

*Aleksandra Chabiera*  
National Heritage Board of Poland  
e-mail: achabiera@nid.pl

## PEOPLE—HERITAGE—SPACE: HERITAGE POTENTIAL IN THE EYES OF TOWNS RESIDENTS

### Streszczenie

#### **Ludzie—dziedzictwo—przestrzeń. Potencjał dziedzictwa w oczach mieszkańców małych miast**

Badania stosunku Polaków do dziedzictwa pokazują, co sądzą oni o jego roli. Czy akceptują publiczne wydatki na dziedzictwo? Czy widzą w nim potencjał rozwoju? Około 45% mieszkańców małych miast uważa, że może ono podnieść jakość życia. Prawie 69% rozumie jego ekonomiczny wymiar. Analiza odpowiedzi mieszkańców małych miast pokazuje obszary, w których warto koncentrować działania prorozwojowe.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rola dziedzictwa, wykorzystanie zasobów, społeczność lokalna, rozwój lokalny, strategie lokalne

### Abstract

A research on the Poles' attitude towards heritage has shown their perception of its role in life. Do they accept public financing of the heritage? Do they recognize its development potential? Ca. 45% of small town residents believe that heritage can improve the quality of life. Almost 69% understand its economic dimension. The analysis shows areas where development measures should focus.

**Keywords:** heritage role, assets use, community, local development, local strategies

### Introduction

Cultural heritage's role in development has been studied for many years and is well recognized. A significant change of approach towards heritage occurred

when heritage, understood through its *basic* values – historic, scientific, artistic<sup>1</sup> – was subjected to the financial assessment of public expenses for enlisted monuments. But as cultural heritage might be a source of income, financing monuments should be perceived as an investment. Thus, economic sciences developed their interest in cultural heritage, as a distinctive part of the economy of culture [Murzyn-Kupisz, 2015]. This observation, along with an inclusive approach towards local management, has triggered a change in the understanding of heritage value. This article takes a closer look at how the inhabitants of Polish towns understand heritage's role in local development, as well as surveys the activities and entrepreneurship that the communities undertake in relation to heritage.

## Heritage value—heritage impact

The notion of cultural heritage value was never defined in one specific way. Heritage items can incorporate different types of value in several categories which may influence one another. For example, artistic value may influence economic value of a heritage item. Categories and perception of value depend on the researcher (for example, the approach of an art historian is different from that of a sociologist) and on the purpose of valorisation [Chabiera *et al.*, 2016: 30–31]. Moreover, social recognition became a function of local cultural heritage value due to pro-social approach. A community, recognizing value of a heritage item, grants it a level of importance in local life.

Measuring the value of cultural heritage is a complex issue. Such an assessment may also be approached in many ways. Some types of value are socially preferred and result from social agreement, others are individual and relate to emotions. Nevertheless, both may be pursued by an individual in everyday life activities [Chabiera *et al.*, 2016: 38–39]. They influence, if not create, the sense of local identity. They are crucial for social capital and a pro-active society [Hełpa-Liszkowska, 2013: 7]. Economic value assessment is even more complex. The involvement of cultural heritage in the economy has been recognized nowadays, but it is not always obvious when it comes to details. Methods of such an assessment can also vary [Chabiera *et al.*, 2016: 39–44]. Financial valuation of heritage is rather rarely done in Poland, and it is usually limited to measuring the people's willingness to pay for ticketed sites.

The state of the current research is better in the field of the heritage impact on economy. Measuring such an impact requires well described areas of influence, operators, or indicators. However, in consequence, it may allow to monitor development processes and to adjust strategies and actions. The assessment allows for the knowledge-based decisions on development, such as required investments with budget allocations, improvements (infrastructure, accompanying incentives),

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<sup>1</sup> These values, presented in The Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of monuments, are described in: Chabiera *et al.*, 2016: 31–32.

restoration, tourist flow, target groups management, and others [Mourato, Mazzanti, 2002: 59–60]. There has been a research attempted in France which analysed jobs and revenues related to cultural heritage. It focused on ticketed museums and sites and showed a high level of revenues created by heritage, compared to state budget for restoration or maintenance, and a high level of employment connected to heritage [Ministère de la culture et de la Communication, 2009]. In European perspective, the impact found in the collected data was understood rather as a part of the culture branch of economy. Eurostat statistics have usually focused on such data as the employment in culture [Eurostat, 2016: 58], cultural enterprises, or international trade in cultural goods, where cultural heritage sector is described only by “antiques, collections and collectors’ pieces, postage or revenue stamps” [Eurostat, 2016: 112], and is distinguished from others, such as art craft and architecture. Cultural participation in heritage was represented by the statistics on the visiting of cultural sites [Eurostat, 2016: 133]. Household expenditures directly related to cultural heritage are represented by “museums, libraries, zoological gardens.” In 2016 edition general data concerning heritage assets were presented. The edition included a pilot project on the use of Wikipedia page views on World Heritage Sites, the general data on World Heritage List, European Heritage Label, European Capitals of Culture and the list of the most frequently visited museums [Eurostat, 2016: 20–42].

This seems insufficient for an efficient development policy, as the understanding of heritage through these data is limited. Nowadays, more branches related to the cultural heritage sector have been defined, with multiple activities based on heritage assets that create jobs and income, such as cultural tourism, historic real estate, creative industry, heritage protection, popularization and education, craft and traditional agriculture [Florjanowicz *et al.*, 2016: 48–49].

The new approach is reflected in series of documents and recommendations within the EU.<sup>2</sup> These were followed by two reports analysing heritage essential role in European development. The evidence-based research published in the *Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe Report* [2015] is a mapping and analysis of available data on heritage impact – economic, social, cultural and environmental [*Cultural Heritage Counts...*, 2015].<sup>3</sup> It presents a holistic approach to the assessment of heritage role in European development. Important findings have resulted from this research. Firstly, heritage has been recognized as crucial for the attractiveness of European regions to investors, especially in the creative and cultural sector. It pointed to a considerable number of jobs and tax revenues created by cultural heritage, as well as to the growth of individual awareness and need to

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<sup>2</sup> Such as *Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe* [Council of the European Union, 2014], *Communication Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe* [European Commission, 2014], *et al.*

<sup>3</sup> Report prepared by the Consortium of Europa Nostra, The European Network on Cultural Management and Cultural Policy Education, Heritage Europe (The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions), International Cultural Centre, Kraków, Raymond Lemaire International Centre, for Conservation at KU Leuven and The Heritage Alliance, England.

learn which resulted in entrepreneurship, social bonds and well-being of localities [*Cultural Heritage Counts...*, 2015: 19–29]. The second report was prepared by the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage. Its aim was to show benefits that cultural heritage might bring for European countries, and it recommended policy framework in regard to heritage within the Horizon 2020. Recommendations based on research and regional needs link heritage with urban regeneration, sustainable use of landscapes, inclusive approach as well as with innovation and creative approach to heritage use [European Commission, 2015: 10–16].

Considering the above, a research of Poles attitude towards heritage would present actual strengths and areas requiring enhancement in the field of heritage based development.

## The Poland of small towns: people—heritage—space

There is a need of thorough research on cultural heritage impact in Poland. The existing analyses show that heritage wisely used in local strategies and activities – public, private and grass-rooted – influences local economies and societies. On the local scale, some analysis has been made [cf. Klekotko, 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012; Chabiera *et al.*, 2016], but on the national, or regional scale there is hardly any analytic overview. Decision makers need evidence-based knowledge about social approach towards cultural heritage. Local economy, as a function of the level of entrepreneurship, depends on the inhabitants' activities. Directions and priorities of development should be defined within a community (inclusive approach), so it is crucial for the authorities to know and understand the opinions of the local people.

In 2015, the National Heritage Board of Poland commissioned a nationwide survey to collect data on the public approach towards cultural heritage. The research was conducted both on national and local scale and it covered such areas as: importance of heritage, personal engagement, activities, understanding of economic dimension, willingness to contribute financially. Thirty-one questions allowed for the collection of data leading to a better understanding of the society's approach towards heritage issues.<sup>4</sup> The quantitative method (with CAPI technique) was used on a representative sample (1067 adults in 16 voivodships), with several demographic variables, among which was the size of municipality: villages, towns up to 50,000 residents, cities 50–200,000 residents, and big cities over 200,000 residents. The group of town inhabitants was the second largest among the respondents

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<sup>4</sup> As the survey was a part of the project *HoME – Heritage of My Environment. Cultural heritage values in local communities*, run by National Heritage Board of Poland and Norwegian Riksantikvaren (co-financed by EEA Grants and Norway Grants), part of it – 19 questions – was also carried out in Norway, in order to compare both countries societies. More about this comparative analysis: Koziol, Einen, 2016: 27–31.

(24%).<sup>5</sup> That allowed to investigate the situation in Polish towns – how these communities perceive and use heritage in their everyday life.<sup>6</sup>

Three basic questions researched the importance of cultural heritage.

1. How important is cultural heritage for you? For 31.4% of the respondents, heritage is very important, for the further 54.6% it is rather important. The size of municipality was a variable which significantly influenced the answers. The second highest level of personal heritage importance was measured among the inhabitants of towns (up to 50,000 residents):

Table 1

How important is cultural heritage for you? Positive answers<sup>7</sup>

<b>Important in one way or another (total)</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Rather important</b>
Big city – 91.9%	41.8%	50.1%
City – 78.9%	34.1%	44.8%
Town – 91.4%	30.4%	61.0%
Village – 82.7%	25.1%	57.6%

Source: Chabiera *et al.*, 2017; own elaboration – data published partially.

Table 2

How important cultural heritage is for your community (place of residence)?  
Positive answers

<b>Important in one way or another (total)</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Rather important</b>
Big city – 79.3%	22.5%	56.8%
City – 73.5%	17.8%	55.7%
Town – 87.8%	26.8%	61.0%
Village – 73.7%	20.5%	53.2%

Source: Chabiera *et al.*, 2017.

2. How important is cultural heritage for your community (place of residence)? For 22% of the respondents, heritage is very important for their community, for

<sup>5</sup> More details about the applied research method in: Chabiera *et al.*, 2017: 20–21.

<sup>6</sup> The statistics presented below result from (if not mentioned otherwise) the 2015 National Heritage Board of Poland survey, and or they were not yet published, or published in: Chabiera *et al.*, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Due to very high level of positive answers, the author decided not to show other answers in three questions concerning heritage importance (“rather not important”, “definitely not important” and “I don’t know, hard to say”), as negligible in this case.

the further 56.2%, rather important. Towns residents are the most persuaded about the importance of heritage in the community life:

Table 3

How important cultural heritage is for your Poland (society)? Positive answers

<b>Important in one way or another (total)</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Rather important</b>
Big city – 86.2%	34.5%	51.7%
City – 79.2%	31.6%	47.6%
Town – 90.6%	33.9%	56.7%
Village – 84.3%	28.7%	55.6%

Source: own elaboration, data non published.

The above answers show that heritage is important for Poles, whether on a personal or on a social scale. What seems interesting is that town residents are among the most aware respondents. This is also the case with the answers to the questions on heritage value for the quality of life. When asked whether they agree with the statement that cultural heritage is valuable because it can make a place of residence exceptional, almost half of Poles definitely agreed (44.1%), but among the inhabitants of towns this response reached 56.9%. The second highest score (big cities residents) is visibly lower, reaching 45.5%. Town residents, more often than other groups, are of the opinion that cultural heritage has potential to improve the quality of community life (45.5% definitely agree, 43.7% rather agree). They also see more often the heritage potential of recreation and leisure and of its influence on aesthetic aspect of the surroundings.

Table 4

How much do you agree with the statement that cultural Heritage is valuable, as it gives possibility of recreation and leisure?<sup>8</sup>

<b>Agree in one way or another (total)</b>	<b>I definitely agree</b>	<b>I rather agree</b>
Big city – 88.7%	35.2%	53.5%
City – 76.5%	46.6%	29.9%
Town – 92.3%	51.4%	40.9%
Village – 86%	33.4%	52.6%

Source: own elaboration, data non published.

<sup>8</sup> Due to very high level of positive answers, the author decided not to show other answers (“I rather do not agree,” “I definitely do not agree” and “I don’t know, hard to say”), as negligible in this case.

Table 5

How much do you agree with the statement that cultural heritage is valuable, because it can improve the aesthetics of a place of residence?<sup>9</sup>

Agree in one way or another (total)	I definitely agree	I rather agree
Big city – 90.2%	43.7%	46.5%
City – 79.5%	48.6%	30.9%
Town – 91%	52.9%	38.1%
Village – 85.4%	37.8%	47.6%

Source: own elaboration, data non published.

Towns and big cities residents appear to be the groups most aware of heritage importance and its role in their lives. Higher level of education is clearly linked with the affirmative attitude towards cultural heritage, which would indicate that the amount of knowledge influences opinions on heritage [Chabiera *et al.*, 2017: 27]. The inhabitants of Polish cities are generally better educated than other groups; thus, the relatively lower positive attitude towards heritage among medium size cities residents seems striking. Better response rate in towns might arise from the fact the accessibility of museums and cultural centres have increased recently, and so have the number of clubs or artistic groups members. Small town residents have recently been more active than before in several cultural fields [Środa-Murawska, 2013: 48–49]. It is possible that cultural activity level influences opinions on heritage.

On the other hand, the question: “Have you participated in any event or activity related to cultural heritage in the last 12 months?” has revealed different attitudes. Only 22.6% of towns inhabitants responded positively and it was the second lowest score, while the rate of positive responses among big cities inhabitants was the highest – 33.6%. When asked why they did not visit any site or take part in any other activity involving cultural heritage, Poles declared, almost in unison, lack of time (63.1%); the second most common answer was that they could not afford site seeing (but only 19.1%). Other reasons were lack of interesting offer for visitors (13.4%) and lack of interest (8.3%).<sup>10</sup>

The question arises whether town residents are interested in what happens in the area of cultural heritage in their neighbourhood. Strong interest is declared only by 4.7% and a moderate one by 44.9%. The attitude of 28.5% of them is neutral, – 14% are rather not interested, and 7.9% are not interested at all. Nor do they feel that they have any influence on what is happening with their local heritage. Such a sense of influence was declared only by 5.6% of towns residents. Respondents pointed to various reasons of their sense of lack of influence. Most common

<sup>9</sup> As above.

<sup>10</sup> Due to the low answers rate to this question (89), author restrains from drawing any conclusions

answer is that they have never considered this (31.6%); 26.5% declare that they do not have time for such an activity, 20.6% do not know how they might engage, while 10.8% think that this would not have changed anything. For the authorities or NGOs that should be an indication that more events or inclusive activities and their promotion is required. Or, that such events should be more attractive.

What attractions or facilities should then be available for monuments visitors? Town residents are most interested in guided tours and local picnics or festivals (33.1% and 30.2% respectively). Next, there are open air events (28.7%), exhibitions (25.5%), souvenir shops (21.4%), local history lessons, workshops (19.6%), concerts (19.6%), multimedia performances and “sound & light” shows (18.3%), tourist centres (17.5%), offer for children, (16.3%), restaurants and bars (14.8%), and active forms of site seeing, such as action games or quests (10.9%). Less popular answers (below 10%) suggested bookshops and mobile apps.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, towns inhabitants would be interested in side events organized in historic places, museums and monuments:

- individual guided tours, storytelling, concerts and dedicated movies (selected by 36.7%, 36.3%, 31.6%, and 30.9% of the respondents respectively);
- workshops, side exhibitions, dedicated theatre plays, educational teaching games and plays (20.1%, 18.9%, 18.6%, and 15.3% respectively).

Less interesting according to the respondents were expert lectures and contests. 10.4% declared they would not be interested in any additional events.<sup>12</sup> 56% of towns residents answered they would definitely pay an additional fee to participate in side events, and 55.6% of them would rather pay such a fee. Fewer than 10% of the respondents were definitely against. The results mark out the course of action for site managers, museums, or tour operators, but, what is more important, for the authorities developing tourism in their municipalities. As cultural heritage might be, and sometimes is, a positive stimulus for a municipality or for a region, it is not enough to open a monument for visitors. If the authorities plan to develop tourism, they need to think about special attractions and facilities to avoid leakage effects. Firstly, because those would bring income to a municipality, and secondly, because they would allow to efficiently steer the tourist flow. Finally, because such an approach would allow to activate other places of interest in the process of development [Chabiera, 2017].

Polish people generally agree that it is worth investing public money in cultural heritage protection: 29.9% of town residents definitely agree and 64.8% rather agree. This shows that a smart communication policy about the investment character of such spending would allow to gain social support. Somehow, the Polish society know, as 15.3% of respondents agree and 58.2% rather agree, with the statement, that cultural heritage can have an economic dimension: becoming a source of income, creating jobs, new products and services. 16.3% of towns residents definitely agreed, while 63% of them rather agreed. So, almost

<sup>11</sup> The question “What attractions and facilities should be available for the monuments visitors?” was of multiple choice. Respondents could choose maximum five answers.

<sup>12</sup> As above.

80% of towns inhabitants would be potential supporters of the strategies involving cultural heritage as an asset for development. What specific targets of public financing are supported by towns inhabitants? Most popular were protection and conservation of historic buildings (64.1%), then heritage promotion outside the municipality (33.7%), the improvement of access and infrastructure (23.2%), heritage education among residents (19%), side events (17.6%), while exhibitions were less popular (9.3%). 2.6% of the respondents did not see any need to spend municipality money on cultural heritage.

## Instead of conclusions

There remains a question about how the communities have already taken heritage into account in their local strategies. A pilot survey among local action groups (LAGs) reveals a rather positive picture.<sup>13</sup> Cultural Heritage was often defined as a crucial asset in Local Development Strategies designed by LAGs: most important seemed historic buildings, crafts and handwork, parks, culinary and other traditions, cemeteries and historic places. Less common choices were archaeological sites, industrial heritage and historic objects. The same order is seen in how these heritage types feature in the implemented projects co-financed by LAGs. The goals of heritage oriented projects were: the preservation of cultural heritage for next generations, activation of inhabitants, the strengthening of local identity, tourism development, better quality of life and social bonds. Using cultural heritage in commercial activities was a less common goal. But the analysis of non-commercial projects has revealed that some of them have a real commercial impact (for example, a revitalization of a palace or a park, accessible now for visitors and in some cases offering services). Projects are implemented most often by public institutions, NGOs and parishes, less frequently by private individuals, informal organizations and businessmen (or individuals planning commercial activity).

All in all, Polish towns residents perceive a high importance of heritage in their lives. They also seem to develop a greater understanding of its role in economy and support public financing of cultural heritage as investment. Nevertheless, not always are those opinions followed by actions. The gap between declaration of heritage importance in social life or in localities development and actual participation or use of heritage is striking. This may be due to the recognition as heritage of something exceptional only (e.g. nationwide famous castle). A barn passed by every day, streets layout or family culinary traditions are not always perceived as heritage or, moreover, as potential. Understanding it increase awareness of one's identity; thus education about local heritage (not only about important local monuments) and inhabitants participation still requires enhancement. Heritage is easy to combine with modern education approach, inclusive, using new technologies

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<sup>13</sup> Not yet published research (on 68 out of ca. 250 LAGs operating in Poland) run in cooperation of National Heritage Board of Poland and Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University.

and appealing. Extracurricular education, as well as comprehensive development approach fall within the remit of local authorities. Cultural heritage should be assessed and its role defined in local strategic documents, from the point of view of spatial planning, economic development, as well as promotion and education. Implementation of such a provisions would boost social engagement, everyday life interest in local heritage and – in consequence – entrepreneurship. That is a task for decision-makers and local leaders. Authorities seem to understand this better nowadays, but since they reflect the attitudes of the society, they also need to convert these ideas into reality.

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