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Questing as a Tool for Supporting Tourism Development in Revitalized Urban Areas: The Case of Bydgoszcz, Poland

Abstract: The article addresses the use of questing as a tool to support tourism development in revitalized urban areas. The aim of the study was to present the potential of questing as an alternative form of exploring urban districts that have undergone revitalization processes. Using the example of Stary Fordon - a district of Bydgoszcz that has experienced significant social and spatial transformations - the article analyzes the potential of this form of tourism activity in the context of place identity revival and enhancement of cultural attractiveness. Based on a case study methodology, the paper discusses the origins and characteristics of quests, as well as their role in heritage interpretation and in engaging the local community. The results indicate that questing can serve as a valuable complement to revitalization efforts by integrating educational, cultural, and promotional aspects. The article emphasizes the importance of narrative-based forms of tourism in fostering emotional and cognitive bonds with urban space and in contributing to sustainable models of urban tourism development.

Keywords: questing, tourism, revitalisation, Stary Fordon, Bydgoszcz

1. Introduction

Urban areas are vulnerable to natural, anthropogenic, and temporal factors, which often lead to degradation, economic decline, reduced tourist appeal, and a lower quality of life for residents (Fitzgerald and Leigh, 2002; Blaikie and Brookfield, 2015; Le et al., 2019). Revitalization seeks to restore and modernize such areas, stimulating economic, touristic, and social renewal.

In 2018–2023, a revitalization programme in Stary Fordon, a district of Bydgoszcz, transformed its main streets and riverfront zones. This process enhanced the area's tourist potential and opened opportunities for alternative tourism forms (Meyer et al., 2012; Hills et al., 2020).

Revitalization efforts aim to improve living conditions, restore spatial order, protect cultural heritage, and support economic growth (Jagodzińska, 2013; Boryczka, 2016; Tahseen and Al-Jumaily, 2020). Active involvement of local communities helps align outcomes with their needs, increasing project sustainability (Belniak, 2008; Binqing and Chan, 2018; Hořická, 2019). Cooperation among authorities, residents, and stakeholders is essential (Ziobrowski and Jarczewski, 2009; Spadło, 2022), as is intervention where self-regeneration fails (Paelinck and Klaassen, 1979; Grodach and Ehrenfeucht, 2015; Russek, 2017).

One promising tourism approach in revitalized districts is questing- a narrative-based, adventure-oriented form of cultural tourism (Rogowski, 2016). It enables visitors and locals to explore a place's history, understand revitalization processes, and view the district as a culturally attractive destination.

This article explores the potential of questing as a sustainable, alternative method of engaging with revitalized urban spaces. The focus is on how this form of tourism can support place identity and attract future visitors. Sustainable development is understood here as an integrated process balancing social, economic, and environmental goals to meet current and future community needs (Gwiaździńska-Goraj and Goraj, 2013). In this context, questing may contribute to the lasting activation of revitalized areas through education, social participation, and the reinforcement of local identity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Revitalization as a Tool for Urban Transformation

Revitalization (from Latin *re-* – again, *vita* – life) refers to the restoration of degraded urban areas (Russek, 2017). It is understood as a comprehensive corrective process involving the introduction of new spatial functions and adaptation to the evolving needs of residents (Kaczmarek, 2001, Jaszczak et al., 2021). Crucially, revitalization goes beyond infrastructure improvement- it primarily aims to enhance the living conditions of local communities (Maciejewska and Turek, 2011; Jezierska –Thöle, 2018).

In Poland, the legal framework for revitalization was established by the 2015 Revitalization Act, which defines it as "a process of leading degraded areas out of a state of crisis through integrated actions focused on local communities, space, and economy, implemented within a territorially concentrated approach and based on a municipal revitalization program" (Ustawa…, 2015). This perspective allows the concept to be analyzed across various dimensions of intervention (Fig. 1).
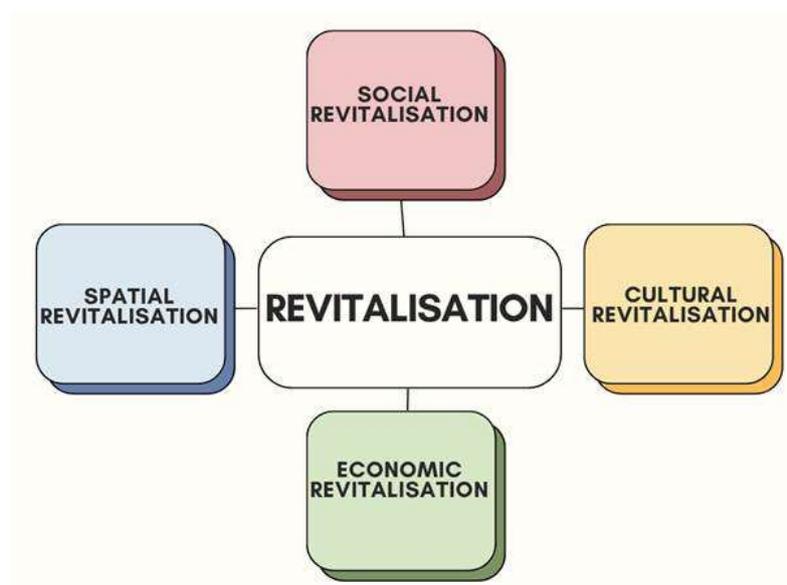

Figure 1. Classification of revitalization by domain. Source: own elaboration based on Boryczka, 2016

Revitalization has gained particular significance in urban policy after 2015 (Klasik et al., 2013; Ziółkowska and Kudłacz, 2020), with a notable emphasis on incorporating social aspects into the process. Unlike planning or constructing new urban areas on undeveloped land, revitalization operates within existing urbanized spaces (Leszkowicz-

Baczyński, 2019). Municipalities initiating revitalization must identify both the degraded area and the revitalization area, based on in-depth analysis and diagnostics (Russek, 2017). An exception applies to areas pre-defined as degraded in local spatial policy documents.

According to the Act (Ustawa…, 2015), a degraded area is one experiencing crisis due to the accumulation of negative phenomena (Tab. 1), and it may consist of non-contiguous zones differentiated by the intensity of such issues.

Table 1. Negative phenomena qualifying a municipal area as degraded. Source: own elaboration based on Russek, 2017 and Ustawa…, 2015.

Social phenomena	Environmental phenomena	Technical phenomena	Economic phenomena	Spatial and functional phenomena
poverty, crime, unemployment	presence of waste posing a threat to human health, life and the environment	technical degradation of buildings	low level of entrepreneurship	lack of access to services and/or their low quality, - shortage of public spaces insufficient provision of social and technical infrastructure

Revitalization processes are always embedded within the specific social, cultural, and spatial context of a place, requiring tailored approaches (Kaczmarek and Kowalczyk, 2016; Przywojska, 2016). In post-industrial areas, revitalization is particularly complex, involving historical land-use reconstruction, reclamation, and reprogramming of space (Maciejewska and Turek, 2014; Kobylańska and Gawor, 2017). In the case of undeveloped areas, natural functions- especially the presence of greenery- are of central importance (Biliński, 2009), while key objectives include pollution removal, ecological restoration, and biological activation (Gasidło, 1998; Skowronek, 2014; Sher, 2022).

Riverfront zones represent a unique category of revitalized spaces, where transformation should emphasize their integrative and city-forming roles (Pancewicz, 2002; Muszyńska-Jeleszyńska, 2013; Izydor, 2022). Their redevelopment contributes to environmental improvement, enhanced urban identity, reduced development pressure, and better quality of life (Wojnarowska, 2011).

Revitalization should result in lasting spatial and functional changes that foster social, economic, and cultural growth (Kaczmarek, 2001; Parysek, 2005; Quattrone, 2017). In Poland, more emphasis is needed on monitoring the long-term outcomes of revitalization programs (Muzioł-Węcławowicz, 2007; Sobieraj and Metelski, 2025). A key aspect of sustainable urban development is the implementation of multifunctional solutions aimed at strengthening central, cultural, residential, recreational, and tourism-related functions (Wolski and Jankowski, 2019; Jaszek, 2022). Notable examples of such revitalization include Mill Island in Bydgoszcz, the river Cybina - its right river bank, Śródka housing estate in Poznań, and international cases like HafenCity in Hamburg, Oostelijk Havengebied in Amsterdam, and the Samuel de Champlain Promenade in Quebec City (Nowacka-Rejzner and Rejzner, 2012; Vingelli, 2018; Jagiełło-Kowalczyk and Piwowar, 2019; Jaszek, 2022; Kędzierska and Kaźmierczak, 2023).

2.2. Tourism Activation of Urban Spaces through Location-Based Games

Contemporary tourism increasingly adopts innovative tools such as gamification, which combines traditional sightseeing with elements inspired by digital and online environments

(Gołoś, 2013). The growing importance of the Internet and social media reflects the needs of modern tourists seeking interactive experiences (Ziemski, 2018; Urbańczyk, 2019).One effective response for that is story-driven location-based games, conducted in physical environments adapted to narrative structures drawn from RPGs (Smoleńska, 2009). Popular formats include field games, storytelling, questing, and geocaching.

According to the "3xF rule" (fun, friends, feedback), games foster deeper tourist engagement by motivating knowledge acquisition and social interaction (Kachniewska, 2014; Stasiak, 2019). By allowing adjustable levels of difficulty and

format, these activities appeal to a wide age range. They often involve local residents, who- as noted by Judd (2003) and Zubowicz et al. (2020) - may begin to behave like tourists in their own cities. Outdoor games, developed within the "urban playground" concept (Dąbrowski, 2013), promote group integration and enhance the tourist appeal of urban spaces. Increasingly, mobile applications serve as guides, enabling tourists to explore independently (Kowalczyk and Pokojski, 2018). This interactive form of tourism blends entertainment, education, and adventure, aligning with Confucius's maxim: Tell me and I forget, show me and I may remember, let me do and I understand (Połucha, 2015).

2.2.1. Questing as a Form of Tourist Activity

Questing is an interactive form of heritage tourism based on exploring local attractions through rhymed riddles and themed walking trails. The term quest refers to a journey or search, and the method integrates elements of letterboxing, scouting games, and outdoor activities such as orienteering (Clark and Glazer, 2014).

The concept originated in 1995 in the United States, when the organization Vital Communities launched the first quests in the Connecticut River Valley, developing around

200 unmarked heritage trails. In Poland, questing was introduced in 2006 in the Warmia and Masuria region (Wilczyński, 2011) and has since gained popularity as an alternative way to explore regional heritage, complementing traditional tourist routes. Nowadays, there are many different categories of quests based on cultural, historical, and natural heritage (Fig. 2). Importantly, quests may span multiple categories, offering a wide range of experiences and adventures for tourists.
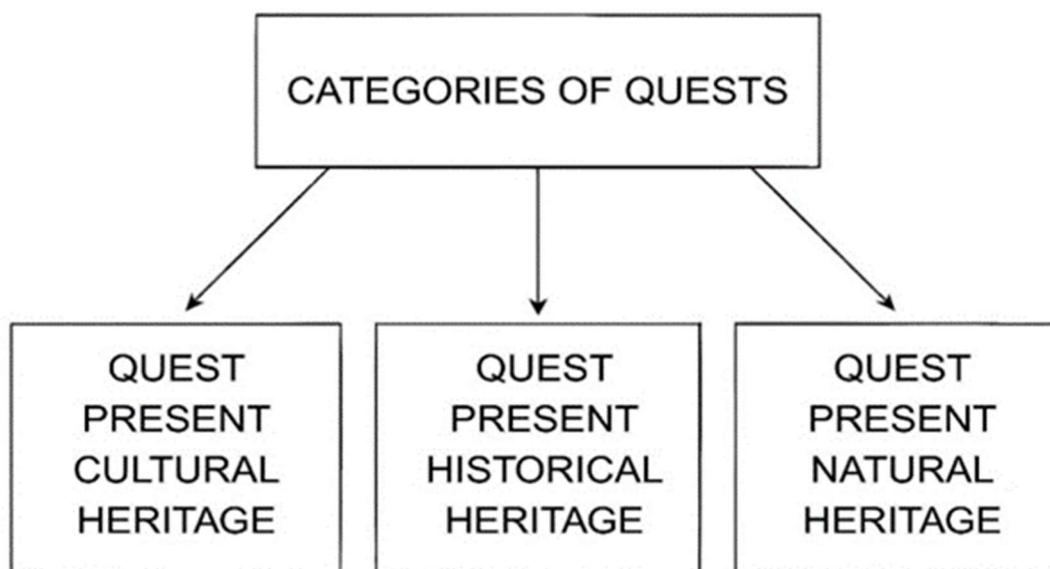

Figure 2. Categories of quests. Source: own elaboration based on online sources www.questy.org.pl (10.04.2014)

Questing enables the discovery of local legends and lesser-known facts often omitted in conventional guidebooks. As Połucha (2015) notes, participants often form an emotional bond with the places they explore. Its strengths lie in strong narrative elements, organizational simplicity, and minimal infrastructure requirements. Many quests are thematically structured (Fig. 2), offering an engaging and innovative approach to presenting local heritage (Pawłowska-Legwand, 2015).Thus, questing can be seen as a valuable tool for uncovering local stories and curiosities that typically remain outside mainstream tourist information (Kaganek and Kurek, 2016) and be considered as a modern tourism product that promotes active, self-guided exploration of nature and culture. Games typically conclude with solving a final riddle or finding a "treasure," which further enhances participant engagement (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Tasks Undertaken as Part of Quest Tourism and Their Effects. Source: own elaboration based on Połucha (2015)

Tasks	Effects of Activities
Learning through fun by using the substantive value of quests	Questing as a tool forming part of regional development and promotion strategies
Creating new, previously unmarked tourist trails and paths	Creating a nationwide network of quests, online coordination
Creating graphic materials (e.g. leaflets) containing riddles, maps of the area	Support for questing foundations, promotion in local and even nationwide media and on the internet
Activating the local community, reviving interest in the area inhabited by the community	Local successes – increase in tourists completing quests in a given area
	Poland as a country aspiring to become the questing capital of Europe

During a quest, tourists follow a designated route, solving riddles along the way, which enables them to actively and independently explore a given area. This format combines elements of entertainment and education, offering a unique tourism experience (Kazior, 2008). Due to its educational potential, questing can also serve as a valuable tool in formal education. As Wilczyński (2011) points out, by blending learning and play, questing transforms tourism from passive sightseeing into a form of active participation (Fig.3).
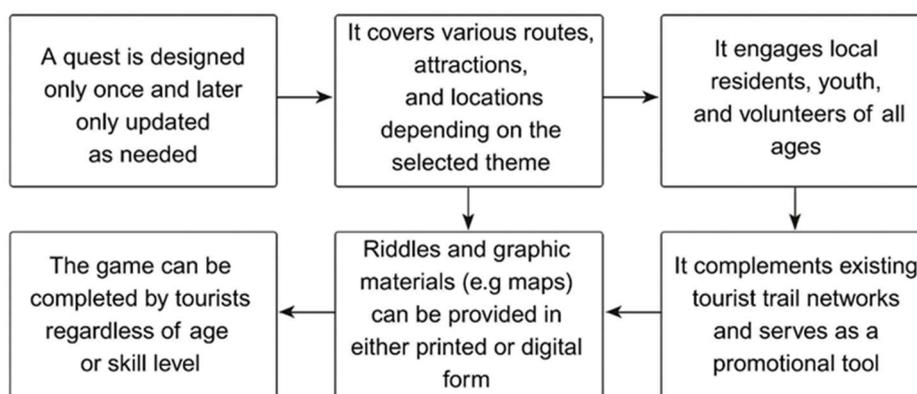

Figure 3. Key features of quests. Source: own elaboration based on Wilczyński, 2011

The core attributes of questing are encapsulated in the 3xE model: entertainment, emotions, and education, often extended to include engagement. Questing requires active participation- players become explorers and co-creators of the narrative (Wilczyński, 2011; Banasik and Fiszer, 2014). This engagement frequently goes beyond gameplay, as residents and volunteers often design quests themselves, deepening their connection to the region and fostering place attachment. As such, questing can be seen as a 4xE experience for both participants and creators Widawska-Stanisz, 2018). Furthermore, questing, as a destination branding tool (Qu et al., 2011), could be integrated with ongoing transformation processes.

It is worth noting that questing is an almost entirely self-managed, low-cost, and widely accessible tool, offering an excellent alternative to traditional sightseeing (Rogowski, 2016). Classic tours often require a tour guide, must be adapted to group needs, and are weather-dependent. Questing involves self-guided exploration, meaning that participants are not bound by reservations or group constraints. Moreover, many questing routes are designed with changing weather conditions in mind, allowing year-round, safe, and engaging participation. Thus, questing can be seen as a tool that stimulates tourism participation and promotes physical activity (Gołoś, 2013; Jalinik, 2013).

With its narrative character, questing offers an alternative to passive leisure activities often associated with digital devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, or TVs. In a world dominated by digital technologies, society increasingly loses interest in traditional forms of travel, expecting engaging, entertaining experiences that are time- and effort-efficient (Sayre et al., 2010). Questing responds to these expectations, enabling participants to become explorers, immersing themselves in the stories they enact. Younger participants may feel like characters from favorite games or movies, especially when elements of augmented reality are incorporated, allowing them to learn actively while having fun in natural surroundings (Champion, 2014). Enhancing questing with digital tools and expanding the existing digital quest database could further increase its appeal to young people.

A key aspect in the promotion and implementation of questing lies in its integration with regional education (Mączka and Kozak, 2017). Questing could become an educational and recreational component of school trips. Moreover, creating quests may become part of educational activities, helping students better understand their local environment, its cultural heritage, and reinterpret familiar spaces through storytelling (Mikos von Rohrscheidt, 2021). Completed quests could later be used during local events, such as district festivals, city days, or guided walks.

As a form of sustainable tourism, questing intensively engages local communities, which are often involved in creating trails and riddles. Its interactive character encourages residents to rediscover their neighborhood in a non-obvious way (Bajgier–Kowalska et al., 2018). Questing also supports pro-environmental attitudes, promoting environmental awareness, active walking, and nature education. Notably, it requires minimal infrastructure, avoiding environmental disruption and visual interference in the natural landscape (Guzal-Dec et al., 2015). Incorporating riddles based on environmental signage about local flora and fauna can further sensitize participants to the world around them. Questing and urban games attract participants by offering fun, competition, and shared experiences with friends and family, often guiding them to less accessible places or those typically unnoticed (Droba, 2014).

Introducing questing as a support mechanism for urban revitalization aligns with international trends in using narrative tourism to activate and regenerate post-industrial or neglected areas (Pazder, 2015).

International examples confirm that storytelling, walking games, and interactive tours are effective tools in rebuilding local identity and engaging both residents and tourists. In the United States, the concept of questing was developed in the Connecticut River Valley (New Hampshire, Vermont), where the Vital Communities organization created a series of local quests for regional education and heritage promotion (Clark and Glazer, 2004). Their success stemmed from cooperation with libraries, schools, and cultural institutions, embedding questing in community life. Notably, quests there documented revitalization processes, as seen in White River Junction, a former railway hub transformed into an artistic and tourist center (Vital Communities, 2018).

In the United Kingdom, narrative walking trails are part of revitalization efforts led by the Heritage Lottery Fund, supporting projects such as "Storywalks" in Manchester and Bristol. The goal was not only physical regeneration but also restoring local memory and building emotional bonds with place through story-based walks (Smith, 2012). Although called interpretive trails or walking stories, they serve similar purposes as the quest in Stary Fordon: combining education, recreation, and place-based identity building. Additionally, it serves a promotional function by activating lesser-known urban areas and complementing main tourist routes (Warcholik, 2019). Owing to its low cost and flexibility, questing is also well-suited to smaller towns, helping reveal their tourism potential (Przysiężna et al., 2014).

2.2.2. Quest Tourism in Poland

Currently, Poland has over 1000 registered questing routes, most of which focus on historical, cultural, natural, or other local themes (Fig.4).

According to data from the portal questy.org.pl (2025), the majority of quests in Poland- 1187 in total- are available in traditional print-ready formats for self-guided use. Alongside these, the mobile format is rapidly developing, with 656 routes accessible via smartphone applications. Though less common, virtual quests have also emerged, currently numbering 20, making them the smallest category.
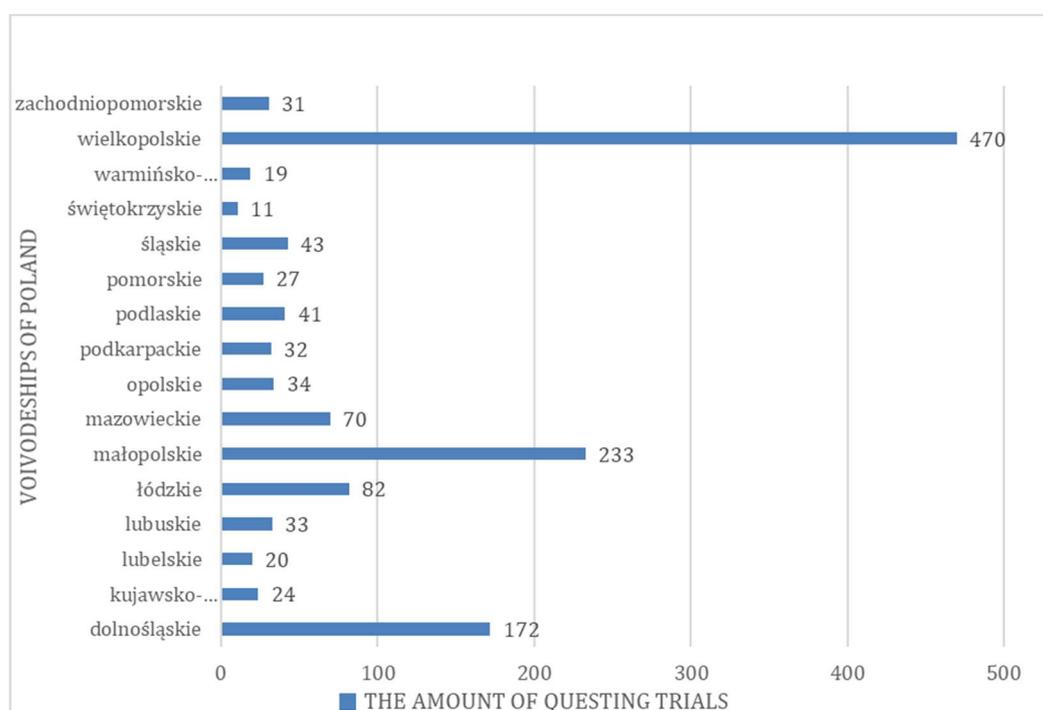

Figure 4. The amount of questing trials in Poland in 2025. Source: own elaboration based on www.questy.org.pl

Notably, in 2015 there were only around 350 quests available in Poland, according to www.questy.org.pl. Since then, the number has nearly tripled, indicating that questing is becoming well-established as a modern form of tourism, offering engaging and unconventional ways to explore regions (Smalec, 2015). Questing not only introduces tourists to previously unknown routes but also invites them to rediscover familiar places-especially those that have undergone recent transformations, often unnoticed by locals or casual visitors.

In this sense, questing aligns with broader processes of revitalization, restoration, and urban renewal. Many newly developed routes pass through areas undergoing change, allowing participants to experience these spaces "anew"—from a fresh perspective and within a new narrative context (Jelińska, 2025).

3. Field of research and Methodology

3.1. Field of research

Stary Fordon is a district within the city of Bydgoszcz, representing the historical core of the larger Fordon area (Fig. 5). Located approximately 12 kilometers from the city center, the neighborhood lies along the Vistula River, which forms Bydgoszcz's eastern boundary. What distinguishes Stary Fordon from other parts of the city is its rich multicultural heritage and longstanding local identity, which have fostered a strong sense of place among residents (Cieśliński et al; 2018).

According to the document issued by the Municipal Urban Planning Office in Bydgoszcz (2015), Stary Fordon is located on the left bank of the Vistula River.

LEGEND: ● The city of Bydgoszcz, map with marked administrative borders of voivodships.

LEGEND:
The border of the Stary Fordon within the Bydgoszcz city border and the boundaries of urbanization units
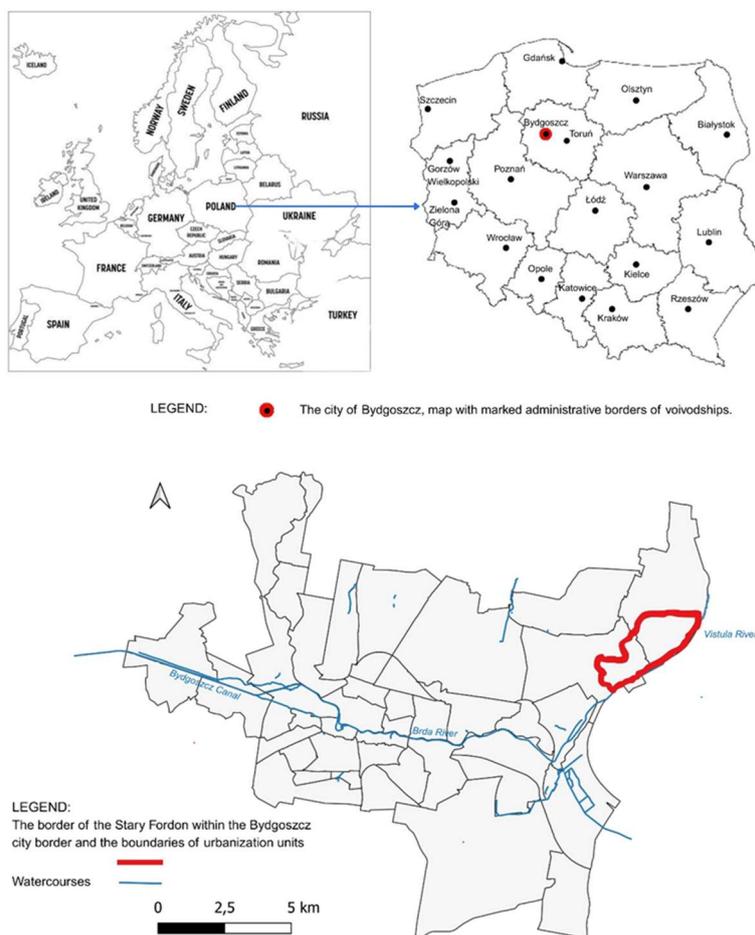
Watercourses

0   2,5   5 km

Figure 5. Location of Stary Fordon in Poland and Bydgoszcz. Source: own elaboration

The location of Stary Fordon on the Vistula's banks strongly influenced its economic growth, urban layout, and cultural connections, rendering the river an inseparable part of the district's identity (Hojan and Rurek, 2017). The riverbanks in this area remain largely undeveloped, featuring wetlands, sandy shoals, and islands. To the north of the river lie fields, meadows, brushwood, and riparian forests- important habitats for migratory birds. Portions of the area are designated under the Natura 2000 network and fall under both conservation and archaeological protection. The landscape along the Vistula is characterized by rich vegetation and anthropogenic embankments.

Historically, Fordon served as a river trade hub, not fortified by walls, and home to a Customs Chamber, now repurposed as a penitentiary. The identity of the place was co-created by Jewish, Polish, and German communities, a fact still visible in preserved religious structures: an Evangelical church (Fig. 6), a Catholic church (Fig. 7), and a synagogue that honors Jewish culture and today also serves as a venue for various cultural and local events.

Figure 6. Parish of St. John the Evangelist in Bydgoszcz (Photo by A. Jelińska 2021)

Figure 7. St. Nicholas Catholic Church in Bydgoszcz (Photo by A. Jelińska, 2021)

Among the tangible remnants of Jewish cultural heritage in Stary Fordon is a preserved sukkah (temporary hut) located at 2 Kapeluszników Street, which was historically used during the celebration of Sukkot. Another

Stary Fordon is now a vibrant cultural space. In 2023, it hosted the Vistula Festival, accompanied by the revitalisation of its riverside and streets, which were transformed into pedestrian and exhibition zones. Previously, events such as "One City – Three Cultures" (2017) and "Stary Fordon Festival" (2019) had been organised. Local heritage is

important element of Stary Fordon's heritage is its technical infrastructure- most notably the Fordon Bridge (Fig. 8), which for over half a century ranked among the longest bridges in Central Europe (wyszogrod.bydgoszcz.pl). further promoted through cruises on the Vistula River, including tasting cruises, culinary workshops focusing on Jewish traditions, historical walks, and events held in the synagogue and former Customs House (now a prison), as well as murals and open-air exhibitions on buildings. These initiatives, combined with historical architecture and

grassroots cultural activities, contribute to the unique character of Stary Fordon, whose rich history makes it a distinctive part of Bydgoszcz.

Figure 8. Fordon Bridge- view from the riverbank (Photo by A. Jelińska, 2021)

3.2. Methodology

This article is based on a case study approach, which allows for an in-depth analysis of specific phenomena within a local context and enables the identification of relationships between space and socio-cultural practices. The study focuses on the Stary Fordon district in Bydgoszcz, Poland, where integrated revitalization efforts have recently been implemented, targeting both public space and local cultural heritage.

The analysis centers on an original questing trail titled Nowy–Stary Fordon, developed by the author as part of a master's thesis. The project proposes an innovative form of narrative tourism aligned with the goals of urban revitalization.

The route was developed using field observations, photographic documentation, map analysis, and data from the Fordon Revitalization Study. The quest was pilot-tested by the author and a small user group to ensure narrative coherence and appropriate difficulty levels.

The project aligns with the idea of community-driven questing, often initiated by residents or local enthusiasts. The potential for further development was identified, including partnerships with cultural institutions (e.g. municipal libraries, the Stare Fordon Enthusiasts Association), which could support its broader dissemination- e.g. via a mobile version, gamified elements such as rewards, or integration into Bydgoszcz's official tourism offer.

4. Results

The revitalisation of Stary Fordon began in the 1990s, when its historic potential was first recognized. Initial conservation works included the Church of St. Nicholas and the synagogue. In 2013, the City Council designated Stary Fordon as an area requiring comprehensive revitalisation, covering approximately 37.7 hectares. In 2016, an infrastructure development concept was prepared and later expanded upon request of the local community. (Raczyńska-Mąkowska, 2018).

The revitalisation process was conducted with active resident participation, and by 2020, four strategic goals were defined: improving quality of life, developing entrepreneurship, strengthening social cohesion, and enhancing tourism appeal. Key implementations included: a pedestrian and bicycle route, skatepark, playgrounds, revitalisation of the market square and river boulevards with new public infrastructure. Tenement buildings, the synagogue, and the Jewish sukkah were renovated, and the prison facility was repurposed to include murals and exhibitions. Accessibility to the riverside was also improved. These efforts have responded to the residents' needs and have significantly supported the ongoing development of Stary Fordon (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Revitalized riverfront area, before (A) and after (B), with new small-scale infrastructure (Photo by A. Jelińska, 2023)

Questing, as a flexible form of narrative tourism, can serve as an effective tool for promoting Stary Fordon- an area that, following revitalisation, has gained a new image and increasing tourist interest. The proposed quest trail, developed by the author in 2022 and updated in 2024 to reflect the post-revitalisation state, serves not only as a form of entertainment, but also as an educational experience. It introduces visitors to the history, culture, and multicultural heritage of the district, highlighting key sites such as the synagogue, the market square, the preserved Jewish sukkah, and the Vistula riverfront. The revitalized Stary Fordon, enriched by a quest-based game, could gain a new identity as a place not only valuable in historical and cultural terms but also attractive to children, youth, school groups, and holiday camps. The combination of revitalization and quest tourism may also encourage local residents to re-engage with the area and rediscover its potential.

The trail, titled "New Old Fordon", was designed in the form of rhymed riddles, guiding participants through 10 stations over a distance of approximately 2 kilometres (Fig.10). One of the main purposes of the quest is to demonstrate the importance of the revitalization process not only in the area directly subject to redevelopment but also in a neglected part of Fordon. The route begins next to the synagogue—one of the most significant landmarks of Bydgoszcz and the first site revitalized in Stary Fordon—and leads participants through the renewed parts of the district towards Wyszogród (Fig. 11), once a recreational area for residents, featuring a small pond and sandy spaces, now covered with grass and serving as a symbolic reference to the origins of local settlement.
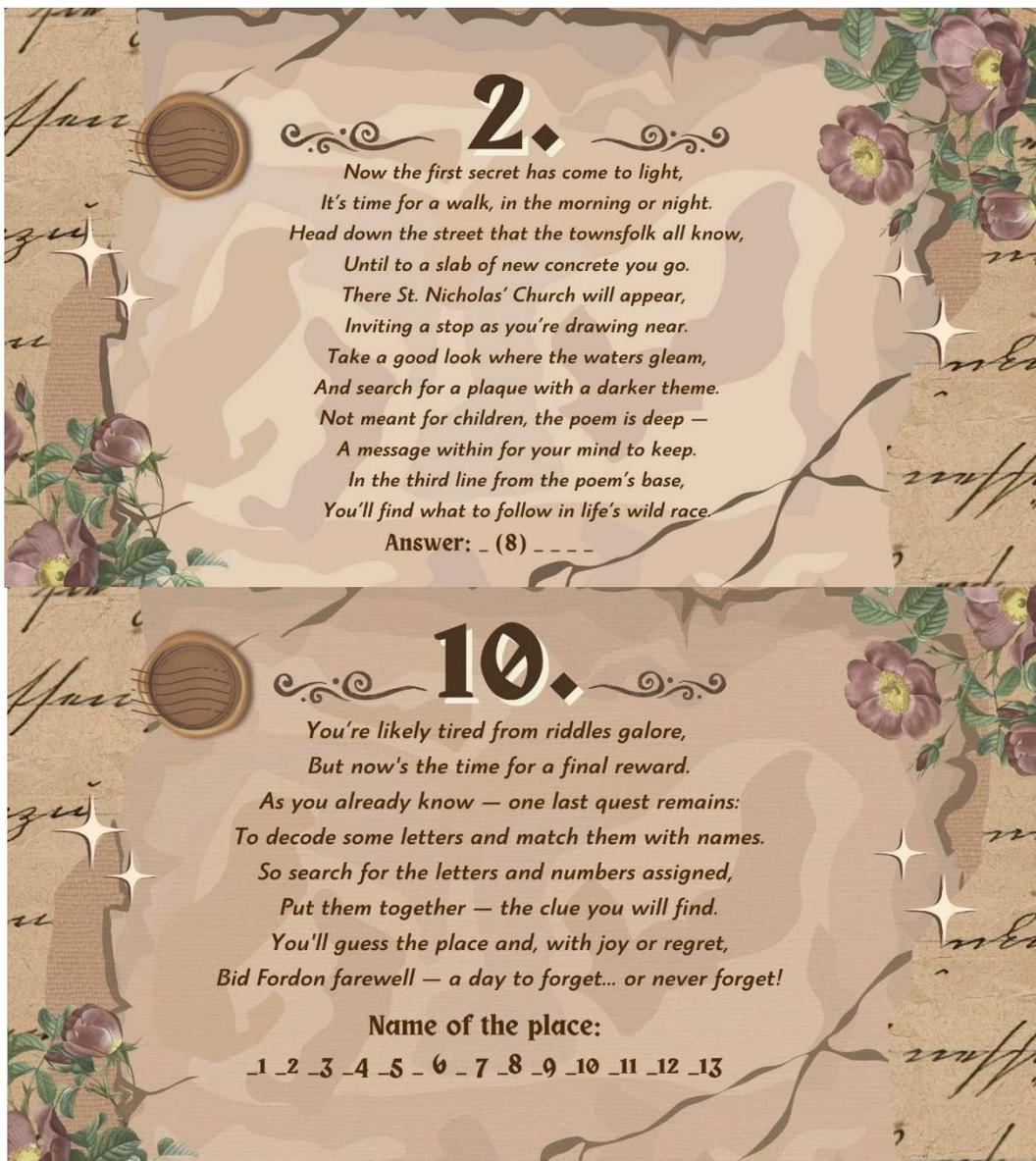
2.

Now the first secret has come to light,
It's time for a walk, in the morning or night.
Head down the street that the townsfolk all know,
Until to a slab of new concrete you go.
There St. Nicholas' Church will appear,
Inviting a stop as you're drawing near.
Take a good look where the waters gleam,
And search for a plaque with a darker theme.
Not meant for children, the poem is deep —
A message within for your mind to keep.
In the third line from the poem's base,
You'll find what to follow in life's wild race.

Answer: _ (8) _ _ _ _

10.

You're likely tired from riddles galore,
But now's the time for a final reward.
As you already know — one last quest remains:
To decode some letters and match them with names.
So search for the letters and numbers assigned,
Put them together — the clue you will find.
You'll guess the place and, with joy or regret,
Bid Fordon farewell — a day to forget... or never forget!

Name of the place:

_1 _2 _3 _4 _5 _ 6 _ 7 _8 _9 _10 _11 _12 _13

Figure 10. Examples of riddles from the "Stary-Nowy Fordon" quest trial. Source: own elaboration by A. Jelińska
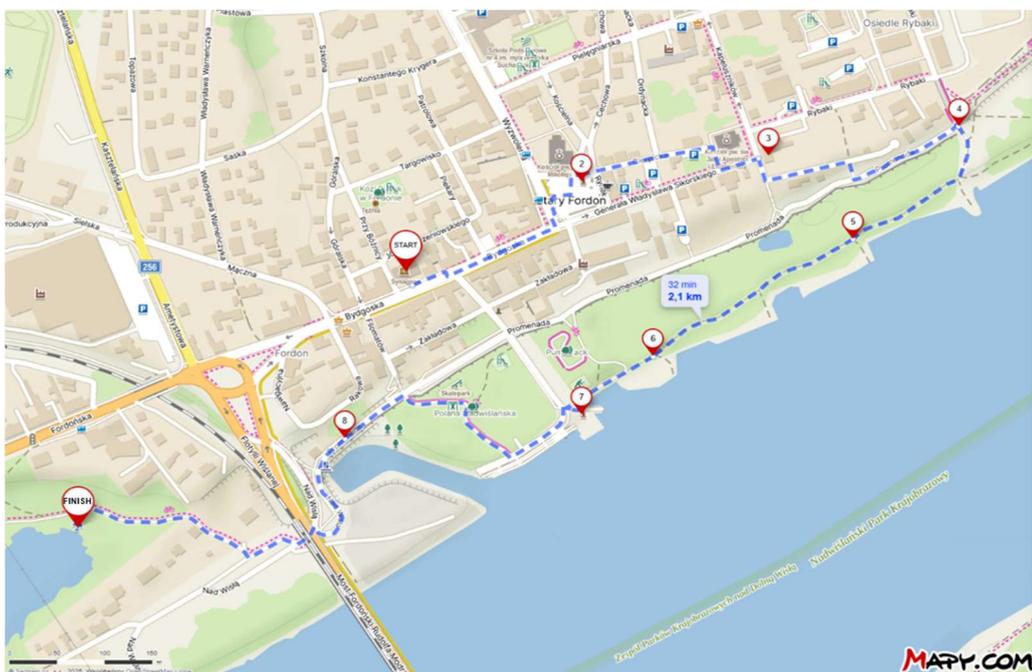

Figure 11. Course of „Stary-Nowy Fordon" questing trial. Source: own elaboration based on www.mapy.com

The route begins at the synagogue on Przy Bóżnicy Street, where participants start the quest by solving the first riddle of an educational and cultural nature. During this stage, they can explore the building and learn about its significance as a place of Jewish worship.

The next stop is the revitalized Market Square with St. Nicholas Church and the Monument to the Fallen and Murdered Residents of Fordon (1939 –1945) by Witold Marciniak. The riddles encourage participants to discover the history and symbolism of the monument and the Old Fordon coat of arms, represented by a rose — a reference to the district's historical identity and autonomy.

The third stage is the Sukkah on Kapeluszników Street. Continuing along Sikorskiego Street, participants reach a small sukkah near the newly redeveloped riverside. Here they learn about the function and symbolism of this unique element of Jewish cultural heritage.

The next important part of the quest is the Vistula Riverside. This stage highlights the natural and recreational values of the revitalized riverside. Participants walk along Rybaki Street and the flood embankments, exploring local topography and discovering the broader landscape context of Fordon. The riddles refer to natural features, including the water gauge on the Vistula and the view of the Ostromecko Palace and Park Complex located across the river. The route continues to the modern FORDON riverside boulevard, a symbol of the district's recent transformation.

The final stop is Millennium Park, situated near the historical Wyszogród settlement site. Here, participants complete the final riddles summarizing their journey and knowledge gained along the route. The park serves as both the endpoint of the quest and a place for rest and reflection, connecting contemporary revitalization efforts with the historical origins of Fordon.

The quest is intended for individuals aged 12 and above as well as for families with children and can be completed individually or in groups. The estimated duration is 1.5 to 2 hours. In addition to the riddle template, participants need a pen and either a map or an internet-enabled device.

A pilot implementation of the route, tested by a group aged 25–30, confirmed both the feasibility and attractiveness of the quest, making it ready for deployment as a permanent tourism product. The trail's main narrative goals are to highlight Fordon's multicultural heritage and showcase the effects of revitalization, particularly in the context of public space and local identity. This initiative may support the long-term promotion of Stary Fordon, stimulate further development of the district, and strengthen its position on the tourism map of Bydgoszcz and the region.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Nowadays, according to the websites PTTK Bydgoszcz and Questy.org, there are about 20 questing trails related to Bydgoszcz, including only one concerning the new part of Fordon. The presented questing trail is therefore the first one created specifically for Stary Fordon, in order to emphasize the value of this district of Bydgoszcz.

The implementation of a questing trail in revitalized areas, such as Stary Fordon, could provide multi-level benefits for the further development of the location in which it is conducted. Questing, as a flexible and highly engaging form of narrative tourism, accessible to all age groups, has the potential to increase the touristic appeal of a given area and, consequently, to enhance its economic status (Howard, 2022; Warcholik, 2024). A rise in tourist numbers may encourage entrepreneurs to establish small-scale gastronomy,

accommodation, and service facilities, which would also require improvements in transport infrastructure (Essing- Jelonkiewicz, 2022; Murniati and Wenzano, 2024). As a result, the area may attract greater attention from local authorities, increasing the chance of being included in future spatial development plans (Beim et al., 2023). This situation may also lead to a rise in the number of residents interested in living in a thriving, well-developing district, prompting them to buy homes or build houses (Zalega, 2010; Yang et al., 2011).

An additional advantage of the solution proposed for Fordon is its replicability – similar quest trails could be developed in other districts of Bydgoszcz or other cities seeking to use revitalization to rebuild local identity. However, success depends on institutional support and integration with tourism and education policies.

A revitalized area may thereby gain new significance, becoming an active site of cultural and touristic experience, while also motivating exploration of less frequently visited attractions. In contemporary contexts, the introduction and effectiveness of questing can be reinforced through social media activities and the use of mobile applications integrating augmented reality (AR) and geolocation features. This, in turn, may lead to heightened interest in the city's tourism brand identity and its perception as a distinctive cultural, social, and touristic product.

Questing, when aligned with sustainable development goals and urban space management, can effectively redirect visitors toward less crowded locations within revitalized areas. Consequently, it contributes to the dispersion of tourist flows and alleviates pressure on heavily frequented attractions. Within the framework of sustainable urban development, questing may be conceptualized as a form of ecogaming- an approach that remains insufficiently explored in academic research. To address barriers such as infrastructural shortcomings, inadequate promotion, or lack of coordination, questing should be integrated into the concept of the smart city. Such integration not only fosters ecological awareness but also serves as a

means of communication between residents and local authorities, supporting the notion of a participatory and adaptive intelligent city.

Questing thus emerges as a particularly effective tool for supporting tourism in revitalized urban areas. It enhances engagement, facilitates the dispersion of tourist activity, and strengthens place attachment. The example of Stary Fordon illustrates the importance of local partnerships, thoughtful design, and effective promotion. The implementation of the "Nowy Stary Fordon" quest, based on revitalized areas of Stary Fordon, could encourage local residents not only to explore their own district but also to co-create new questing trails. This proposed form of tourism integrates various forms of exploration with puzzle-based activities, becoming a versatile tool for discovering the area while simultaneously fostering environmentally conscious behaviors and reinforcing local identity.

The "Nowy Stary Fordon" quest could also be used by local guides to enrich the existing tourist offer during events and festivals, as well as by teachers in nearby schools as part of geography, history, physical education, or art classes. Future quests, developed on the basis of this initiative, could emphasize natural assets, for instance within biology lessons. They could also stimulate students' creativity by involving them in composing new rhymed riddles for Polish language classes, or designing visual materials in art and computer science lessons.

The proposed route may therefore be developed in cooperation with local associations, schools, guides, and residents, serving as an integrative tool that promotes sustainable development. Future research should focus on the long-term effects of such initiatives, the transferability of best practices to other urban contexts, and their alignment with sustainable development strategies. The key to well-considered solutions lies in an approach that combines effective management, collaboration, and the integration of new technologies.

A quest trail can function not only as a determinant of regional economic growth, but also as a place branding tool. The example of

New Zealand's "100% Pure New Zealand" campaign, which identified the country not only as an attractive tourist destination but also as a source of pristine, rejuvenating experiences, illustrates the importance of linking tourism products to place identity (Morgan et al., 2002).

In Czechia and Slovakia, questing takes the form of "Hledačky" – narrative routes connected to national heritage and revitalized spaces. A notable case is Telč, a UNESCO-listed site, where questing was introduced to support sustainable tourism and resist the over-commercialization of the historic center (Novák and Šťastná, 2016).

In Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway), the growing popularity of "kulturstigar" (cultural paths) illustrates their role not only as tourism products but also as participatory tools in the revitalization of post-industrial districts, such as Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm. There, local storytelling helped create memory maps and educational trails for schools (Eriksson, 2013). Against this international backdrop, the project carried out in Stary Fordon aligns with global trends and can be seen as a model example of using narrative tourism in local revitalization. Importantly, the questing model used in this study does not require costly infrastructure and can be implemented in a sustainable manner, respecting both the natural environment and cultural heritage – as confirmed by examples from the US and Scandinavia (McKercher and du Cros, 2002).

The case of Stary Fordon demonstrates that questing can serve as an innovative, low-cost, and community-oriented instrument supporting tourism development in revitalized urban areas. By combining heritage interpretation, narrative engagement, education, and spatial experience, questing strengthens place identity, activates local communities, and contributes to the sustainable revalorization of urban space. Embedded in broader international trends of narrative-based urban regeneration, the proposed model illustrates how storytelling and participatory exploration can complement physical revitalization processes, transforming regenerated districts into meaningful, resilient, and socially embedded tourism destinations.

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