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Increasing the socio-cultural influence of immovable cultural heritage on local communities – the case of historic residential buildings in Wielkopolska used as hotels

Abstract. The article presents results of a study of how immovable cultural heritage used for commercial purposes of tourism affects local communities. The study is based on data collected in direct interviews with property owners and representatives of local authorities and a questionnaire survey of local residents concerning sixteen historic buildings used as hotels, which are located in rural areas of Wielkopolskie province. It was found that the provision of additional, free cultural functions for local communities by property owners and/or local authorities exerts a greater socio-cultural impact and contributes to local, sustainable development. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that when historic buildings of this kind are used for commercial purposes it is important to ensure that they are part of the cultural experience not only for hotel guests but also for the local community. In this way, entire communities can appreciate their local cultural heritage (socio-cultural impact), which in turn strengthens cultural sustainability.

Keywords: cultural heritage, heritage management, sustainable development, impact assessment, adaptive reuse, cultural economics, socio-cultural development

JEL Codes: R11, Z32, Q01

1. Introduction

Many historic buildings are currently being adapted to serve contemporary purposes. These new uses are often related to the tourism market, which means they many of these buildings are converted into hotels. As the stock of cultural heritage objects, including immovable ones keeps growing, not all of them can be used

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as museums and maintained with public funds (Szmygin, 2009, p. 5). Therefore, in line with the contemporary approach to immovable cultural heritage, such resources can be adapted to serve purposes other than those they were created for. They are treated as a catalyst for sustainable local development (JPI CH Report, 2019; Kobyliński, 2011; Purchla, 2013; Szmygin, 2016; Veldpaus Pereira Roders, & Colenbrander, 2013). Reuse of immovable cultural heritage is also a consequence of the current policies in the field of the use and management of cultural heritage (Council of Europe, 2005, 2015; Council of the European Union, 2010, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; European Commission, 2018; ICOMOS, 2014, 2016; United Nations, 2015). These policies result from research on cultural heritage and the role it plays in socio-economic life. In recent years, both research and policies related to cultural heritage have focused on the impact of cultural heritage resources on sustainable local development, including the socio-cultural component (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Gabrielli & Farinelli, 2017; Labadi, 2011; Licciardi & Amirtahmasebi, 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2013; Murzyn-Kupisz & Działek, 2013; Purchla, 2013).

Immovable cultural heritage can be traded like any other real estate, which is not legally protected. For example, in Poland in many cases such buildings can be bought and sold without any limitations and sometimes such transactions are even facilitated by various types of discounts (Ustawa z dnia 21 sierpnia 1997 r. o gospodarce nieruchomościami). Potential buyers are thus incentivised to acquire such buildings and repurpose them for contemporary, often commercial, functions. In this way, historic buildings get a “second life” and can be preserved for future generations without the need to spend public funds on protecting and maintaining them. Unfortunately, once such buildings start to be used for commercial purposes, are often “excluded” from the life of the local community or their role in this respect is considerably limited. For their new owners, profit becomes the key rationale for their operation in the new format. When historic properties are sold to private owners, buyers’ intentions are rarely taken into account. Under private ownership, the use of historic buildings for cultural and social functions is usually limited to paying customers, i.e. those who have purchased a service offered at a given historic site. However, it should be emphasized that such buildings, although privately owned, still constitute *public goods* (Mathews, 2010; Navrud & Ready, 2002; Navrud, 2005) and as such should be part of the local community’s socio-cultural life, contributing to its sustainable development. Therefore, it is worth investigating whether historic buildings that constitute local cultural assets and provide additional cultural functions for local communities affect their socio-cultural development. One category of buildings that are frequently made to serve new functions are historic residences in rural Poland converted into hotels. These buildings no longer serve their original purposes as centres for managing their owners’ land or as manifestations of their wealth and status. The author investi-

gated additional cultural functions played by such buildings, namely the impact of organizing free cultural events (of various types) for local communities. The study focused on sixteen historic residences located Wielkopolskie province in Poland. It is part of broader research on the impact of historic buildings on sustainable local development and ensuring their cultural sustainability.

2. The research problem

Research on the impact of immovable cultural heritage on sustainable local development has been undertaken since the 1990s (see: Bollo, 2013; Frey 1997a, 1997b; Greffe, 2004; Lazzaretti, 2012; Mason, 2002; Matarasso, 1997; McLoughlin, Sodagar, & Kaminski, 2006; Murzyn-Kupisz & Działek, 2013; Nijkamp, 2012; Rypkema, 2008; Van der Auwera, 2014; Yung & Chan, 2012). Most of these studies focus on the socio-economic effects of using immovable cultural heritage, such as job creation, local government revenue, influx of tourists, etc. (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Gabrielli & Farinelli, 2017; Labadi, 2011; Licciardi & Amirtahmasebi, 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2013; Murzyn-Kupisz & Działek, 2013). There are no studies accounting for any factors that might strengthen or weaken the impact of particular uses of immovable cultural heritage on various dimensions of sustainable development, particularly the socio-cultural dimension. The element of culture is essential in this context because heritage is, as a rule, culture-forming and creative and is the basis for creating so-called cultural income (Throsby, 2005; UNESCO, 2013). Therefore, it is important that the impact of cultural heritage should be as big as possible and any initiatives to repurpose it should benefit the maximum range of recipients, including the local community where a given cultural heritage object is located. However, repurposing of cultural heritage resources is very often associated with commercial use as a source of income (hotels, residential real estate, etc.). On the one hand, in this way historic buildings can generate profit, with which they can be maintained without the need to use public funding. On the other hand, using a historic building for commercial purposes often means that the majority of the local community can no longer use it because the price of services offered is too high. This is frequently the case with historic buildings converted into hotels. Such facilities are often of a high standard, which is reflected by relatively high prices of services offered. An earlier study (Niemczewska, 2020) carried out by the author indicates that the socio-cultural impact on customers who use the services provided in historic buildings is greater than that experienced by members of local communities, who have limited opportunities to use them. However, this influence exists if the local community can experience a given building on other

occasions. As mentioned in the introduction, immovable cultural heritage objects are often sold to private owners, without much regard for their intentions, which are usually associated with profit generation. However, certain initiatives taken by both property owners and local authorities can increase the role such buildings play in the socio-cultural development of local communities. In view of the above, the author hypothesized that additional non-profit cultural initiatives associated with cultural heritage objects used for commercial purposes contribute to increasing their impact on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable development of local communities.

3. Theoretical background

Broadly understood cultural heritage is perceived as an important factor of sustainable local and regional socio-economic development (Kogut-Jaworska, 2011, p. 190; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2013, pp. 156-162; Purchla, 2013, p. 5). Cultural heritage is a development fostering resource, which, if properly used, can bring multifaceted benefits. It can be a tourist product, a tool to combat poverty, a branding tool, a tool to promote social cohesion and an economical alternative to creating new buildings (Purchla, 2013, p. 54). Some researchers also refer to it as a kind of cultural capital (Shockley, 2004, pp. 75-102; Throsby, 1997, 1999). Interpreting cultural heritage as cultural capital is clearly in line with the definition of the environment as natural capital (Licciardi & Amirtahmasebi, 2012, p. XXII; Navrud & Ready, 2002, p. 5; Throsby, 2005, p. 3). For this reason, cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) began to be considered and studied in the context of sustainable development. It means that studies in this area aim to answer the following questions: does the new use of a given heritage object ensure sustainable local development, does it positively affect such economic categories as employment growth, multiplier effects, but also whether it affects socio-cultural development. Also in practice, cultural heritage is seen as a catalyst for creativity and a factor contributing to the attractiveness of regions and cities, which translates into economic growth and job creation (European Commission, 2014; 2018). Both states and organizations influencing policy making have perceived the need to transform cultural heritage sites and give them a different, contemporary meaning in order to limit the use of public funds by increasing their chances for self-financing. In 2019, the Register of Monuments included 844,588 entries for immovable monuments (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, 2020, p. 13). The number of historic buildings increases every year (although some of those previously listed, due to the loss of their historic value – which is often the result of adaptation works – are deleted from the register). Therefore, even professional monument conservators agree that only the most valuable buildings can function

as museums and only some can be renovated and restored using public funds. Most historic monuments have to be maintained by their owners or users, which means that they must fulfil new functions (Szmygin, 2009, p. 5).

One category of immovable monuments in Poland includes residential buildings, such as palaces and manors. They are an important part of the national immovable heritage, both in material and symbolic terms (Kozak, 2008, p. 93). They are situated in towns and villages, although in most cases, they are a feature of the rural landscape, which is a reflection of the original purpose they were created for. Manors and palaces were centres of land administration and served as a symbol of their owners' wealth and social status. Some of them are now located in urban centres because over the centuries cities have grown, and some of these buildings have been "absorbed" into the urban fabric. Some of them were originally built inside cities, such as palaces of factory owners in Łódź, which saw a rapid development of the textile industry at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Regardless of their location, many are currently neglected or are used for other purposes (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, 2017, pp. 125-126). Depending on their state of preservation and location, they have been used as offices, schools, orphanages, nursing homes, penitentiary institutions, hotels, boarding houses, etc. How those buildings have been treated and used over the years also depends on the prevailing political or socio-economic conditions. The accession of Poland to the European Union was an important moment for the Polish stock of monuments. As a result, cultural heritage resources (including immovable ones) began to be perceived not only in the light of national policies but also in the context of European regulations. The goal of these policies is not only to protect cultural heritage as a valuable resource from the point of view of local communities but also to enable its use for new purposes and shape its role in society and the economy. Contemporary use of cultural heritage, according to EU and national policies, should contribute to economic growth, employment and social cohesion, social and cultural development, i.e. to the implementation of the main goals of sustainable development. For, as underlined by the European Commission, "Europe's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is our common wealth – our inheritance from previous generations of Europeans and our legacy for those to come. It is an irreplaceable repository of knowledge and a valuable resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion" (European Commission, 2014).

4. Methodology

To confirm the hypothesis, the author conducted a study using qualitative and quantitative methods to characterize the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable local development and the resources of immovable cultural heritage. The use of

Table 1. List of historical residential buildings analysed in the study

Name of the historical place	Data from the Polish Register of Monuments
Antonin Palace	Hunting palace complex, register nos: KS.Z.I.2/28/48 dated 6.03.1948, 906/A dated 20.07.1970, 719/A dated 25.09.1995, no: 732/A dated 27.09.1996
Będlewo Palace	Palace complex register no: 1493/A dated 27.11.1973
Biedrusko Palace	Palace complex, register no: 1778/A dated 19.01.1978
Brodnica Palace	Palace complex, register no: 1715/A dated 23.04.1975
Bugaj Palace	Palace complex, register no: 455/A dated 16.07.1988
Dębogóra Manor	Manor house complex XVIII/XIX century, register nos: A-762 dated 22.03.1995, A-564 dated 29.09.1987
Drzeczkowo Palace	Palace complex, register no: 228/1-4/Wlkp/A dated 2.04.1957, 11.04.1974 and 4.07.2002
Iwno Palace	Palace complex, register no: 767/Wlkp/A dated 29.10.1968, 4.02.1988, 5.02.1981, 23.11.1994 and 20.10.2009
Jeziorki Manor	Manor and farm complex, register no: 1413/A dated 7.05.1993
Kobylniki Palace	Manor complex, register no: 1432/A dated 11.04.1973
Obrzycko Palace Complex	Palace complex, register no: 1430/A dated 11.04.1973 and 2249/A dated 5.10.1992
Podstolice Palace	Manor complex, register nos: 2154/A dated 22.04.1988, 1987/A dated 16.01.1985
RzęszkowoPalce	Palace complex, register nos: A-525 dated 27.08.1985, A-797 dated 15.12.1997
Tarce Palace	Palace complex, register no: 1390/A dated 24.02.1973
Wąsowo Palace Complex	Palace complex, register no: 1689/A dated 4.04.1975
Witaszyce Palace	Palace complex, register no: 474/Wlkp/A dated 11.11.1974

Source: The Register of Immovable Monuments of Wielkopolskie Province [January 2020].

quantitative research methods is often preceded by the application of qualitative methods (Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2014), which is the approach adopted by the author. The preliminary qualitative data for were collected using direct interviews and quantitative data were collected by means of a questionnaire survey. The study consisted of two stages: the purpose of the first one was to examine the socio-cultural impact of historic residential buildings used as hotels on local communities. All of the analysed buildings are located in rural areas of Wielkopolskie province.

The sample of buildings was selected from the Register of Immovable Monuments for Wielkopolskie Province¹, which were listed as residential buildings (including the following subcategories: manor or palace complex, manor house,

¹ <http://www.poznan.wuoz.gov.pl/rejestr-zabytkow>

palace) and were located in rural areas. Online information was used to check which of the selected buildings functioned as hotels. Only buildings that had been used as hotels for at least 8 years were included in the sample. 31 buildings that met this condition were found, of which one had become a retirement home, one was owned by the Marshal's Office of Wielkopolskie province and did not provide accommodation for non-institutional guests, while five others were no longer in operation and their owners could not be contacted (the buildings were put up for sale). Owners of another three buildings refused to participate in the study, while

Table 2. The questionnaire concerning the socio-cultural impact of repurposed historical buildings on local communities

Education and knowledge / creating the image and regional symbolism:				
1.	Do you know that (name of a given historic place) is a cultural heritage object protected by law?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>How do you know about it? (school, Internet)</i>			
2.	Do you know what the original purpose of this place was?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If you do, please specify what it was. How do you know that? (school, Internet, etc.)</i>			
3.	Do you know any historical events associated with this place or what role it played in any period of history?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If you do, say what event you know about? How do you know that?</i>			
4.	Do you think that the historical significance of this place is important for the country (region)?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>Could you justify your answer?</i>			
5.	Do you think that this historic place is something special or distinctive only for your country, region?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If you do, could you explain why?</i>			
Skills / Creativity:				
6.	Has the fact of living in (near) this historical place prompted you to start doing something related to art, craft, collectables?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If the answer is "yes", could you specify what it is that you do:</i>			
7.	Has the fact of living near (or visiting) this historic place encouraged you to acquire new skills?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If the answer is "yes", specify what skills?</i>			
8.	Does the new function of this historical place enable you to participate in certain cultural events organized periodically (e.g., festivals, shows, art shows)?	yes	no	no opinion
National, regional, local identity / social participation:				
9.	Do you feel proud that this type of place is located in the area you live in?	yes	no	no opinion
10.	Would you recommend this historical place for the purpose of promoting your country, region or place of residence abroad?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If the answer is "yes", could you explain why?</i>			
11.	Have you had an opportunity to participate in local and community initiatives that were somehow connected with this historical place?	yes	no	no opinion
	<i>If you have, could you give an example:</i>			

Source: own research.

five others did not respond to the request to participate in the study (which was treated as a refusal). As a result, the final sample included 16 buildings, which are listed in Table 1.

The study was carried between January and September in 2020. It should be noted that the reference period started before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, while other works, e.g. the survey of local government representatives, were conducted via e-mail during the lockdown (the respondents were asked to take into account the time before the pandemic).

Data for the analysis of the socio-cultural impact of repurposed historical buildings on local communities were collected using simple random selection, where each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Fifty people were examined in each of the village communities where the 16 historic buildings converted into hotels were located. Table 2 presents the content of the survey questionnaire.

Relative percentages of positive answers were calculated for each question. These percentages can be interpreted as representing the level of appreciation for each of the 16 cultural heritage objects analysed in the study. Table 3 shows an arbitrary scale used to classify the level of appreciation or the strength of the socio-cultural impact.

Table 4 shows the assessed impact of the historic buildings on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable local development. In the case of 6 buildings, the socio-cultural impact was assessed as considerable; with regard to 5 others, it was assessed as moderate, and in the case of the last five – as weak.

To investigate whether the lack of additional non-profit cultural initiatives affects the level of cultural appreciation by local communities and, consequently, the socio-cultural dimension of development, the author interviewed the buildings' owners and representatives of local government. The author divided additional

Table 3. Level of general appreciation for the 16 cultural heritage objects, the strength of the socio-cultural impact on representatives of local communities

Range (percentage scale)	Impact strength
0	no impact
1-20	very weak
21-40	weak
41-60	moderate
61-80	significant
81-100	strong

Source: own research.

Table 4. The socio-cultural impact of the analysed historic buildings on local communities

Name of the historic building	Socio-cultural impact
Antonin Palace	significant
Będlewo Palace	moderate
Biedrusko Palace	significant
Brodnica Palace	significant
Bugaj Palace	weak
Dębogóra Manor	significant
Drzeczkowo Palace	weak
Iwno Palace	significant
Jeziorki Manor	moderate
Kobylniki Palace	weak
Obrzycko Palace	moderate
Podstolice Palace	weak
Rzęszkowo Palace	weak
Tarce Palace	significant
Wąsowo Palace	moderate

Source: own research.

Table 5. The correlation between the presence of additional non-profit cultural activities and the assessed level of the socio-cultural impact on the local community

Additional non-profit cultural functions + (present), - (absent)		Strength of socio-cultural impact	Number of buildings where additional non-profit cultural func- tions were present
organised by the owner	organised by local authorities		
Socio-cultural involvement on the part of both sides			
+	+	significant	6
+	+	moderate	2
Socio-cultural involvement on the part of one side			
+	-	moderate	3
-	+	weak	2
No socio-cultural involvement on the part of any side			
-	-	weak	3

Source: own research.

non-profit cultural initiatives into two subcategories: additional non-profit cultural functions/activities organised by the building's owner and, cultural events organised by local authorities for the local community.

At this stage, the data were collected during structured interviews in which respondents were asked about the organization of free socio-cultural initiatives and events for the local community. In the case of building owners: "Do you ever organise any non-profit cultural events in the hotel? If so, please provide examples" and, in the case of local government: "Do the local authorities organize any cultural events in the historical site, which can be attended by members of the community where the site is located)? If so, please provide examples".

Information about socio-cultural activities mentioned above was compared with the previous assessment of the socio-cultural impact. The results of this comparison are summarised in Table 5.

5. Findings

As shown in Table 5, the presence of additional non-profit cultural activities is clearly correlated with the socio-cultural influence of historic buildings on local communities. Cultural heritage objects where both owners and local authorities were involved in organising such events have a stronger socio-cultural impact on the local community. 8 buildings (50% of the sample) where such activities are organised by both sides were assessed as having a considerable or moderate level of socio-cultural impact. 5 historic buildings where cultural events were only organised by one side were assessed as having only a moderate or weak level of socio-cultural impact. 3 objects where neither the owners nor the local authorities provided additional non-profit cultural activities, were only assessed as having a low level of socio-cultural impact. Interestingly, in 8 cases, socio-cultural activities involving the historic buildings are organised by public-private partnerships between building owners and local authorities, with the participation of local schools. The latter fact confirms the results of earlier studies (Belova & Korshuk, 2017, p. 71) that by getting to know local cultural heritage, children and adolescents learn to appreciate and preserve it. Historic buildings where such activities are organised have a moderate or considerable impact on the socio-cultural development of local communities.

6. Conclusions

Immovable cultural heritage in the form of residential buildings located in rural areas is undoubtedly a valuable historical resource in Poland. Because the cost of maintaining such buildings, which are frequently in poor condition, has to be

borne by local governments and taxpayers, it is reasonable to use them for other purposes, which practically means exploiting them as sources of profit for their owners. Such buildings are usually converted into hotels. As elements of cultural heritage, they are a common good and valuable resource for local communities and can potentially contribute to local sustainable socio-cultural development. The study described above has shown that historic buildings converted into hotels can make a considerable contribution to local sustainable development in the socio-cultural dimension provided that their owners and local authorities organise additional non-profit activities enabling local communities to benefit from their cultural values, which confirms the initial hypothesis put forward by the author.

On the one hand, the results of the study provide the basis for recommending more cooperation between owners of heritage objects used for commercial purposes and local authorities in order to develop their socio-cultural function. On the other hand, they show it is necessary to impose the requirement of undertaking such initiatives on prospective owners of such buildings as a way of making sure that their cultural values can be appreciated not only by paying guests but also by members of local communities. From the perspective of sustainable local development and cultural sustainability, it is particularly important to ensure the participation of local schools.

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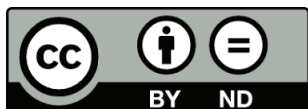
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Zwiększanie społeczno-kulturowego wpływu nieruchomego dziedzictwa kulturowego na społeczności lokalne – przykład zabytkowych obiektów rezydencjonalnych Wielkopolski zaadaptowanych do funkcji hotelowych

Streszczenie. W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań nad wpływem nieruchomego dziedzictwa kulturowego zaadaptowanego do komercyjnych celów turystycznych na społeczności lokalne. Opracowanie opiera się na danych zebranych w wywiadach bezpośrednich z właścicielami nieruchomości i przedstawicielami władz lokalnych oraz badaniu ankietowym mieszkańców dotyczącym 16 zabytkowych obiektów hotelarskich zlokalizowanych na terenach wiejskich województwa wielkopolskiego. Stwierdzono, że zapewnienie dodatkowych, bezpłatnych funkcji kulturalnych społecznościom lokalnym przez właścicieli nieruchomości i/lub władze lokalne wywiera większy wpływ społeczno-kulturowy i przyczynia się do lokalnego zrównoważonego rozwoju. Na podstawie wyników badań można stwierdzić, że w przypadku wykorzystywania tego typu obiektów zabytkowych w celach komercyjnych ważne jest, aby były one częścią doświadczenia kulturowego nie tylko gości hotelowych, ale także społeczności lokalnej. W ten sposób społeczności mogą docenić swoje lokalne dziedzictwo kulturowe (wpływ społeczno-kulturowy), co z kolei wzmacnia zrównoważony rozwój kulturowy.

Słowa kluczowe: dziedzictwo kulturowe, zarządzanie dziedzictwem, zrównoważony rozwój, ocena wpływu, adaptacyjne ponowne wykorzystanie dziedzictwa, ekonomia kultury, rozwój społeczno-kulturowy



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