

## **Second homes twenty years later: the case of the commune of Jadów**

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### **Abstract**

The paper shows the phenomenon of second homes in the commune of Jadów in the perspective of two research approaches – the description of the process in accordance with the precepts of neo-positivism, and its additional interpretation conform to the “recommendations” of the humanistic approach. The areas of high tourist attractiveness, especially those situated near large urban agglomerations. Despite the traditions reaching back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the second homes in the commune of Jadów are still developing, although some of the observations made in 2002 may indicate that this process could undergo a further slowdown in a close future.

**Key words:** urban agglomeration, second homes, Warsaw

### **Introduction**

The phenomenon of second homes appeared in the vicinity of Jadów at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first homes started to be constructed in the pine woods over the river Liwiec, used by the inhabitants of Warsaw during summer for leisure purposes. The development of the second homes in this location was not only motivated by the presence of the woods and the river, but also by the transport-wise accessibility, since a railway stop was established at the distance of about 1 km from Liwiec on the highly frequented railway line Warsaw–Białystok–Vilna–St. Petersburg. The time of travel between Urle and Warsaw was a bit longer than one hour. Owing to this, Urle and the villages neighbouring with it to the South – Borzymy and Nowy Jadów Letnisko (New Jadów Summerplace) – have become in the years 1918–1939 one of the primary locations of summer vacationing for the inhabitants of Warsaw. Although during the World War II a large part of the resort and the woods adjacent to the railway line were destroyed, already in the 1950s Urle regained their fame, and became the place of leisure, first of all for the families with small children. That is why it would not be an exaggeration to state that at least every second or third inhabitant of Warsaw at the age of more than 30–40 years, who spent the childhood in Warsaw, visited the valley of Liwiec and the woods in the vicinity of Urle, either for a longer time, or just for a day trip. Hence, if we apply the commonly adopted terminology, used in human geography, “Urle” (this notion encompassing in a colloquial sense also Borzymy and Nowy Jadów

Letnisko, and sometimes also Iły) is a **place**, and not space (Jaakson, 1968; 1977). No wonder therefore that during the last dozen or so years in Urle and other villages of the Jadów commune a true boom of second homes took place. There having been yet at the beginning of the 1980s at less than 500, increased in the period 1992–2002 from 778 to 1189.

### 1. The development of second homes in the commune of Jadów – the neopositivistic approach

The commune of Jadów is located 50–60 km to the North-east of Warsaw. It has 116 sq. km of surface area and 7,966 inhabitants (in 2002), residing in 27 villages. Some 27% of the commune's surface is covered by forests, while 22% is constituted by meadows and pastures.

The very first studies on the phenomenon of second homes in the commune of Jadów were carried out by A. Kowalczyk in the middle of the 1980s, but their results were published only several years later (Kowalczyk, 1994). According to the local census carried out in 1985 there were 723 recreational plots in the commune, on which 499 second homes had been erected. A vast majority of these second homes were located in a couple of villages located close to the river Liwiec, in Urle, Borzymy, Nowy Jadów Letnisko and Iły (Tab. 1). Except for Iły, neighbouring directly upon Urle, the phenomenon of second homes appeared in these villages yet at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main motivation for this development, besides the presence of the river Liwiec, being the pine woods and the vicinity of the railway station of Urle.

The subsequent study of second homes in the commune of Jadów were carried out by M. Sałaga-Mabiała in 1992. This study demonstrated that in the years 1985–1992 the numbers of the recreational plots and the second homes increased, respectively, by 119.5% and 155.9% (Sałaga-Mabiała, 1993). During the period mentioned a particularly high number of second homes appeared in the villages located on Liwiec – Strachów and Zawiszyn, as well as in the previously mentioned Iły.

Then, ten years after, the subsequent study was carried out in the commune of Jadów. As noted by M. Kempny-Falińska (2002) the number of recreational plots increased in the years 1992–2002 by 17.1%, while the number of second homes – by 52.8%. During this period the development of the phenomenon took the most dynamic course in the village of Starowola, while in the localities situated in the vicinity of Urle a distinct curbing of the rate of growth of the number of second homes could be noted.

When we compare the distribution of the second homes in the commune of Jadów over the period of a dozen years, we can see that as time went by, they started to appear in the localities not only situated farther from the railway station of Urle (which is understandable, since more and more owners of the recreational plots own a car), but also on the areas featuring lower tourist attractiveness. Although Zawiszyn or Starowola are close to the river Liwiec, but are more distant from the bigger forest complexes, covering the western part of the commune.

We can conclude on the basis of Table 1 that the development of the second homes phenomenon in the individual localities of the commune of Jadów makes it possible to classify them into three following categories:

Tab. 1 Growth of the number of recreational lots and second homes at Jadów commune in 1985–2002

Villages	Number						Types
	Recreational lots			Second homes			
	1985	2002	1985 = 100	1985	2002	1985 = 100	
Adampol	8	47	588	8	27	338	A
Borki	–	1	x	–	1	x	C
Borzymy	136	186	137	100	131	131	A
Dębe	15	25	167	11	20	182	B
Iły	100	269	269	85	188	221	A
Jadów	17	2	12	12	2	17	B
Kukawki	–	4	x	–	4	x	C
Myszadła	4	44	1100	2	29	1450	B
Nowy Jadów Letnisko	60	92	153	51	74	145	A
Nowy Jadów	5	6	120	2	6	300	B
Podbale	–	1	x	–	–	x	C
Sitne	–	32	x	–	13	x	C
Starowola	11	196	1782	8	105	1313	A
Strachów	48	246	513	16	131	819	A
Sulejów	1	4	400	–	4	x	C
Szewnica	10	13	130	7	8	114	A
Urle	280	322	115	180	250	139	B
Wólka Sulejowska	–	2	x	–	1	x	C
Wujówka	–	1	x	–	1	x	C
Wyglądały	1	5	500	1	1	100	A
Zawiszyn	27	360	1333	16	193	1206	A
JADÓW COMMUNE	723	1858	257	499	1189	238	x

At Nowinki, Oble, Podmyszadła, Warmiaki, Wójty and Dzierżanów villages there are no recreational lots and second homes

**Type A**, called “progressive”, is represented by the villages, in which the rate of change of the number of recreational plots in the years 1985–2002 was higher than the respective rate for the number of second homes. It can be assumed that a high number of plots without buildings will lead in a not too long perspective to appearance of new second homes on these plots. It is worth noting that an important number of villages classified in this category are located close to the river Liwiec.

Then, **type B**, called “regressive”, encompasses the villages, in which the change index for the period 1985–2002 was higher for the number of second homes than for the recreational plots. This may mean that the development of the phenomenon of second homes in these villages will undergo a slowdown in a not too distant future, and a part of the currently existing second homes will start to play the role of permanent residences. Hence, we can consider that the localities classified in the category B

undergo the phenomenon of suburbanisation (this observation applying first of all to the village of Urle).

Finally, **type C** encompasses the villages, in which the recreational plots and the second homes do exist, but are not numerous, and so we can consider that the phenomenon of second homes is in those villages only at the initial stage. The majority of villages classified in type C are located in the areas of low tourist attractiveness.

Tab. 2 Characteristic of the second homes at Jadów commune in 2002

Villages	Recreational lots			Second homes		% of taxes from recreational lots and second homes in own revenues
	Number	% of total area of the village	Average surface (ha)	Number	Average surface (ha)	
Adampol	47	2.97	0.14	27	41.3	52.6
Borki	1	0.06	0.11	1	25.0	4.4
Borzymy	186	29.12	0.14	131	51.6	67.1
Dębe	25	1.52	0.12	20	54.0	37.2
Iły	269	39.80	0.11	188	42.3	89.5
Jadów	2	0.10	0.14	2	41.0	0.6
Kukawki	4	0.10	0.11	4	35.7	12.5
Myszadła	44	0.82	0.12	29	40.1	30.5
Nowy Jadów Letnisko	92	43.30	0.14	74	54.7	51.3
Nowy Jadów	6	0.29	0.14	6	33.5	4.7
Podbale	1	0.04	0.10	–	–	0.3
Sitne	32	0.34	0.07	13	48.3	15.3
Starowola	196	5.55	0.12	105	43.1	80.8
Strachów	246	11.61	0.20	131	48.9	83.1
Sulejów	4	0.05	0.09	4	33.7	5.9
Szewnica	13	0.40	0.13	8	47.7	6.2
Urle	322	48.18	0.12	250	51.6	70.4
Wólka Sulejowska	2	0.11	0.37	1	17.0	2.6
Wujówka	1	0.06	0.16	1	40.0	7.8
Wyglądały	5	0.94	0.20	1	32.0	30.9
Zawiszyn	360	7.94	0.10	193	41.4	52.8
JADÓW COMMUNE	1858	1.89	0.13	1189	39.2	44.5

At Nowinki, Oble, Podmyszadła, Warmiaki, Wójty and Dzierżanów villages there are no recreational lots and second homes

The data contained in Table 2 indicate that in 2002 the surface area occupied by the recreational plots constituted the highest shares of total area in the localities of Urle (48.18%), Nowy Jadów Letnisko 43.30%), Iły (39.80%) and Borzymy (29.12%), that

is – in the villages, which are not only located close to the river Liwiec, but also have the longest tradition of recreational areas belonging to the urbanites. The shares of areas taken by the recreational plots in the respective totals are much lower in the villages, in which the second homes started to appear in larger numbers only in the 1980s and 1990s (Starowola, Strachów, Zawiszyn).

The table presented suggests also that in the majority of villages the average area of a recreational plots is between 1,000 and 1,500 sq. m, while in the case of second homes, although the overall mean of living area is at 39.2 sq. m, in the localities, where the numbers of second homes are the highest, this area frequently reaches 60–90 sq. m (which is especially true for the villages of Iły, Starowola, Strachów and Urle).

The fact that in many villages the recreational plots account for even more than 40% of the total surface finds its reflection in the revenues of the communal budgets from taxation collected from the owners of recreational plots and second homes. It was already the studies conducted at the beginning of the 1990s that have shown that there are localities in the commune of Jadów, in which the taxes paid by the owners of second homes amount to 70–80% of the entire taxation revenue collected in a given village (Saługa-Mabiala, 1993). A similar situation was observed in 2002. It namely turns out that in the localities with the most developed recreational function – first of all the ones situated in the valley of Liwiec – the taxes accruing from the owners of second homes constitute as a rule more than 50% of all taxes collected, and in some cases even more than 80% (Iły, Starowola and Strachów). Hence, we can consider that in many villages of the commune of Jadów the recreational function starts to be more and more distinctly the dominating one. This fact is linked not only with the increasing number of the recreational plots and second homes, but also with the collapse of farming and the poorly developed crafts and services on these areas (it is worth noting at this point that in Jadów itself, the administrative and economic centre of the commune, the taxes accruing from the recreational function amount to the mere 0.6% of all the own revenues of the locality).

Because the studies conducted recently demonstrated that during some fifteen years the average acreage of the recreational plots in the commune of Jadów decreased, while the average living area of a second home increased, the decision was made of taking a deeper insight into the issue by comparing the data for the years 1985 and 2002.

The data from Table 3 suggest that the average size of a plot decreased by 300 sq. m (this is, for instance, the situation in the villages of Iły, Nowy Jadów Letnisko and Urle), though in some cases the decrease attained 600 sq. m (Borzymy) and even 1100 sq. m (Starowola). Among the localities featuring the well-developed recreational function the phenomenon described has not occurred only in Strachów (where the mean area of a plot increased).

A different trend was observed, on the other hand, for the second homes. Although the average living area of a second home decreased as well (from 44.8 sq. m to 39.2 sq. m), there were many villages, in which the second homes were in 2002 significantly bigger than in 1985. This apparent paradox can be explained by the fact that during the 1980s a part of the second homes (especially in the villages of Dębe, Jadów and Nowy Jadów) were actually old, large village houses, purchased by the inhabitants of

Warsaw with the intention of turning them into the recreational facilities or permanent residences. Some of them persisted, yet many of them were demolished and new buildings were constructed on their place, frequently having lost their recreational function, since the owners settled there for good.

Tab. 3 Changes in average surface of the recreational lots and second homes at Jadów Commune in 1985–2002

Villages	Average surface (ha)			
	Recreational lots		Second homes	
	1985	2002	1985	2002
Adampol	0.25	0.14	38.5	41.3
Borki	–	0.11	–	25.0
Borzymy	0.20	0.14	46.8	51.6
Dębe	0.11	0.12	60.6	54.0
Iły	0.14	0.11	33.5	42.3
Jadów	0.19	0.14	116.3	41.0
Kukawki	–	0.11	–	35.7
Myszadła	0.15	0.12	21.5	40.1
Nowy Jadów Letnisko	0.17	0.14	50.5	54.7
Nowy Jadów	0.18	0.14	35.0	33.5
Podbale	–	0.10	–	–
Sitne	–	0.07	–	48.3
Starowola	0.23	0.12	33.4	43.1
Strachów	0.18	0.20	35.3	48.9
Sulejów	–	0.09	–	33.7
Szewnica	0.16	0.13	44.1	47.7
Urle	0.15	0.12	45.3	51.6
Wólka Sulejowska	–	0.37	–	17.0
Wujówka	–	0.16	–	40.0
Wyglądały	0.09	0.20	32.0	32.0
Zawiszyn	0.11	0.10	28.4	41.4
JADÓW COMMUNE	0.16	0.13	44.8	39.2

At Nowinki, Oble, Podmyszadła, Warmiaki, Wójtys and Dzierzanów villages there are no recreational lots and second homes

The studies conducted demonstrated, at the same time, that in the majority of localities the average living area of a second home was in 2002 bigger than in 1985. This applied in a particular manner to the villages with a longer history of the developed recreational function (Borzymy, Nowy Jadów Letnisko and Urle – increase of the area of the second homes by 3–6 sq. m), and especially to the ones featuring a rapid development of the second homes phenomenon in the recent years (Iły and Starowola – increase of the area by 9–10 sq. m, Strachów and Zawiszyn – increase by 13 sq. m). Observations

made during the study demonstrated that a part of the particularly large buildings were constructed with the intention of turning them in the future into permanent residences. The investigation of M. Kempny-Falińska (2002) showed, however, that only 21% of the respondents (the investigation encompassed 113 owners of the second homes) had an explicit intention of settling in a permanent manner in the commune of Jadów. Those with the opposite intention accounted for 49%, and 30% had no opinion on the subject. At the same time as many as 72% of respondents stated that they did not see the need for a further development of the recreational function in the commune of Jadów (22% were for such development, while 6% had no opinion on the subject). One of the main reasons for opting against the further construction of second homes on the area considered is constituted by the associated – indirect – inconveniences. The studies showed that as many as 98% of the respondents are of the opinion that the main problem of the commune is constituted by waste, 96% indicated the increase of the crime rate (mainly the robbing of the second homes, car theft and vandalism), 81% expressed their dissatisfaction with the shortages in electric power supply, while 77% complained about the poor quality of local roads. At the same time, as many as 87% of respondents stated that the commune authorities do not care about the needs of the owners of second homes (only 13% responded positively to the respective question).

The results of the survey study, quoted here, mean that despite an apparent development of the recreational function in the commune of Jadów, it can soon turn into stagnation, or even undergo a limitation, since the excessive development of second homes starts to entail disadvantageous changes in natural environment (intensification of the recreational structures) and in functioning of the technical infrastructure, and brings about an increase of the social pathology.

In summing up the development of the second homes in the commune of Jadów in the years 1985–2002 we can present a number of essential conclusions:

- the recreational function in the Jadów commune becomes the dominating function, as demonstrated not only by the increase of the number of recreational plots and second homes, but also by the share of tax revenue from these sources in the total own revenues of the commune;
- the villages with the well-developed recreational function are situated on the areas with the highest tourist attractiveness, close to the woods and over the river Liwiec;
- in the years 1985–2002 the average area of a recreational plot decreased in many villages, which may be a sign foretelling a deficit of free space for recreational developments in a rather close future;
- in the years 1985–2002 the average living area of the second homes increased in many villages, which may mean that their owners are ready to turn them into the places of permanent residence.

Altogether, the studies concerning the development of the phenomenon of second homes in the commune of Jadów demonstrate that the commune has an increasingly developed recreational function, although there are also some signals indicating that a part of the second homes can be transformed – conform to the process of suburban-

isation – into the locations of permanent residence. On the other hand, the disadvantageous phenomena associated with the excess number of second homes may cause that a part of their owners will start to get rid of them, which in a farther future might lead to a limitation to the recreational function on this area.

## **2. The development of second homes in the commune of Jadów – the humanistic approach**

I visited Urle for the first time on a summer day of 1981 or 1982. I remember well how we got out of the crowded train with my wife onto the sandy platform and we were at once in a pine wood, which started a dozen metres away from the rails. In two or three minutes I was already in the home of my wife's aunt, who, back in the 1960s, having two sons a couple of years old, built in "Urle" – officially in Borzymy – the second home. Both the aunt and her husband were teachers and had the possibility of making use of the house in the summer time during at least two months. I do not remember very well what I did on my first visit to "Urle", but I think that my walk led me to the river Liwiec.

My second visit in "Urle" took place in late spring of 1983, this time we went not only with my wife, but also with our seven months old daughter. During four months our family lived in the second home of the aunt, with me, having, after all, definite professional obligations, travelling every few days, and sometimes even every day, with the train on the line Urle–Warsaw–Urle, together with the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages (working in Warsaw), as well as with other dads and mums of the children brought there out of Warsaw for the vacation time.

Despite the fact that in the summer of 1983 the martial law was suspended in Poland, the socio-economic situation in the country was very difficult. I felt this personally, when I waited in front of a small village shop (there was one shop in Urle, two shops in Borzymy and one in Nowy Jadów Letnisko at that time, but all of them functioned for 4–6 hours a day only), to buy bread and noodles, for one or two hours as a rule. There were no problems, though, with other food products (and beverages). Milk for our child, potatoes and eggs were bought from a farmer in Nowy Jadów (where I would go with a bicycle), while meat, sausages and vodka, contrary to the law in force, were bought with the local populace busy with illegal meat and moonshine alcohol production.

Yet, the summer of 1983 in Borzymy was apparently not so traumatic for me, since after the return to Warsaw we decided with my wife to buy a plot of land in "Urle". We purchased it in March 1984 from a farmer residing in the close by Nowy Jadów, the one, who had provided us before with milk, potatoes, etc. Although the plot was situated 200 m away from the second home of the aunt, it belonged already to Nowy Jadów Letnisko. It had just 500 sq. m, and was overgrown in 2/3 with pines, birches, as well as berry shrubs. The remaining 1/3 was constituted by the sandy "road", traced by the local population in parallel to the proper street. In the summer of 1984, while living still in the aunt's home, we fenced the plot, dug out the well and brought electricity to the plot. Then, at the beginning of 1985 we built the second home. It had 35 sq. m and was a factory-produced wooden house, frequently constructed in Poland not only as a



second home, but also as a camping house. Although I used above the expressions “we dug”, “we built”, etc., in fact all this was done by the local craftsmen, who lived largely off such service.

Starting with the summer of 1985 during more than a dozen years me and my family would spend at least several weeks a year in our second home. During the summer stays there we spent a large part of time in the woods, over the river, bicycling, or just staying in our second home. After 1989 the previously described problems with shopping became gradually less acute, since new shops were established, some of them functioning during 12–18 hours, bars opened, etc. Trains got less crowded, because, first, more and more people had cars, and, second, an important part of the inhabitants of neighbouring villages lost their jobs in Warsaw and did not have to take the morning and afternoon trains. Let me indicate at this point an apparent paradox: on the one hand purchase of a car, on the other hand – loss of a job. It is, however, in fact only an apparent paradox, since numerous inhabitants of Urle and the villages in the vicinity still worked, but now in the “grey zone” or the hidden economy. In many cases this hidden economy was constituted by the construction service associated with the emergence in the villages around of the new second homes. Further, an important part of those employed in the newly established village shops in the commune of Jadów worked there illegally, as well. Finally, a part of young males started to have connections with the criminal organisations functioning in the region of Warsaw. It should also be mentioned that a significant source of income for the local population – legal in this case – started to be constituted by the sale of land for the second homes.

More or less in the middle of the 1990s myself and my family started to take a different look at “Urle”. It gradually ceased to be for us a **place** (featuring positive connotations), and became again a space.

First, we noticed that in many locations, where woods had been growing before, new second homes were constructed. These were usually large, solid structures, surrounded by high walls (oftentimes with barbed wire), with full-scale garages, and sometimes even with swimming pools. Some of them appeared close to our house, on small plots, which until just before had been wooded. Second, walks in the woods became less and less pleasant, because in many locations the illegal waste dumps appeared. Third, a part of the young (who had been children in the 1980s) grew to become criminals, alcoholics and drug addicts (this applied equally to the children of the owners of second homes and the children of permanent inhabitants). Fourth, our daughter became a teenager, and me and my wife turned forty. As our daughter was getting increasingly independent, although she still eagerly visited “Urle”, she would spend her leisure time with her friends rather than with parents, and the amount of time devoted to bringing her up decreased, my wife felt a stronger need (as for me – it was less that strong) of going for vacation to another part of Poland or abroad. Fifth, in 1998 my wife’s father died. After retirement he would spend a lot of time in “Urle”, painting the fence, repairing the second home, shopping and visiting the neighbours, with whom he got befriended during these dozen or so years, etc. All this caused that in 1999 we spent the last summer in our second home. It was sold in December 1999 to an acquaintance of my wife’s aunt, also living in Warsaw. The

new owner, having a daughter of ten years and remembering "Urle" from her own childhood, was similarly motivated in buying the house as we had been more than fifteen years before.

Summing up, me and my wife bought a recreational plot in the commune of Jadów for the same reasons as several hundred other people. Besides the closeness to Warsaw and the attractive natural environment (woods, river) we were mainly motivated by the reasons resulting from our family situation – the birth of a child. Yet, similarly as our family passed with time through several phases of the family development cycle, also our Second Home (understood not in terms of a building, but as something close to our hearts) turned out to be in 1999 something entirely different than at the beginning of the 1980s. This Home, just like our family, grew older. The ageing had, of course, a literal (technical) sense, but to a greater extent it was functional (in view of the new needs of our family) and the metaphysical one. The changes, which took place during fifteen years in Nowy Jadów Letnisko and in other villages composing together the nominal "Urle", caused that staying there ceased to be a pleasure. It became partly an obligation, and in some situations even a pain (like during the night balls of our neighbours or the walks in the litter-filled woods). That is why we sold the second home in Nowy Jadów Letnisko, but preserved the memories of our Second Home in "Urle".

### **Conclusions**

The text presented above demonstrates that the phenomenon of second homes is in Poland a social and spatial process featuring high development dynamics. This concerns, in particular, the areas of high tourist attractiveness, especially those situated near large urban agglomerations. Despite the traditions reaching back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the second homes in the commune of Jadów are still developing, although some of the observations made in 2002 may indicate that this process could undergo a further slowdown in a close future (some slowdown having already been observed in the recent years).

The paper shows the phenomenon of second homes in the commune of Jadów in the perspective of two research approaches – the description of the process in accordance with the precepts of neo-positivism, and its additional interpretation conform to the "recommendations" of the humanistic approach. It is possible that the operation performed was not highly successful, but in the opinion of the present author (conform to the postulates voiced by the proponents of postmodernism) the association of different research paradigms may in some cases broaden our knowledge of the essence of the phenomenon investigated.

P.S. After having written an important part of the text I learned that my wife's aunt – the very same, whom I visited for the first time in 1981 or 1982 – started to look for the buyer of the second home that she had built with her husband (now deceased) almost 40 years ago.

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