax rates; the inhabitants of the protected areas were thereby asked what economic instruments should be used for the development of a certain direction.

The respondents believed the following courses of economic development to be of the highest importance for the commune (Figure 1):

- agriculture – 23 municipalities (51.1% - 1st), 8 gminas (17.8% - 2nd);
- agricultural and food processing – 2 municipalities (4.4% - 1st), 19 gminas (42.2% - 2nd);
- tourism – 7 municipalities (15.6% - 1st), 5 gminas (11.1% - 2nd);
- environmental protection – 2 municipalities (4.4% - 1st), 7 gminas (15.6% - 2nd);
- services – no municipality (0% - 1st), 2 municipalities (4.4% - 2nd);
- handicraft – no municipality (0% - 1st), 2 municipalities (4.4% - 2nd);
- industry – 11 municipalities (24.4% - 1st), 4 gminas (8.9% - 2nd).



Source: author's construction

Fig. 1. **The courses of development to be of the highest importance for the commune**

Subsequently, the respondents answered the questions concerning opportunities for development in the above-mentioned courses of development (Figure 2).

The results are described below (Poplawski L. 2012).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for agriculture:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 2 municipalities (4.4%);
- hire of state property or self-government's property on preferential prices - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 12 municipalities (26.7%);

- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 2 municipalities (4.4%);
- credit guarantees - 23 municipalities (51.1%).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for the development of agricultural and food processing:

- property tax allowances and exemptions – 5 municipalities (11.1%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 12 municipalities (26.7%);
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 2 municipalities (4.4%);
- credit guarantees - 20 municipalities (44.4%).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for the development of tourism:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 2 municipalities (4.4%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 16 municipalities (35.6%);
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions – no municipality;
- credit guarantees - 14 municipalities (22.2%).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for environmental protection:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 8 municipalities (17.8%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 5 municipalities (11.1%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 10 municipalities (22.2%);
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 1 municipality (2.2%);
- credit guarantees - 19 municipalities (42.2%).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for the development of handicraft:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 7 municipalities (15.6%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 13 municipalities (28.9%);
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- credit guarantees - 18 municipalities (40.0%).

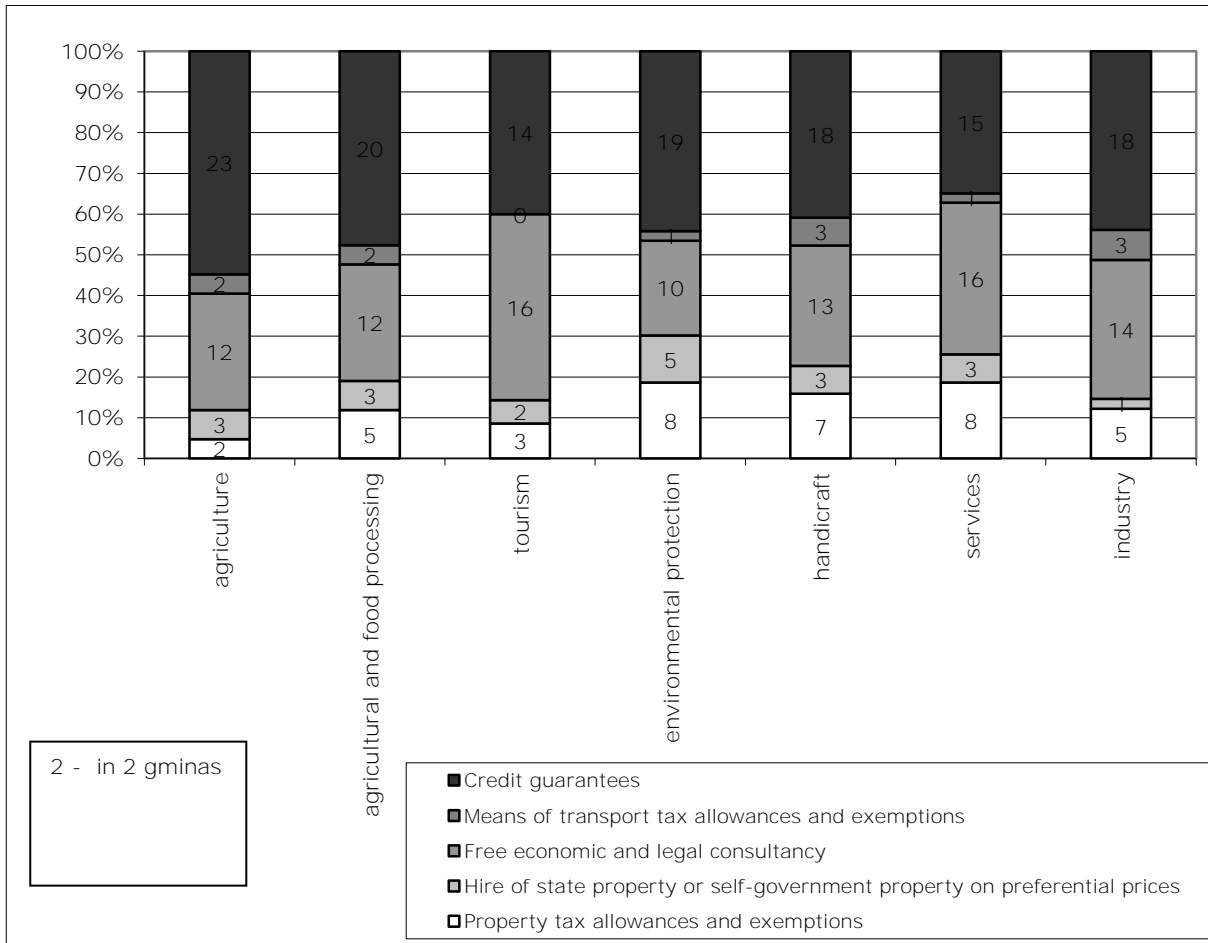
The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for the development of services:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 8 municipalities (17.8%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 16 municipalities (35.6%);
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 1 municipality (2.2%);
- credit guarantees - 15 municipalities (33.3%).

The respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments for the development of industry:

- property tax allowances and exemptions - 5 municipalities (11.1%);
- hire of state property or self-**government's property on preferential prices** - 1 municipality (2.2 %);
- free economic and legal consultancy - 14 municipalities (31.1%);

- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions - 3 municipalities (6.7%);
- credit guarantees - 18 municipalities (40.0%).



Source: author's construction

Fig. 2. **The economic instruments for local development**

The process of transforming present agriculture based on the traditional way of cultivating and using the land should lead to the multifunctional development of rural areas which also implies integrated and environment-friendly agriculture combined with recreation and tourism. Agriculture based on ecological methods should be adjusted to the local landscape and its water and soil conditions. The large size of the labour force in agriculture provides a chance for alternative solutions also in such time-consuming branches of specialised agriculture as ecological agriculture, seed production, herb-cultivation etc. Ecological agriculture should not only be recommended but also the only one permitted in the protected areas. Considering the food production in such areas, it seems appropriate to promote the most environmentally friendly direction of the development, i.e. ecological agriculture (Siekierski, Dudek 2000). The development of tourism (ecological tourism) ought to be supported and treated as an alternative source of income for farmsteads. A similar point of view has been presented by E. Gaule and G. Zilinskas (2013), A. Grzelak (2008), A. Biernat-Jarka (2010), S. Jarka (2012), and I. Pilvere (2012).

The implementation of long-term initiatives undertaken in the protected areas requires the activity aimed at the further development of the infrastructure which conditions not only the bettering of life

conditions but also makes the area more attractive for tourists and prospective investors. It concerns particularly the improvement in the technical and agricultural infrastructure.

The efficiency of the multifunctional development policy in protected areas depends on the acceptance of the commune authorities; it should also be consistent with the development of the commune. Another indispensable aspect of the prospective success is a dynamic syllabus of courses organised for local inhabitants, which would comprise all economic spheres of the commune. If the development policy is adopted properly, the comprehensive courses for the inhabitants are offered and the commune is sufficiently promoted, the socio-economic development is bound to take place in many years to come.

The activities in the area of introduction and use of ecological methods in agriculture should be an integral part of environment protection activities and eco-development of legally protected areas. Among the factors, which favour the activities, you could mention the willingness of respondents, presented in their opinions and declarations, to use the ecological methods. They are also interested in getting to know the eco-farms managed in other areas, concurrently with taking burdens of these undertakings **manifested by some of questionnaire's participants. The outcomes indicate the possibility of implementing the eco-development and agriculture, ecological production in communes. The survey's participants** represented different levels of ecological knowledge, eco-development principles and ecological production methods.

Conclusions

Municipalities are not allowed and have no chance to directly support private companies but they can support them by other means. They can offer companies tax reductions and other financial incentives (e.g. tax exemptions). **The gmina's number one obligation is to ensure** the development of its territory. However, offering tax reductions and exemptions decreases its revenues which are supposed to finance its own activities. Municipalities can have a direct influence on their own development, e.g. through tangible investments, such as developing the technical infrastructure, and through financial investments, such as contributing to or purchasing companies. Decentralisation has led to self-governments' more important role and increased influence on the economic development of their territory, especially through the development of private entrepreneurship. Fiscal instruments (taxes, fees) are a commonly used tool of stimulating development.

Based on the research in the field of courses of development in communes in the Swietokrzyskie voivodeship, the conclusions are as follows:

- agriculture – 23 municipalities (51.1% - 1st), 8 gminas (17.8% - 2nd);
- industry – 11 municipalities (24.4% - 1st), 4 gminas (8.9% - 2nd);
- tourism – 7 municipalities (15.6% - 1st), 5 gminas (11.1% - 2nd);
- agricultural and food processing – 2 municipalities (4.4% - 1st), 19 gminas (42.2% - 2nd);
- environmental protection – 2 municipalities (4.4% - 1st), 7 gminas (15.6% - 2nd).

In relation to the all offered courses of development, the respondents have most frequently chosen the following support instruments:

- credit guarantees - from 14 municipalities to 23;

- free economic and legal consultancy - from 10 municipalities to 16;
- property tax allowances and exemptions – from 2 municipalities to 8;
- hire of state property or self-government's property on preferential prices - from 1 municipality to 5;
- means of transport tax allowances and exemptions – from no municipality to 3.

These principles are also binding for local development, for which self-government is responsible. The mandatory inclusion in the territory of the Natura 2000 network and protection of habitats and bird nesting sites is and will be the main source of conflict among self-governments, inhabitants, and institutions responsible for nature conservation. The inhabitants of these areas, although they own public goods that serve the present generations, not only do not get paid for conservation efforts (protecting habitats and bird nesting sites), but also suffer losses, such as the decreased value of land under protection. The problem will grow despite the fact that the new Common Agricultural Policy for 2014-2020 very strongly emphasises this issue. The inhabitants who are not farmers are not entitled to compensation (at present). It is only a matter of time before the inhabitants who do not receive compensation for restricted use of their own property will demand damages.

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