



The Socio-Economic
Dimension of Heritage.
Introduction to
the Discussion

Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga
Katarzyna Jagodzińska

Cultural heritage consists of the resources inherited from the past in all forms and aspects [...]. It originates from the interaction between people and places through time and it is constantly evolving. These resources are of great value to society from a cultural, environmental, social, and economic point of view and thus their sustainable management constitutes a strategic choice for the 21st century.¹

1 Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe Education, Youth, Culture, and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 20 May 2014, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf (access: 12.04.2017).

The inspiration for our decision to undertake an analysis of the impact of cultural heritage on socio-economic development in Central Europe was the international project "Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe" (2013–2015), in which the International Cultural Centre² and the editors of this volume conducted a study of the socio-economic potential of heritage. In this project, the researchers started with the premise that cultural heritage is a developmental resource rather than merely an area of public life requiring financial input and protective measures. It is generally viewed as playing an important role in all areas of life and at every level – local, regional, national, and European. Nonetheless, there is no sufficient evidence nor arguments based on evaluation of actual projects to support this conviction. Our analysis of the outcomes of empirical studies conducted across European Union countries to explore the impact of heritage on various spheres of life confirmed our hypothesis regarding the significance of heritage for Europe's development in the social, economic, cultural, and environmental domains. Over the course of the project, which made no distinctions between Western, Central, or Eastern Europe, the editors identified dif-

2 The project was coordinated by Europa Nostra and research partners included the International Cultural Centre (Kraków) and Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (KU Leuven, Belgium). Three other organisations participated in the project: ENCATC, Heritage Europe – EAHR and Heritage Alliance. Information about the project and report available at: mck.krakow.pl/artykul/cultural-heritage-counts-for-europe-report (access: 14.06.2017).

ferences in approaches to the evaluation studies in different parts of Europe: specifically that in Central Europe, unlike in the west of the continent, the pro-development role of heritage is not entirely recognised or appreciated, either by decision-makers or by academic circles. The lack of academic interest in this issue was confirmed by the Central European experts taking part in the project. The publication *The Power of Heritage. Socio-Economic Examples from Central Europe* is on one hand an attempt to fill, at least partly, this gap in the research and on the other, an incentive for municipal and regional authorities, administrators of heritage sites, heritage organisations and associations, and the academic world, to pursue research in this field.

Thus, the focus in this book is Central Europe. The editors' definition of this term is not equivalent either to the German concept of Mitteleuropa or to contemporary initiatives such as the Visegrad Group; instead, they take a broader view similar to that of Antoni Podraza, for whom "Central Europe extends from the River Elbe in the west to the Bug and the San Rivers, the Carpathian arc and the Iron Gate in the east, and from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Slavic countries connected with the Byzantine cultural sphere in the south."³ Given this vision of Central Europe, the

editors sought to cooperate with scholars who have conducted case studies in Belarus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, and Slovakia.

The choice of Central Europe as the subject of research is also connected with the conviction that the culture sector, and hence also the heritage sector, in this part of the continent is in a different situation than elsewhere. The potential impact that heritage can have on its socio-economic environment is certainly the same regardless of the geographical location of a given heritage site. Sometimes, however, the mere existence of heritage (which, of course, every society possesses) is not sufficient to release that potential. Targeted action is also necessary – by authorities, various types of institutions and organisations, local communities, charismatic leaders, and ordinary individuals. A lack of action, which is often due to a lack of awareness of this potential, causes it to become "dormant." The difference in the situation in Central Europe is first and foremost a consequence of the region's history: the extended duration of the feudal system, the after-effects of the Bolshevik revolution, the late emergence or restitution of sovereignty of many of the states in the region (after World War I), the tragic experiences of the Holocaust, and the magnitude of destruction during World War II (due not only to military action but also to looting). The subsequent fifty years of isolation behind the Iron Curtain also left their mark. At the time when

3 Antoni Podraza, "How Should We Understand the Term 'Central Europe' at the Turn of the 21st Century?," [in:] *Central Europe. A New Dimension of Heritage*, Jacek Purchla (ed.), International Cultural Centre, Krakow 2003, p. 27 (23–28).

the West was discovering the potential for leveraging heritage for socio-economic development, Eastern Bloc countries were functioning in a command economy system, politically and administratively centralised, with limited private ownership. In many places this led to a lack of appropriate care for the maintenance of historic buildings and areas, and also to neglect of minority heritage. Culture was treated, in accordance with Marxist theory, as an add-on, a superfluous luxury that did not contribute to development.

1989 was the year of change, initiating rapid political and economic transformation and opening something of a cultural gap in the post-communist societies. Jacek Purchla believes that the 1990s suffered from a lack of vision and comprehension for the role of culture and heritage in the new reality, which only served to aggravate the crisis in this sector. The authorities still tended to perceive culture either as ballast or as sacred, therefore limiting the sector's potential for development in the conditions of a market economy.⁴

The openness to global trends slowly began to bring a change in approaches to the potential of heritage and culture. For most countries of the region the real breakthrough came with accession to the

European Union in 2004⁵. EU funds began to be recognised as an opportunity for the still poor condition of the culture infrastructure, as a chance to renovate monuments, adapt historic buildings to new functions, and construct new facilities for institutions yet to be appointed. This forced decision-makers to adopt a long-term perspective in strategic planning, in the form of development plans and contingent operating programmes. They also had to consider what role culture and heritage were to play in the strategic development plans of their region and country as a whole. Moreover, entities applying for grants to fund their cultural heritage projects had to consider the aspect of how their planned actions could contribute to the development of their region and/or country – as only development-oriented projects had a chance of being financed from the European sources.

This change in thinking, however, has not necessarily translated into a practice of evaluating projects (even if such a declaration is made in applications for EU funds) in terms of their impact on the socio-economic environment. To date, neither entities operating in the cultural heritage sector themselves nor academic circles have shown significant interest in conducting such research.

The aim of this publication, then, is to present the potential of heritage from both

4 Jacek Purchla, "Kultura a transformacja Polski," [in:] *Kultura i przemysły kultury szansą rozwojową dla Polski*, Jan Szomburg (ed.), Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, Gdańsk 2002, pp. 13–19.

5 Czechia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined the EU in 2004. Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Belarus, included in this publication, is not part of the EU.

the theoretical and empirical angles. This monograph falls into two complementary sections. The first is theoretical in character. The editors of the volume introduce the reader to the field of heritage and its impact, define both terms, and then give an overview of the results of research relevant to potential areas of impact. After a thorough analysis, the following (complementary and partly overlapping) areas of impact were distinguished: impact on the labour market and the real property market, on building human and social capital, on the quality of life, as well as competitiveness and attractiveness of a place, and stimulation of creativity. This list of areas of impact is not exhaustive, and many issues could only be touched upon to a very limited extent. Nonetheless, this chapter does highlight the most important aspects of this interdisciplinary issue. In their text, the authors postulate a holistic approach to studying the impact of heritage. Placing it in its broad context reflects its complex, dynamic character, and also corresponds to the way that heritage is conceived within its socio-economic context in documents by international institutions and organisations. In this chapter, authors wish to emphasise a multidimensional approach to cultural heritage that takes into account the total value of cultural heritage – cultural, sociological and economic.

The second part of the book contains articles presenting the results of research on the impact of heritage conducted in vari-

ous Central European countries. The case studies were selected in such a way as to cover both tangible and intangible heritage, and its economic and social impact.

The empirical section of the book opens with an article by the Hungarian authors Orsolya Lazányi, Gusztáv Nemes, and Barbara Fogarasi: "The Impact of Heritage-Led Development on Local Communities. A Comparative Analysis of Three Sites in Hungary." On the basis of their study of three projects – the renovation of the ruined Gothic fortress on the tuff outcrop in Sirok, the revitalisation of the historic centre of Balatonfüred, and the conversion of the Károlyi castle in Fehérvárcsurgó into a tourist and culture centre – they analyse the complex relations between historic buildings and local communities. In their quest to develop a methodology for measuring the impact of heritage they reach the conclusion that local management of investment projects in heritage is far more effective in terms of generating indirect and induced effects as far as local economy and society are concerned than top-down management by central authorities.

The broad view of heritage is also examined by Hristina Mikić and Estela Radonjić-Živkov in their article "The Wider Socio-Economic Benefits of Cultural Heritage. A Case Study of Suvača in Kikinda." One of few extant horse dray mills in Europe, Suvača in the Kikinda region of Serbia is a symbol of traditional life

in the region. Although it has not served its original function for many years now, it remains an important element of the local landscape and the life of the town. Over 80% of the respondents of the survey conducted by the researchers recognised that the local community values the mill as a landmark which strengthens their identity and transmits symbolic values. Moreover, it is appreciated by representatives of the creative industries, who perceive Suvača as a place of cooperation, networking, bond building, and accumulation of creative capital.

The creative industries were also the subject of research undertaken in Łódź by Anna Fiń, Katarzyna Jagodzińska, and Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga. Their study is showcased in the article entitled "Creative Industries and the Power of Heritage. The Case of OFF Piotrkowska in Łódź." The study, conducted in what is currently one of the most fashionable spaces in Łódź, operating under the name OFF Piotrkowska, showed that the heritage site – in this case a post-industrial complex – is one of the prime location motives for creative practitioners. The historic red-brick factory walls create a unique ambience which is attractive both to the customers who use the shops, service outlets, and gastronomic facilities, and to those who run their businesses here. In and of itself, the existence of a visually attractive heritage site would not have sufficient power of attraction without complementary fac-

tors – in particular its central location, attractive rents, and the creative fervour generated by the tenant community.

In the next article, Riin Alatalu analyses the influence of the revitalisation of the historic suburbs of Tallinn and the renovation of schools in former manor houses on the economy and society of Estonia ("The Social and Economic Impact of Heritage in Estonia. Historic Suburbs and Manor Schools"). In the first part of her text, she discusses the effects of heritage policy, specifically the extension of the conservation protection area to the old suburbs, with their wooden fabric. It was partly this decision that brought about the gentrification of this neglected and dilapidated villa quarter and its transformation into a voguish area of the city, with rising rents. An external effect of the project is the expansion of gastronomy businesses and entertainment options, as well as of monument conservation firms and manufacturers of traditional construction and decoration features. The second part of Alatalu's study focuses on the impact of the renovation of the schools located in historic manor houses and farms which are covered under the monument protection policy. She notes that many of these schools are the centres of local life and can unlock the potential of smaller, provincial localities.

In the article entitled "The Impact of Built Heritage Revitalisation on Social Well-Being. An Environmental Psychological Study of a Participative Historic Build-

ing Restoration in Hungary," Andrea Dúll and Barbara Fogarasi analyse the issue of the impact of immovable cultural heritage on the sense of belonging, identity, and psychological significance of sites for the community. Environmental psychology research shows that factors such as self-acceptance and self-esteem, pro-social attitudes, bonding skills, and satisfaction with one's place of residence are strongly connected with the sense of belonging to a certain place. As the case study of the parish centre in Balatoncsicsó in Hungary shows, immovable heritage plays an important role in establishing the sense of belonging.

The next two articles address the impact of castles. In the first, entitled "Castles and People. Towards an Understanding of the Social Dimensions of Conservation Projects in Belarus," Stsiapan Stureika analyses the effects of the government programme "The Castles of Belarus" (2012–2018). His main focus of interest is the extent to which castles are incorporated into the daily lives of the residents of the localities under analysis. The results of his field research show how under-exploited the potential of historic sites still is, in terms of both economic development and social aspects. One of the symptoms of this situation is the exclusion of local communities from decision-making that affects "their" castles. A slightly different situation, in the Polish context, is shown by Łukasz Musiaka in his analysis of the impact of Teutonic castles on the

development of the localities in which they are situated ("The Impact of the Teutonic Knights' Medieval Material Heritage on Small Towns in Poland"). The author demonstrates that the potential of castles could be exploited to a far greater extent, though his analysis shows that these sites are already of relatively big significance for the localities he researched. The economic effects are perceived from the angle of tourism. For these towns, particularly the smaller ones, the castles play the role of employment providers, and they are an element of the municipality's image and brand. Their impact on the quality of life is connected with broadening the local cultural scene and building a sense of pride and local patriotism.

The article by Peter Džupka, Mark Gróf, and Miriam Šebova entitled "An Economic Valuation of the Kulturpark. A Case Study of the Cultural Infrastructure Reconstructed as Part of Košice European Capital of Culture 2013," addresses an issue which is important for aspects such as municipal policy: that of the financial viability of investing in large-scale infrastructure projects related to culture and heritage. The site under analysis here was the new cultural "icon" of Košice, Slovakia: Kasárne/Kulturpark. The renovation of a 19th-century military barracks complex and the conversion of the Neoclassical building into a cultural centre was a flagship project of European Capital of Culture, the title held by Košice in 2013. The costs

of this project and the overheads generated by the new space are a considerable burden on the city's budget, and this was the genesis of the scholars' question of how this fact is evaluated by residents. Using the contingent valuation method, they established that the overall willingness to pay expressed by the people of Košice is greater than the running costs of the Kulturpark, which may be interpreted as a confirmation of the "viability" of the investment.

The closing text in the volume is "The Economic Impact of Czech Classical Music Festivals" by Tereza Raabová. This is the only case study in the book that looks at intangible heritage – classical music. The author undertakes an analysis of the economic impacts of the festivals which make up the Czech Association of Music Festivals. This reveals that the overall impact of festivalgoers' spending generated a rise in revenues to the Czech economy of over €20 million, and over €2 million accrued to the public purse in the form of various taxes.

The main intention behind inviting scholars from the wider region to cooperate and present their case studies demonstrating the potential of cultural heritage in Central

Europe was to draw attention to the significance as a research topic of the impact of cultural heritage on its socio-economic environment at the regional level. It is important to emphasise in this respect that the overall value of any cultural asset, including heritage, is composed of its economic, as well as its social and cultural value. This is why it is imperative that it be examined from a range of perspectives – economic, sociological, psychological, ecological, culturogenic, ethnographic, and so on – and transferred beyond the most commonly recurring discussions regarding the economic significance of heritage and the problem of its commodification. The editors of this volume and the authors of the articles hope that their book will be an important voice in the debate on the potential of heritage, and provide a body of arguments showing why it is worthwhile and even vital to invest in heritage. On the eve of the European Heritage Year 2018, we hope to convince you that investing in heritage is an investment in our future!

Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga
Katarzyna Jagodzińska

Translated from the Polish
by Jessica Taylor-Kucia