

Heritage unwanted and desired. The “Red Baron” as a tourist product of the town of Świdnica

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Abstract:

Aim: The paper aims at exemplifying empirically the discussions conducted on the Red Baron in Świdnica and elsewhere, at depicting the products created worldwide on the basis of the brand originating from the legend of the Red Baron. The paper also presents the results of a study seeking to answer the question: Can the Red Baron become a branded tourist product of Świdnica?

Design / Research: The paper outlines the issues of urban tourism products drawing on elements provided by nature and history. At the same time it indicates that cultural heritage can be both an opportunity and a hurdle to tourism development. The paper shows the social conflicts that may arise when local authorities – being one of the major creators of tourist products – adopt a conservative or passive attitude towards tourist assets available in their area, with those assets having a high marketing potential but being considered by a portion of the population to be so called unwanted heritage.

Conclusions / findings: The paper refers to the dispute, ongoing for 20 years in Świdnica, Lower Silesia, as to whether or not its former citizen Manfred von Richthofen, a German World War One flying ace known as the ‘Red Baron’ should be used for the town’s tourist promotion.

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Keywords: tourist product, urban tourism, Świdnica, Red Baron, cultural tourism, unwanted heritage, tourism potential, social conflict.

JEL: Z32, Z38, M31, R58

Introduction

The creation of urban tourist products¹ is a process that is important and recommended for the economic growth of a particular region, yet it is also complicated and not that easy. The process may raise controversies or provoke social conflicts, which is predominantly because natural components of an urban product cannot be changed, for they are attributable to nature and history (Dębski 2010). Lower Silesian Świdnica, a town situated in the Western Recovered Territories with a very rich and multinational history provides an ample illustration of this issue given that a dispute has been going on for over 20 years in the town whether its most famous citizen, Manfred von Richthofen, a World War One flying ace, known across the world as the Red Baron, should be used to promote tourism. The local government has not sought to resolve this social conflict, which at times would turn into a heated verbal exchange between the opponents and proponents of this idea, although the intention of local governments, according to the Act on Commune Local Government, should be aimed at using in full the tourists assets of the areas where they operate and which – owing to legal regulations² – exercises the greatest influence on the creation of the city's promotional and tourism policy, and, as the consequence of the development of the marketing of places, on how its tourist products are shaped (Łuczak 2007).

The conservative attitude of Świdnica's local authorities may come as a surprise and lead to confusion, for, on the one hand, as the author's research and analyses show, Świdnica would like to develop its tourist economy and create tourist products for which demand will emerge, and

¹ The concept of "tourist product" is interpreted multidimensionally in the literature concerned with this issue, which is on account of the diversity and complexity of the tourist product. In the marketing approach – the approach that the author first and foremost has in mind while illustrating the problem faced by Świdnica – just like in the case of any other product, anything that represents an object to be traded on the market tends to be a tourist product, and as such, an amenity, a proposal, a thing, a place, organization, an idea, a service, goods (Żurawik, Żurawik 1994; Olearnik 2010), a person – everything that allows for satisfying the tourist's desire or need (Kotler 1994), what he can consume (Kaspar, Kunz 1982). "Tourist products" have their own composition and structure and can be broken down into different categories based on a variety of criteria. The most popular is the the breakdown into simple tourist products (a service, thing, object, event) and complex (a product as a performance, trail, region-site), and adopting a narrow approach to tourist products – that which tourists purchase separately, e.g. accommodation or board, a souvenir, transportation, participation in an event, or in a broad approach – in the form of a set of services, a package which is a combination of what tourists do and the assets, tools and services they use to this end (Kaczmarek et al. 2005), as well as the experience lived through between the time of their departure and arriving back home (Medlik 1995). In Poland, the authors who in their works have given much space to the tourist product include, among others, J. Altkorn, B. Włodarczyk, J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, W. Gaworecki, S. Medlik, E. Dzik, A. Kornak, T. Żabińska, Z. Kruczek, M. Drzewiecki, T. Lijewski, J. Dietl, Bąk, D. Puciato, A. Panasiuk, while worldwide it is Ph. Kotler and V.T.C. Middelton.

² The local government's own task, including also promotion or activities benefiting tourism is what the Act on Commune Government of 8 March 1990 imposes on local authorities.

yet, on the other hand – looking at the attitude towards the Red Baron, who is part and parcel of the town’s history – it would seem that the local authorities intentionally do not use in full the assets this area offers and are not always willing to promote what attracts those visiting the region and which could contribute to an increase in the town’s tourism. The main component affecting the degree of attractiveness of the tourist product of every town and city, and that includes Świdnica, are after all such cultural resources as historic monuments, museums, objects and places of religious worship, archeological sites, industrial open-air museums, thematic parks, cemeteries, monuments and memorial sites, defensive facilities, cultural events, unique objects (Purchla 1999). Świdnica is the only place in the world where one can encounter the greatest number of traces of the legendary aviation pilot’s life. What represents authentic material heritage is the Red Baron’s existing family house, gymnasium which he attended, the memorial stone and the remnants of the monument erected to his memory nearly a 100 years ago, his father’s and brother’s grave, as well as other town’s locations like, for example, the railway station or the parks which he described in his diaries.

Considering the components listed above, it is quite natural that many people in Świdnica have long believed that the Red Baron should become another, next to the Church of Peace which is on Unesco’s list of World Heritage sites, the town’s branded tourist product – promoted and supported by the local government. The legendary pilot has already become a tourist product just by applying the simplest definition proposed by Ph. Kotler (1994) which states that “anything that can be offered to a market for attention” can be referred to as a tourist product. The town’s history related to the Red Baron attracts people’s interest. The observations conducted regularly by the author demonstrate that organized tourist tours as well as individual tourists frequently reach the pilot’s family home in Świdnica at 19 Sikorski street. The tourist flow linked to the legend surrounding the Red Baron started to emerge following his death. As it will be demonstrated further on in the paper, already by the year 1927 the first tourists from the USA and France came near the family Richthofen’s house to see the World War One flying ace’s homeland (Nawrocki 2012). After 1945, when Świdnica became a Polish town, tourists’ visits stopped, because of, among other things, the country’s political system in force. The tourism was revived again in the 1990s and has continued to grow since then.

The increased number of visits associated with the Red Baron has failed to trigger any substantial tourist-focused activities on the part of Świdnica’s local authorities, which could use

this natural demand. The official explanation of this situation (despite the fact that there exists no social research on this subject) tended to be that the town's inhabitants did not want to promote themselves through a German pilot who had killed people and eventually had got himself killed. However, a very different picture emerges based on the material collected by the author – Świdnica's citizens want the legend of the Red Baron to be exhibited in the town and they believe that this may contribute to an increase in tourism, of which more in the further section of the discussion.

The primary objective of the paper is to illustrate empirically the discussion conducted on the subject of the Red Baron in Świdnica and beyond, further to show the products made across the world drawing on the brand created on the basis of the legend of the flying ace, and to present the findings of the research which sought to answer the question: "Can the Red Baron become a branded tourist product of Świdnica?" Considering that the tourist product is, among other things, complex and structurally flexible, which means that its content can assume various shapes when it comes to its final form (Rapach 2001) – the author does not carry out a discussion on what kind of tourist product the Red Baron could be for Świdnica, neither does she indicate whether it should be considered by employing a narrow or a broad approach, nor if it should be in the form of a multi-component package, etc. In this paper "the tourist product" is conceived in the most general terms, for the problems the town of Świdnica is facing are linked to the way of thinking about the Red Baron as a product in general, and as such, something which can be offered for "sale", which can be displayed and promoted, which the town could pride itself on and which could be the basis for designing a variety of attractions, be it a performance, a thing, an exhibition, a hall of memory, a trail or an aggregate consisting of many simple products combined within one package.

The set aim of the paper can be accomplished by using numerous diverse research techniques such as observation or an interview and corresponding research tools which are an instrument for technical collection of data (Pilch, Bauman 2001).

The empirical material included in the paper is comprised of the data gathered as the result of the original and secondary studies which the author conducted over the period of 2000-2015, e.g. search query (and the analysis of the content of printed documents and the Internet sources), experiments and observations – mainly the participatory ones. In order to obtain the citizens' views on the Red Baron and whether they believe Świdnica should take advantage of the legend surrounding the pilot to promote tourism – a diagnostic survey was employed, where a

questionnaire developed by the author served as a research tool. The auditorium questionnaire was used whose characteristic feature is that the interviewer stays in touch with respondents and clarifies anything that may be confusing or unclear and helps respondents fill in the questionnaire (Sztumski 1995). The survey was conducted at the end of 2014 on a group of 300 Świdnica’s citizens, of both gender, of whom 100 were school-aged (third year of the secondary school and the first year of the upper secondary school) and 200 adults. The results are presented further on in the paper.

This paper may also be an indication for local self-governments in that it shows that social conflicts – that last many years coupled by a conservative role played in those conflicts by local authorities and officials, as well as identity problems, a lack of knowledge on the history of the region concerned, not knowing how tourists products are developed, and on top of that using stereotypes and showing unwillingness to cooperate and reach a consensus – are clearly not conducive to tourism growth.

1. Who was the Red Baron

Before presenting how the Red Baron is perceived in the world and by the Świdnica population, what appears important in this context is to mention briefly his life story – for it is this story that affects significantly the reception and assessment of this figure by the public, being also the essential element in all kinds of reasoning that are taking place increasingly more frequently in Świdnica.

As many sources inform³, the Red Baron was a nickname given during the World War One to Manfred von Richthofen – a citizen of Świdnica, a German soldier, the greatest fighter ace of the World War One, who – before dying in combat near the Somme River in France on April 21, 1918 – achieved 80 officially recognized victories. His trade mark was a red Fokker which gave him his war nickname. Manfred von Richthofen was born in 1892 in Kleinburg, now part of Borek, a district of the city of Wrocław. In 1901, when he was 9 years old, he moved with his family to Świdnica, situated 50 km away from Wrocław, and settled down in a villa which still exists today at 19 Sikorski street (Adler 2012). There is no reason to relate the pilot’s life story in its entirety as

³ On the subject of the Red Baron’s biography and legend the world’s media have given lots of accounts. On the pilot’s fate and family a few books have been written and films made, not to mention countless internet articles. Richthoffen himself kept a diary which after his death was published in dozen or so languages.

it does not represent the main aim of the paper; one should, however, mention – which is of particular importance for the discussion unfolding presently in Świdnica that when the World War One broke out, Manfred von Richthofen, as any other soldier was sent to serve on the front, where he became famous as a fighter pilot and became known as a dangerous opponent (Kilduff 2001). At that time the world's press would write volubly about his victories. The tactic which he elected while fighting in the air was analyzed in the staffs of each side of the conflict. He was praised as a model to be emulated by his allies as well as by his enemies, becoming a legend already during his lifetime. His fame spread across the world especially when the news started circulating that the British formed a special squadron serving just one purpose and that was to shoot down the German pilot. One can venture to say that he was respected as a pilot in hostile camps, which is confirmed by the fact that when he was killed during his flight on April 21, 1918 and fell down within the area occupied by Australians and the French, against whom he engaged in sky-high combats, they organized a full military funeral for him.

Horst Adler, a German historian associated with Świdnica (1988) stated that in the wake of his death the memory of the Red Baron and his roots had become the object of pride of the then citizens of Świdnica, and his military fame began to attract the first foreign tourists to the town, which has already been mentioned in the introduction of the paper. German papers recorded that in 1927 American and French pilots visited Świdnica to get to know the place where the flying ace grew up and to see the modest memorial stone which still survives today.

The flow of foreign tourists interested in the Red Baron's past was large enough to prompt in 1928 the contemporary population of Świdnica to build an imposing monument, redolent of a mausoleum, commemorating the town's famed citizen in the park neighboring the Richthoffen's villa, while five years later in 1933 a museum was opened in the family villa documenting Manfred's and his younger brother Lothar's, also a pilot, merits. After the town of Świdnica was captured by the Red Army in May 1945, at the end of the World War Two, the Richthoffen museum collection disappeared. Despite the fact that the collection was plundered and the pilot's family members left for Germany (because of moving the national borders after the war), the Świdnica's story of the Red Baron does not end there. As in many other places of Lower Silesia, also in Świdnica the new settlers coming from the east across the River Bug, marked by the trauma of the Second World War began to obliterate any traces of the town's German identity, being oblivious for many years to the fact that the town was also largely made by the culture and heritage of its

former inhabitants. The information that the most famous pilot of the world from the times of the World War One lived in Świdnica was for many years omitted in the publications promoting the town. Only with the onset of the 1990s which saw Western tourists looking ever more frequently for the house of a flying ace, some dared to say that the Red Baron had strong links with Świdnica. It was then that the suggestion was made to use this fact for tourism promotion. It is at this point that the problem mentioned in the introduction – the dispute between the opponents and advocates of the idea to promote the town using the pilot’s popularity, which is still ongoing and dividing the town into those who believe that making the Red Baron into a clear tourist product is a very good idea and those who will hear none of this.

3. The image of the Red Baron in the world’s culture

Based on the information gathered during the research query, it can be noted that since the end of the World War One people have been fascinated with the legend surrounding the Red Baron in many parts of the world. He is much admired and highly respected also in the countries which fought on the opposite side of the front line and whose soldiers had to face him or his squadron’s fighters in the air battles.

The research shows that throughout the last half century the Red Baron has appeared multiple times in films, computer games, food products, and also in art works. As a fighter ace together with a symbolic Albatross or a Fokker painted in red he was immortalized in paintings, songs, theater plays and events. Considering the impressively long list of products created based on his story one could assert that the Red Baron has become a household name with positive connotations and which could be sold and continues to do so whatever its shape, be it the name of a scale model, a shelf for the wall, a bicycle, a night lamp, bed linen, t-shirts, wine, Lego blocks, pizza, chocolate, beer or a tourist attraction such as, for example, sightseeing flights using the replica of a Fokker painted in red. It is worth looking more closely at the examples of products created for commercial purposes which draw on the Red Baron’s story. While doing so, one cannot help noticing that they are developed for different target groups, also those within which there is segmentation according to age. Many products bearing the Red Baron brand have been produced with children in mind. Here one should mention such toys as blocks with which one can assemble the legendary pilot and his plane. A few producers placed them on the market, including the well-

known Lego company. The offer designed for the youngest is full of electric toy cars, planes, little bicycles, stickers, mini figures or kites which are sold on the beaches of Australia and the United States. What is very popular with families with children are theme playgrounds and entertainments equipped with merry-go-rounds and swing sets with Fokkers – one can encounter those in the USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, as well as in Europe, for instance, in the Netherlands, Germany or Italy.

It has been noticed that since the 1960s a character associated with the Red Baron and which has been very popular with the youngest has been continually Snoopy the dog – a comic book hero created by Charles Schulz. The series where Snoopy fought imaginary air battles in the expanses of the World War One against the Red Baron was the best selling series in the USA in 1966. This marketing success provided the basis for producing later on a single and a record released by Royal Guardsmen in Florida titled Snoopy vs. Red Baron, as well as a board game and two video games. The characters of Snoopy and Red Baron were presented to the subsequent generations of children in 2016 in a cinema adaptation of the animated film *The Peanuts Movie*.

One of the most profitable product types associated with the Red Baron brand are computer games. The demand for those games has existed since the early 1980s, which is since the time when the market saw the first of this type of entertainment together with a special simulator prepared by the Atari company. Over the recent years four games of skill (for the computer and Playstation) were produced, whose story coincides with the history of the World War One and allows players to get into the role of the Red Baron or his adversaries. The games are available worldwide in many languages. It should be noted that computer game players represent a group who can relate to the Red Baron very well. Analyzing the posts on foreign online fora where the representatives of this community of players hold their discussion the conclusion to be made is that they are fascinated with the legend of the greatest flying ace in history. Many of them say that they tend to buy any game whose title bears the nickname of the legendary pilot. In their online conversation, the players share not only their impressions of the games but they also their knowledge on the history of World War One⁴.

In discussing the ways how the German pilot and his war story tend to be perceived by people who are not Polish it is worth saying a few words about the art of film. Here the Red Baron

⁴ The documented posts show that many players has a considerable knowledge about the Red Baron. They know for instance that Manfred von Richthofen's family house is in "present day Polish Świdnica" and that there is a dispute going on in the town as to whether to promote the town while taking into account the legend of the Red Baron.

has also been present – first owing to an American film production from 1971, and later to a German cinema adaptation made on the 90th anniversary of the pilot’s death (2008). One should remember that apart from the commercial movies about the Red Baron cited above, there have been several dozen documentaries made of which some have happened to be shot also in Świdnica – most frequently at the Richthoffen’s villa or near the remnants of the monument commemorating the Red Baron. Most recently the German film crew from Moers Media came to the pilot’s home in October 2015 while shooting a film about the Red Baron for National Geographic, ZDF and ARTE.

The Red Baron is also a brand referring to flavor. Pretty much the whole world (including Poland) can taste wine and beer labeled “Red Baron” or “Rote Baron” produced in small local manufacturing firms, as well as chips, pizza, chocolate and cookies.

Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that apart from the typical commercial products for sale outlined briefly above, there are sites across the world where the memory of the Red Baron is cultivated and which exercise tourist, educational, recreational or cultural functions. Those include, for instance, museum exhibitions dedicated to Manfred von Richthoffen, and especially to the machine he used to fly at the end of his life and which became his trade mark, that is, the red Fokker. The most important of them are the following:

- **Vintage Aero Flying Museum** in the USA (in the vicinity of Denver) founded by Lafayette Foundation and dedicated to the aviation history of the World War One. The museum has a replica of the Red Baron’s Fokker, which has for years participated in air shows;
 - National Museum of London where one can see the engine removed from the wreckage of Manfred von Richthoffen’s airplane and to get to know his history;
 - **Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre w Marlborough** of New Zealand with a huge model diaporama reconstructing the scene of the Red Baron’s fall. The museum also houses some original items of the German pilot’s memorabilia and that of his crashed triplane, such as, for example, a cross cut out of the triplane’s fabric, the pilots handkerchief bearing his monogram, two mugs representing a “victory trophy”.

For educational purposes as well as to commemorate the Red Baron, serve the air shows in which historical airplanes are demonstrated, including the replicas of the red Fokker built across the entire world. As the material gathered by the author shows, many of them were built to fly and earn money. Since 1983 in Australia it has been possible to take a flight over Sydney in the Red

Baron's plane. Tourists may choose between a sightseeing flight or a sport aerial acrobatics. A half an hour of such adrenaline filled attraction under the name of the Red Baron costs 465 dollars. In Europe round flights in replicas looking similar to the original Fokker take place, for example, over Belgium, France, England – especially in those places where there are traces of the pilot from Świdnica. This type of tourism has many supporters, which in turn affects the profitability of the products manufactured on this basis.

The examples cited above may be a proof that the Red Baron brand is very popular in the world and a household name for nearly every age group. What the articles published in foreign media – both popular science and historical media (and the commentaries posted in reference to them) show is that the reception of the Red Baron as a historical figure is very positive. Perhaps this is why so many aero modeling clubs, aero clubs and associations that are not linked to aviation adopts his name or nickname worldwide.

4. The Red Baron's reception by Świdnica population

Assuming that the Red Baron is a well-known brand, which is worldwide illustrated by the products created based on his legend, and also in the light of ever more frequent tourists' walks near the Richthofen's villa⁵, one could suggest that including him in the concept of the town's promotional policy would be a measure that uses the natural demand contributing to greater tourist flows in Świdnica. The entities representing the tourist and marketing industry find it rather obvious that Świdnica, where there are numerous material traces of Manfred von Richthofen⁶, should benefit from its famous citizen, but the attempts made at inducing the local authorities to take actions in this respect have been unsuccessful for many years.

In the course of the research it was found that the local politicians are anxious about using the ready-made brand of the Red Baron, the world's household name and part and parcel of Świdnica (and about developing a tourist product that would be different than all others by some

⁵ While conducting her study, the author has observed that the number of tourists interested in the place where Manfred von Richthofen grew up has been steadily rising. This is further confirmed by the local guides and employees of the town's tourist information office who have a direct contact with tourists.

⁶ The material traces related to the Red Baron in Świdnica include the following: his family home at 19 Sikorski street, the stone commemorating his death, an oak tree to his glory, the remnants of the memorial site in the park at Sikorski street from 1928, the place where he landed during the war to visit his family, the school he attended, and also – although razed to the ground – the graves of his father and brother in Park Młodzieżowy (Youth Park), where an obelisk was erected informing about the soldiers buried within the park's area.

unique feature), for they would rather avoid the risk of dissatisfying those who oppose promoting the town through the famed pilot. These persons upon hearing of any attempts aimed at promotional activities linked to the pilot and to be carried out by the local government protest loudly twisting the historical facts. They claim that the Red Baron was, for instance, a “Nazi”, “a German of murderous instincts, “a psychopathic murderer, who, had he survived, would have joined Hitler’s army”, “a controversial figure – he served in the German Army, so he was on the opposite side” (Augustyn 2006), and “it is not in Poland’s interest to promote a hero of the German militarism” (Osińska 2010). At this point it is worth reminding that, apart from Poland, and in particular Świdnica, nobody – not even the British, who after all lost the greatest number of pilots fighting against the Red Baron (Franks et al. 2007) – calls Manfred von Richthofen a murderer. On the contrary, the Brits, Americans, Australians or the French regard the Red Baron with respect, while at the same time they can play with history rendering it through multiple facets.

The town’s historians who speak publicly on the subject of the controversial Red Baron in vast majority assess him positively. Piotr Zagała (after Augustyn 2006) asserts that nothing can be held against Richthofen, an ordinary German patriot. However, in Świdnica one talked about him only in a mutter: “What’s the point in broaching the subject if he is German”, while Sobiesław Nowotny (after Augustyn 2006) in his summary of all negative statements concludes that “Richthofen is controversial because National Socialists fomented his myth. For the Nazi propaganda, a twentysomething youth who took top honors and won international fame was a model of success. However, one must remember that the World War One air force was akin to knights dueling in the air. That was not a mass and anonymous slaughter like in the trenches. What mattered in the air were individual skills”.

The helplessness of the local government officials with respect to the Red Baron was revealed in 2006 by the then local official, later to become the town’s vice president, who spoke on this issue as follows: “I don’t know myself what to do with him. A person who on the one hand is extremely mediagenic, and yet, on the other, he is a German pilot whom Świdnica’s inhabitants associate with the Nazis” (Augustyn 2006).

Despite the fact that the opinion has been divided in the town and the dispute continues to go on between the Red Baron’s advocates and opponents, the town’s self-government has not been interested whatsoever in this situation so as to try and do something in this matter or to understand it – although one of the local government’s tasks, pursuant to Article 7 of the Act on Commune

Government, is to shape the town's promotional policy and to support its economy – including tourism. The author believes that the Red Baron is Świdnica's problem which the local authorities have not wanted nor attempted to resolve for 20 years. Had it been otherwise, the officials and the representatives of the legislative and executive bodies elected by the town's citizens would have taken whatever steps to state their clear support either for one or the other party to the dispute, or at least they would seek to organize a public debate whose outcome could be a public compromise. However, the local government has never verified how numerous the group of persons who were opposing the idea of turning the Red Baron into the town's branded tourist product actually was, nor has it ever attempted to find out, based on e.g. a referendum or a survey, what the present day inhabitants think about this controversial former citizen of Świdnica and about the town's promotion using his character.

The lack of goodwill on the part of the officials and representatives of the town's authorities for the ideas submitted by some members of the population who see the opportunity for increasing tourist flows through the Red Baron had the effect that some decided to take the matter in their own hands. As evidence of that one should mention in the first place a four-star hotel built in 2012 in the vicinity of the pilot's home named Red Baron Hotel, as well as moving the memorial stone with which the town's German citizens honored the pilot's death in 1918, from the thickets where it had stood to the garden situated within the area of the former Richthofen's villa. This public campaign conducted by the founder of the Red Baron Foundation led to intense positive domestic and international media coverage (Augustyn 2007). The outcome of the campaign is the ever growing interest in the Richthofen's family home on the part of tourists, foreign journalists and movie producers who shoot documentary materials dedicated to the flying ace. Despite this the local authorities have not taken any measures in this respect totally failing to support the citizens who started to build the tourist product on their own (Augustyn 2009). But in order to create an attractive tourist product what is crucial is a promotional activity that is well organized and implemented and which should be carried out by the local government. As Dąbrowska (2006) notes, one of the significant changes within the scope of local promotion and tourism is the shift from the promotion of assets to the promotion of the tourist product. It is no longer enough to promote beautiful landscapes or historical buildings.

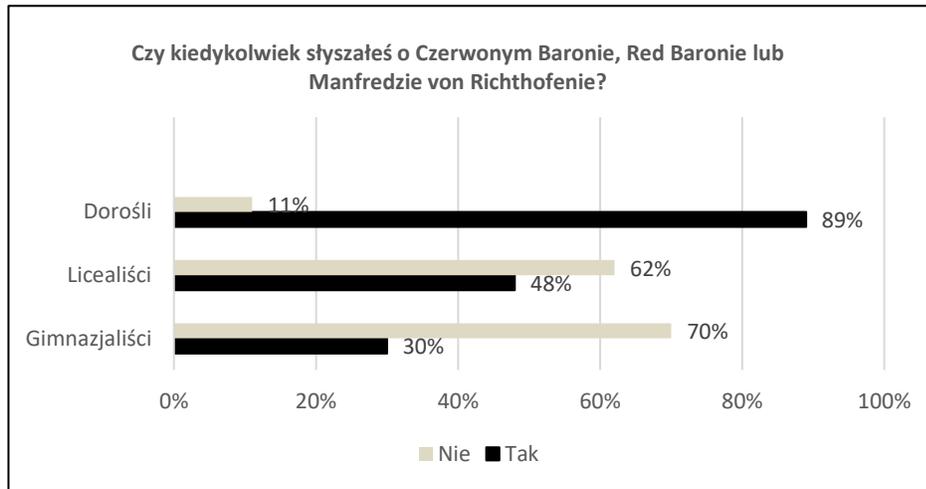
5. The findings of the survey of Świdnica population

While gathering and verifying the materials it was revealed⁷ that the problem of no response on the part of the town’s officials and authorities is not as much a dislike for the Red Baron as the fear of public opinion. The implication of this finding involved carrying out a public survey by the author aimed at checking, among other things, whether these concerns were well grounded. Two such studies were conducted – one a pilot survey accomplished in its entirety by the author independently on her own, while the second survey on a sample of 1000 persons was carried out in 2015 within the framework of a project financed by Civic Initiatives Fund (CIF) by a research team of Symbioza Foundation to which the author of this paper belonged. The results of both polls were very similar. For the purpose of this paper, the results of the survey completed independently by the author will be presented.

The pilot survey conducted at the end of 2014 encompassed 300 respondents from Świdnica of whom 100 were school-aged (third year of the secondary school and the first year of the upper secondary school) and 200 adults of both genders. The first part of the questionnaire to be filled in by the surveyed referred to how well they recognized and knew the Red Baron, while the second part was concerned with finding out what respondents thought about the pilot and whether the town’s inhabitants would like to promote their town through his legend.

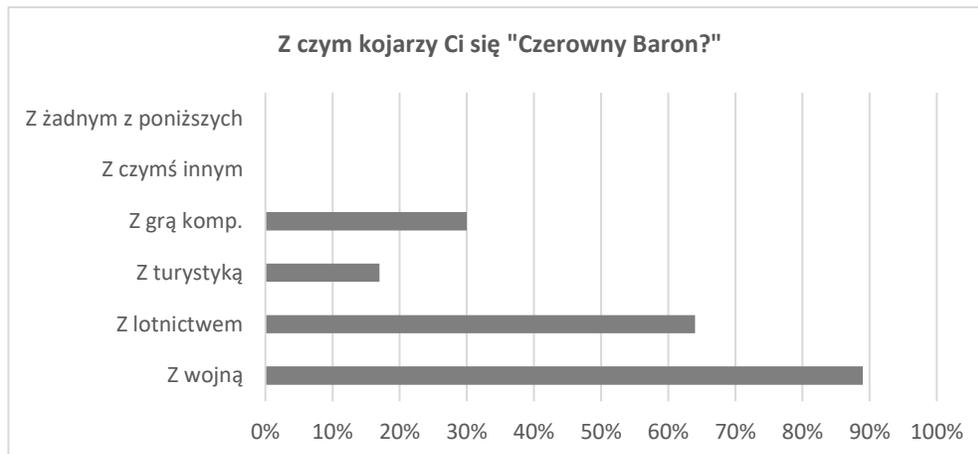
When asked: „Have you ever heard about the Red Baron?” 89% of adult respondents answered in the affirmative, 11% in this age group admitted that they had never heard of him (see Figure 1). The younger respondents knew clearly less about this character, which would demonstrate that in schools and outside classes there are no classes focusing on regional education, which would allow young people to gain better knowledge on Świdnica’s history and its famous citizens. 48% of upper secondary school respondents stated that they were familiar with the Red Baron, while only 30% of secondary school respondents reported that they had heard of him.

⁷ The paper presented herein represents a partial result of the author’s interest of many years in the issue of the development of Świdnica’s tourism and the ongoing dispute involving the figure of the Red Baron.

Figure 1. Have you ever heard of the Red Baron or Manfred von Richthofen?

Source: self-reported data.

Persons who heard about the Red Baron associated this figure correctly (see Figure 2). The majority of respondents, while indicating two options of the answer to the question as to “What do you associate the Red Baron with” responded that with war (98%), with aviation 64%, with tourism 17% and computer games 30%.

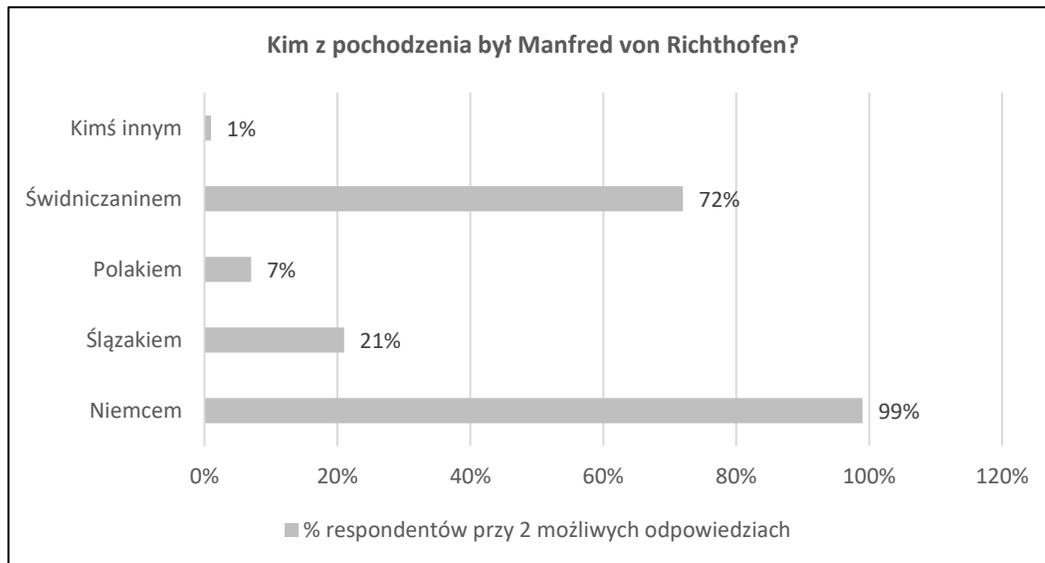
Figure 2. What do you associate the Red Baron with?

Source: self-reported data.

Respondents were also asked about Manfred von Richthofen’s ancestry (see Figure 3). Respondents could choose for their answer two options out of five. Their choices showed that the

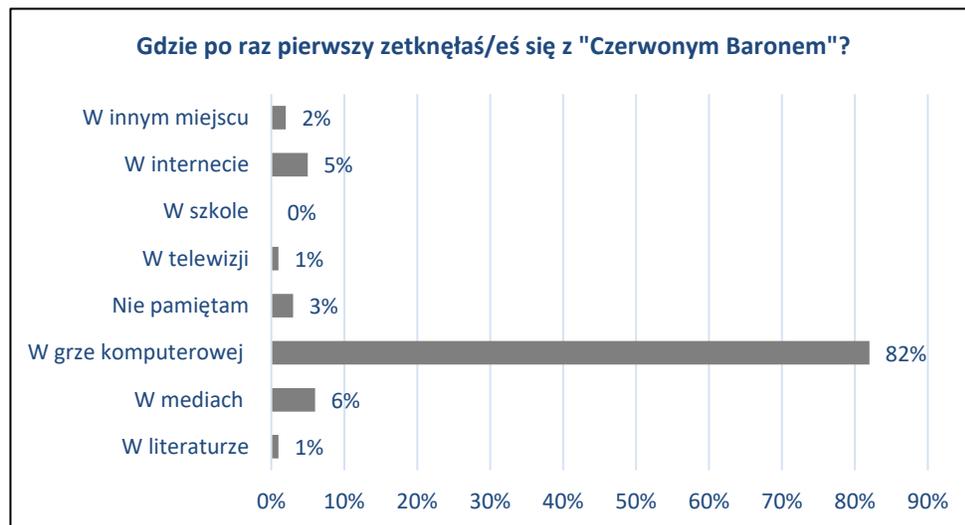
majority of them knew that he was German (99%) and a citizen of Świdnica (72%). 21% respondents also gave a correct answer in that they called Richthofen a Silesian, with 7% of respondents considering the Red Baron to be Polish, while 1% stated that he was of some other ancestry without reporting which, although the questionnaire offered such option.

Figure 3. What was Manfred von Richthofen’s ancestry?



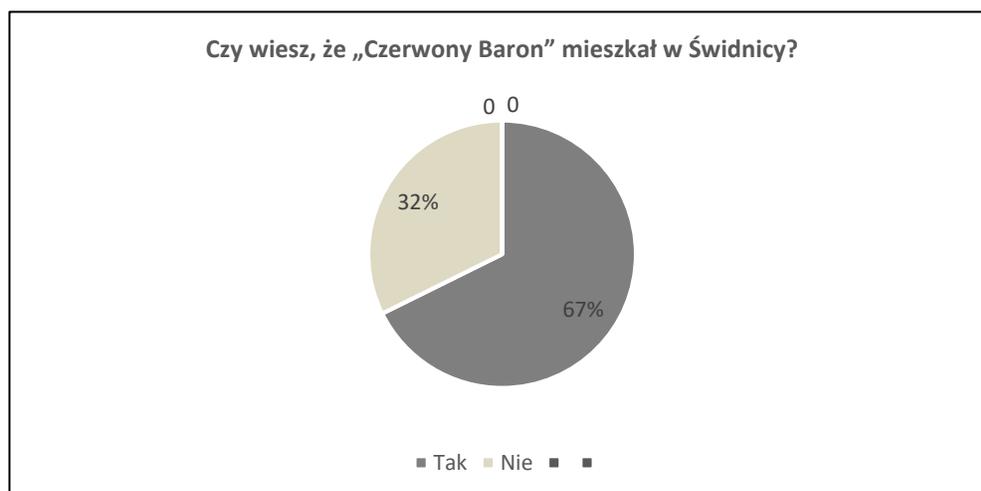
Source: self-reported data.

What came as a rather surprising response was one given to the question: “Where did you first come across the Red Baron” (see Figure 4). It turned out that in their vast majority both the oldest as well as the youngest respondents came across the character of the Red Baron for the first time while playing computer games (82% of all respondents); 3% stated that they could not remember, with 6% reporting that they heard about this figure in the media, while 1% said that it was while reading books. The same percentage of respondents (1%) indicated TV as the place where they came across the pilot for the first time, 5% indicated the Internet, and 2% another source. One respondent who indicated other source wrote that he found out about the Red Baron quite accidentally through his encounter with tourists in Świdnica who had been looking for the way to the pilot’s home. This meeting prompted the respondent to search for more information on Richthofen.

Figure 4. Where did you first come across the Red Baron?

Source: self-reported data.

Almost all respondents (98%) who heard about the Red Baron knew that he was a flying ace in the World War One. Not all of them, however, were aware of the fact that he used to live in Świdnica (see Figure 5). Of this information, only 62% of respondents was aware, but on the other hand, everyone of them was aware of the existence of the Richthofen's family house in their town and was able to point out accurately the neighborhood where the house is situated.

Figure 5. Do you know if the Red Baron used to live in Świdnica?

Source: self-reported data

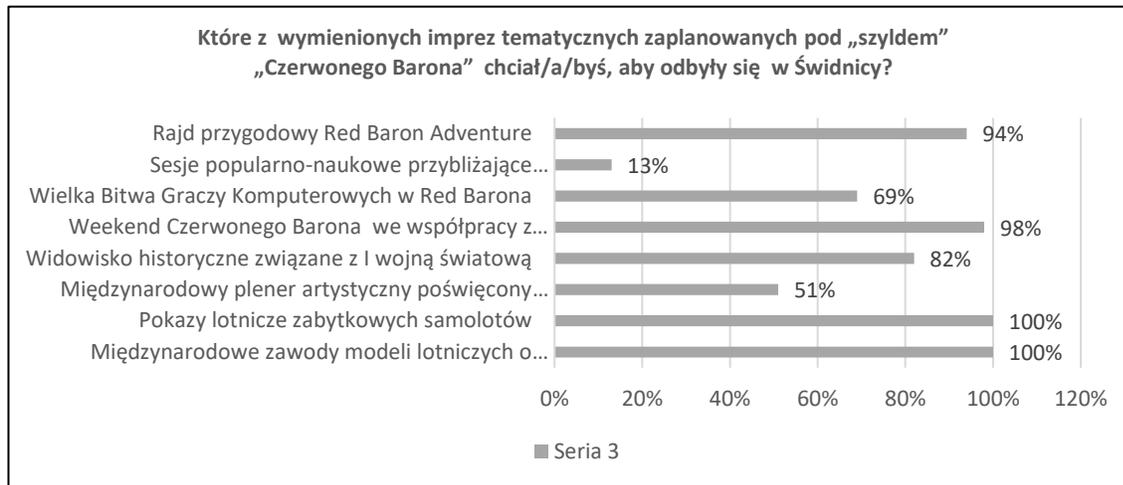
One of the most important issues was concerned with the opinion (of those who came across the Red Baron, as well as those who heard about him the first time during the survey) whether they believed Świdnica should promote itself through the Red Baron brand. The question “Do you think that the Red Baron is a sufficiently important and well-known figure in the world for Świdnica to use him for promotional purposes?” 96% answered in the affirmative, 4% had no opinion. None of the respondents expressed his clear opposition that could count as a “No”.

A vast majority of respondents (97%) believed that the town’s local authorities should plan promotional activities based on the Red Baron’s legend, with three percent having no opinion in this respect. The questionnaire also verified the inhabitants’ views on Świdnica’s attractiveness in terms of tourism. The responses given by respondents showed that the surveyed considered their town to be attractive (78% respondents), 14% considered it to be unattractive, with 8% having no opinion.

98% of respondents reported that promoting Świdnica through the Red Baron might increase tourist flows. 1% of respondents was of different opinion, with the same percentage of respondents stating that they did not know whether that would be so.

In one of the questionnaire items respondents were asked to indicate on the list with the proposals of tourist events that could be organized with the “participation” of the legendary Red Baron those which they would like to take place in Świdnica. Respondents had also the opportunity to submit their own proposal for a tourist event involving the figure of Manfred von Richthofen (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Which of the tourist events involving the Red Baron would you like to be held in Świdnica?

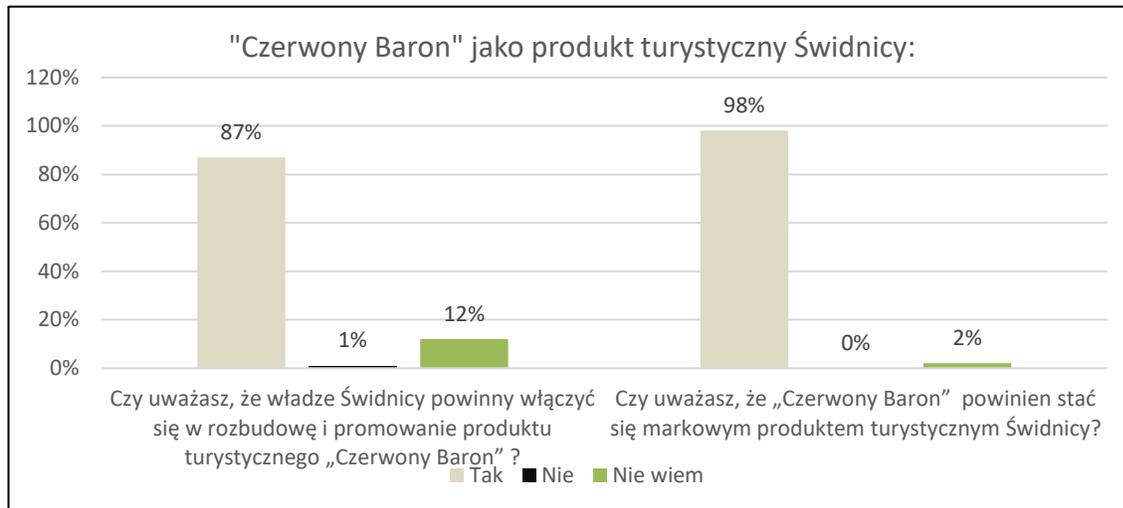


Source: self-reported data

Having analyzed this questionnaire item, it turned out that what enjoyed respondents' greatest popularity were the following proposals: International competition of aero-models for the Red Baron Cup and air shows of historical airplanes – 100% of respondents stated that they wanted these events to be organized in Świdnica. Respondents also found interesting (94%); the Red Baron Adventure Rally; “The Red Baron Weekend” in cooperation with aero-clubs (98%), a historical show related to the World War One (82% of respondents stated their support for organizing this kind of performance in their town). A Great Battle between the Red Baron Computer Game Players aroused interest of 69% of respondents; International Plein Air Art event attracted attention of 51% of the survey participants. The smallest percentage of respondents with 13% stated their interest in popular science lectures familiarizing the town's population with the history of the Red Baron. A dozen survey participants wrote their own suggestions of events that should be held in Świdnica involving the Red Baron – for the most part, they included sightseeing flights over the town “with the Red Baron” (gliders, small tourist airplanes, historical airplanes), with one person's proposal being Great Piantball Battle between the Poles and Germans for the Red Baron Cup to be held across the area with the remnants of the Fortress of Świdnica– situated in the park where Richthofen's destroyed monument-mausoleum stands. It is worth noting that this proposal is quite interesting and exceptionally mediagenic, while at the same time very brave considering the Poles'

stereotypical attitude toward Germans. Such event could prove to be very exciting while showing that Poles can keep their history in perspective.

Figure 7. Respondents’ opinion on the Red Baron as Świdnica’s tourist product.



Source: self-reported data.

The last two questions of the survey referred to the tourist product based on the Red Baron’s legend (see Figure 7). The question: “Do you think that Świdnica’s authorities should join the development and promotion of the Red Baron-based tourist product?” was answered by 87% of respondents in the affirmative, 12% had no opinion, with 1% believing that the town should not participate in this undertaking. While answering the last question included in the survey: “Do you think that the Red Baron should become a branded tourist product of Świdnica?”. 98% of the surveyed gave a clear affirmative answer, with the other 2% stating “I don’t know”.

Analyzing the results of the survey one can see very clearly that an average inhabitant of the town of Świdnica who knows who the Red Baron is and what he is famous for believes that the flying ace should be used for the town’s promotional purposes.

6. Summary

Looking at the Red Baron in marketing terms one can notice that he became a product already during his lifetime. Germans made him a national hero, creating a huge propaganda tool through his figure. He was a darling of the media of his times, being discussed by the entire world involved in war, and also later following its end. He has been a topic of conversation until today.

He still intrigues us, arouses emotion, the hero of numerous publications, films, games. He takes on the form of toy characters, usability goods such as, for instance, bicycles. His legend is readily used while developing marketing products and it makes for a very good sale.

Considering that the Red Baron is a brand that is easy recognizable across the world by people of all ages (it suffices to mention the way Americans, the English or Australians “play with” his legend) one could assume that if Świdnica’s local self-government were to accept a marketing perspective of this figure and were to decide to use it for promotional purposes, the town could count on tourists taking greater interest in it. It is worth pointing out that despite the fact that the local authorities have displayed a dislike towards Manfred von Richthofen for 20 years, he still managed to become a tourist product of the town. This happened at the moment when the first tourist interested in the Red Baron remembered the pilot’s story connected with Świdnica and came to his family home at 19 Sikorski street. The interest in Świdnica’s traces of the Red Baron has been growing and developing since the moment the memorial stone was transported close to the old German house. This was a key moment which brought about that international media and film makers began showing their heightened interest in the flying ace. In a situation when foreign TV crews and tourists start flocking to the town, and the Red Baron as a brand is perceived as some sort of an already positive symbol, the failure on the part of the local authorities to make an attempt at resolving the dispute seemed a mistake. Likewise, being inactive in terms of using the figure for promotional purposes because of the fear, as mentioned earlier, of public criticism. The pilot survey – conducted on a sample of 300 town’s population – showed that the town’s inhabitants who understood what a tourist product was would like the local self-government to use the Red Baron in its promotion of the town, thereby sending a clear signal that they did not mind the fact that he was German. For many of them – which the answers given to the questionnaire confirmed – Manfred von Richthofen is also first and foremost their fellow Świdnica citizen.

Following the author’s completion of the research presented in this paper, in April 2016 the first public debate, initiated by Symbioza Foundation, was held in the City Hall under the title “The Red Baron – a branded tourist product of Świdnica?” which changed the opinion of many people previously against the promotion of the town using this figure. In the debate, apart from presenting what a tourist product was, all pro and cons of the use of Red Baron for tourism purposes were presented. Furthermore, it was showed – by demonstrating extensive picture documentation – what kind of products and for which age were developed beyond Świdnica based on the legend of the

Red Baron. It was also for the first time in the history of Świdnica that a substance-based discussion on Manfred von Richthofen was conducted among several dozen people (Szymkiewicz 2016). The outcome of the discussion initiated by the NGO sector was the declaration made by the local authorities present at the discussion as to the promotion of the town using the Red Baron, as well as the creation of a tourist product based on his legend (Dobkiewicz 2016), which was included in Świdnica’s Strategy for Tourism Development as one of the most significant tasks to be carried out over the period of 2016-2026.

The conclusion to be made following the case of Świdnica is that for the development of urban tourism what is needed is not only will and enthusiasm on the part of decision-makers, but above all it is to equip them with the basic knowledge on how to create tourist products and to develop marketing skills. What came to the fore while collecting the research material was the unwillingness and inability to look at the Red Baron through the marketing lens or that of a tourist product. The recommendation seems therefore reasonable for local governments facing similar problems as that of Świdnica rooted in the so called unwanted heritage to conduct the dialogue with the public and to ensure its education. If the local community is granted the opportunity to see what a marketing or tourist product of a particular region is, what is the purpose of its development, to whom it is addressed (in other words, who should like it and who should benefit from it) and finally – what profits the whole commune or region could gain from it – there is a chance that these truly difficult products will be able to be developed without stirring social conflicts. The situation today is such that owing to ever growing competition on the tourist market among Polish towns and cities, successful can only be those which – as Dąbrowska argues (2010) – are capable of the following: identifying correctly their own potential in terms of tourism and developing tourist products that are attractive, unique and of high quality and which can attract visitors’ attention.

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