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# PROTECTION OF VALUABLE AREAS OF LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. CULTURAL PARKS IN THE LODZ REGION

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**ABSTRACT:** Cultural park is one of the forms, in which valuable areas and historical establishments are protected under the Polish law. Protection covers “space” in its entirety with elements of wild nature and man-made structures. Such spaces have been shaped by the history of human interventions into a unique and original cultural landscape, a complex spatial structure consisting of: passages (rivers, channels, roads, and borders), plains (meadows, fields, water reservoirs, and forests), and objects (natural objects and monuments). They ensure sustainability of development processes. In circumstances created by globalisation, investment pressure, and seeking short-term benefits, comprehensive protection of valuable cultural areas acquires special importance from the point of view of sustainable growth. The paper aims to identify valuable areas of local cultural heritage in the context of sustainable development on the example of cultural parks established in the Lodz voivodeship.

**KEY WORDS:** cultural heritage, cultural park, comprehensive protection, cultural landscape, sustainable development

## Introduction

The term *cultural heritage* covers a wide spectrum of meanings, which are not obvious and unambiguous. Yet, currently it gains in importance and popularity. Cultural heritage is no more seen as part of a non-productive “superstructure” that should be done away with but it has become an appreciated market asset (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012, p. 11). Cultural heritage is expressed in tangible and intangible elements typical of a given area which reveal its culture and history making it a vital component of any territorial unit. These components are not just the housing stock, monumental architectural structures, sculptures, paintings, collections of public and private institutions, such as museums, libraries or archives. They also include products of craftsmanship, works of applied arts, wooden architecture and technological structures. Cultural heritage is not just about cultural (aesthetic, artistic, historical) but also economic and social (applied and ornamental) values. Through its components that carry the features of a public good, cultural heritage generates external benefits (economic and non-economic) (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2011). The main thesis adopted for our research argues that cultural heritage represents the characteristics of a public good that we need to protect since in the long-term perspective it is critical for sustainable development and social justice.

Nowadays, cultural heritage attracts increasingly more attention of representatives of different areas of science. It has also become the theme of multidisciplinary research conducted not only by art historians, conservation officers or researchers into cultural studies but also by planners, economists, and management experts. Moreover, cultural heritage typical of a particular territory increasingly more features in strategic documents drafted by local authorities and in discussions over regeneration plans or local development efforts (Boryczka, Zasina, 2016). Thus, we need to stress that the inclusion of new groups of professionals (e.g., representatives of economics, natural sciences, law, management, social sciences, marketing, and IT) into the protection and the observed increased appreciation of the social role played by the cultural heritage are positive occurrences. All of them bring in research methodologies and tools specific of their individual fields of expertise by which they improve the collection and processing of data and knowledge about heritage and its components. That has enriched forecasting capabilities and ways of shaping the future fate of components of cultural heritage as well as improved protection efficiency (Rouba, 2008).

The primary goal of the paper is to identify valuable areas of local cultural heritage in the context of sustainable development on the example of cultural parks established in the Lodz voivodeship. Attempt has been made

to specify the role and importance of cultural parks in sustainable development of municipalities and in the building of their potential and attractiveness.

## Local Cultural Heritage as a Factor of Sustainable Development and Its Protection

How we understand the meaning and role played by cultural heritage closely links with the idea of sustainable development. Cultural heritage is one of factors of sustainable development, which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a development aimed at efficient use of limited resources having alternative use now and in the future” (Rzeńca, 2016, p. 52). Sustainable development is not just about using constantly shrinking resources in accordance with certain principles, it is also a requirement to secure more prosperity to the mankind in which local communities have a special place on condition that the development may not restrict future generations’ ability to meet their needs (Kobyliński, 2000). Hence, sustainable development consists in acting in a way not destructive for natural resources. Moreover, it covers long-term use of renewable resources, efficient exploitation of fossil fuels, maintaining the stability of environmental processes and eco-systems, protection of genetic diversity and overall protection of nature as well as the maintenance and improvement of prosperity, safety at work, and human health. Sustainable development is also economic development which does not exert significant negative or irreversible impact on human environment and reconciles the laws of economics and nature (Kozłowski, 2002). Cultural heritage has also got a valid and direct share in sustainable development through its economic, social, and environmental dimension. It also contributes to the building of economic base by boosting local employment in areas such as tourism, environmental protection, monument conservation or in activities linked with regeneration (O’Brien et al., 2015; Boryczka, 2016). Hence, cultural heritage described as an asset owned by territorial authorities (at different levels. e.g., natural and economic) representing, to a different extent, characteristics of a public good, must be protected and exploited to a different often limited degree. Cultural heritage is increasingly more often seen as an economic asset (Nijkamp, 2012; Boryczka, Zasina, 2016). Cultural heritage must also be rationally managed and secured to be maintained for future generations (Barthel-Bouchier, 2016).

Being an endogenous factor of sustainable development and in order to produce benefits (influence economic and social development), cultural

heritage must be properly managed (Guzmán, Pereira Roders, Colenbrander, 2017). Proper use of the heritage may also produce indirect positive multiplier effects (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2011). However, to be able to properly manage cultural heritage we must protect it not only to preserve its components in a good shape, build the identity of local communities, images or brands of places but also to facilitate control over establishments and areas. Similarly to natural resources, cultural heritage may be used in different ways (properly or improperly) in production or human consumption. Cultural heritage treated as a resource must be managed in a manner specific of natural or economic resources. Economically speaking, cultural heritage does not directly generate tangible goods. It is connected with the production of intangible goods, such as knowledge about the past, building individual and collective identity, production and consumption of services that highlight the heritage (Kobyliński, 2000).

The mere presence of a certain resource within a given territory, including cultural heritage, does not automatically ensure the development of a territorial unit. The resource impacts territorial development when it becomes a real asset which can be used in diverse, e.g., economic and social, activities. To become an asset important for development, cultural heritage, which is “just” a potential, needs to be used in a sustainable and responsible way (Jewtuchowicz, 2013, Boryczka; Zasina, 2016). Efficient and effective management of cultural heritage calls for a number of instruments, mainly “soft” ones, which help produce incentives for other stakeholders to make them behave in a desired way (Thorsby, 2012, p. 85) and engage various operators into the “game” of taking care of the public good such as cultural heritage.

Using a non-renewable resource, such as cultural heritage in a too intensive and not well-thought-out manner may produce irreversible consequences, including its total annihilation. Thus, we need to intensify its protection and minimise its use. Cultural heritage must be managed in a manner that is conscious, rational and well thought out (O’Brien et al., 2015). We need to stress that cultural heritage is not owned by historians, archaeologists, conservation experts, art historians or any other group composed of representatives of a given local community. It is owned publically as a public good whose components are used and enjoyed by the local community or users of a given area. If we consider cultural heritage a non-renewable and unique resource, our duty is to manage it properly and preserve for future generations (Kobyliński, 2000). This is how it becomes an internal factor of sustainable development (Chabiera, 2016).

Protection is one of the major duties of modern management of cultural heritage. Yet, increasingly more attention is paid to sustainable and responsible exploitation. Thus, it is worth stressing that effective protection of herit-

age includes the ability to include it into development processes as cultural heritage will survive only if used (Boryczka, Zasina, 2016).

In Poland the Act of 23 July 2003 on Monuments Protection and Guardianship contains the main body of regulations and specifies the scope and forms of protection of monuments and historical buildings. It lays down principles to be followed when drafting the national programme of monuments protection, caring for them as well as funding all restoration, preservation and construction works in such buildings or objects. The Act introduces a number of tools that one may use to protect cultural heritage in Polish municipalities. It also lists responsibilities and duties of public administration bodies entrusted with the protection of historic monuments and sites (Dz. U. 2003 No. 162 item 1568). These responsibilities are organised around securing organisational, legal and financial framework that would ensure lasting and sustainable maintenance, preservation and management of these monuments, help prevent threats that could reduce their value and, ultimately, counteract their misuse, destruction, loss, theft or illegal exports, enhance control over their use and shape, in which they are preserved, and specify protection responsibilities in local development plans, as well as shape cultural environment (Gosztyła, Pasztor, 2013). The Act provides for four basic levels of status of monuments protection: inclusion in monuments register, listing on the National Heritage List, denominating as a historic monument, identification of protection requirements in the local development plan, and, finally, a cultural park (Dz. U. 2003 No. 162 item 1568).

Cultural park is a specific form of cultural landscape protection. It deals with the protection of a certain area, in which such landscape can be found. The role of a cultural park focuses on the preservation of unique areas of outstanding beauty and monuments based in them, which make a given area distinctive (Dz. U. 2003 No. 162 item 1568). A cultural park extends over a delineated area, not just over individual elements of cultural heritage. It highlights cultural merits that give some specific features to the area in question. Cultural park contains natural elements and man-made objects. Over the years, human activities have shaped the area into a unique and original cultural landscape. When a cultural park is established, its operating rules are also adopted, including bans and limitations on how it can be used by local residents, visitors, and economic operators based in it intended primarily to protect and maintain the heritage (Lipińska, 2011).

By setting up a cultural park we can generate diverse benefits to the area of cultural heritage covered by such a protection format and to the specific municipality and its local authorities. Such benefits include, inter alia, increased tourist and education attractiveness of a given municipality (development of the area), protection of all of its territory, enhanced spatial man-

agement efficiency (e.g., possibility to use diverse tools to protect the park from haphazard investment projects and avoid disorganised outdoor advertising), and acting towards the fostering of local community ties and identification with the place. The decision to establish a cultural park is taken by the municipal Council but fully fledged cultural parks are created as a result of multi-stage efforts (Chabiera, 2016).

Having cultural parks within the borders of a given territorial unit can contribute to:

- comprehensive protection of nature and monuments within the area,
- increased attractiveness of a city/town to its residents and potential tourists,
- spatial order (e.g., preventing disorganised outdoor advertising) and sustainable development,
- higher management efficiency within the protected area,
- more intensive feeling of social identity,
- putting individual bans and restrictions in place.

The establishment of a cultural park may also effectively contribute to sustainable development and spatial order within the area where monuments and the environment are protected on equal grounds (Chabiera, 2016).

On top of that, to many territorial local authorities a cultural park is a valid additional argument when applying for EU subsidies and financial resources allocated by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which provide a vital impulse for local authorities in Poland suffering from budget deficits to act and use new instruments of cultural heritage protection ([www.dladziedzictwa.org/programy-fundacji/parki-kulturowe-i-pomniki-historii](http://www.dladziedzictwa.org/programy-fundacji/parki-kulturowe-i-pomniki-historii)).

Obviously, discussions about cultural parks also address negative aspects involved in the format. The most frequently stressed are costs of additional outlays made by municipalities to pay for the drafting of mandatory documents, such as, inter alia, local spatial development plan, park protection plan and the draft resolution on the establishment of a cultural park. These costs, however, are borne as part of regular operations of local authorities and practically remain little relevant in the context of a multiplicity of benefits resulting from choosing this form of protection and shaping the cultural landscape. In these discussions we can also hear unfavourable opinions about putting in place restrictions on space management and types of solid structures that are allowable in cultural parks. These voices and arguments criticise restrictions imposed on the “Polish sacred right of real property ownership” and result from many years of negligence and absence of a genuine spatial planning system in Poland. Interestingly, in the light of surveys that are discussed further in the paper, local communities see these restric-

tions mainly as benefits of having a cultural park (more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of respondent group), which allows us to conclude that negative opinions may originate from those whose vital interest lies in preserving the *status quo*.

## Research Methodology

The survey was conducted in four stages (figure 1). Research methods used in the first stage were based on heuristic techniques that deploy expert knowledge and desk research. The second stage focused on the stock taking of cultural parks in the Lodz voivodeship or, more precisely, in four municipalities (Lodz, Sieradz, Zgierz, and Leszcynek). These municipalities were selected for the survey because they have been hosting cultural parks for some years already. Besides, at this stage we also conducted a study based on questionnaire interviews with representatives of local authorities and local administration (offices, departments) and organisational units directly taking care of cultural parks in the above mentioned municipalities. Respondents for the interviews were selected in a target sampling.

In the third stage we conducted a comparative analysis of cultural parks in Poland paying special attention to cultural parks in the Lodz region (Lodz, Sieradz, Zgierz, Leszcynek).

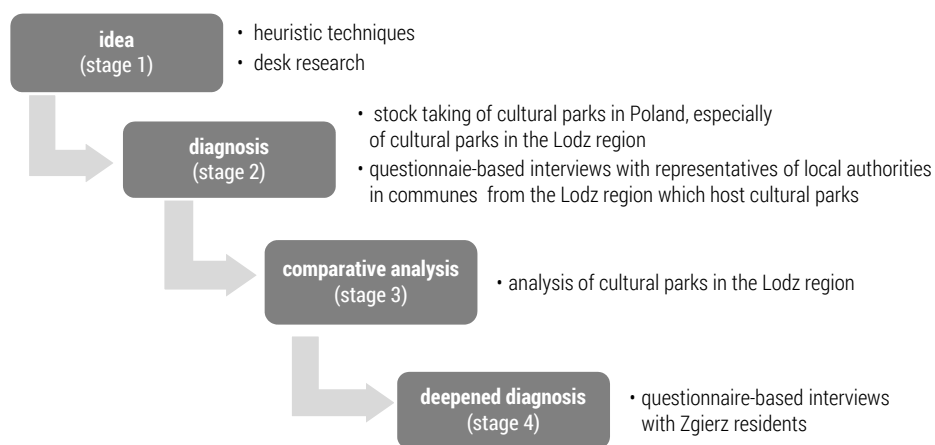


Figure 1. Stages of research

Source: authors' own work.

In the fourth stage we carried out a questionnaire-based social survey among residents of one of the examined towns (Zgierz). It was a pilot study and the sample was selected on a random basis. The survey was conducted between May and July 2018.

Our research was undertaken to find out about the role and importance of cultural parks in sustainable development of towns and municipalities and in the building of potential and attractiveness of these territorial units.

## Cultural Parks: Typology and Distribution over the Territory of Poland

Until the early 2018 thirty five cultural parks have been established throughout the territory of Poland. We can divide them into 7 groups based on categories of heritage they are supposed to protect: ([www.dworniczak.com/parki-kulturowe-w-polsce-rozmieszczenie-i-typologia/](http://www.dworniczak.com/parki-kulturowe-w-polsce-rozmieszczenie-i-typologia/))

1. Protection of cultural townscape of ancient city centres.
2. Protection of cultural heritage encapsulated in complexes of historic buildings situated nowadays outside of strict city centres.
3. Protection of (mainly) cultural landscape in non-urbanised areas.
4. Protection of landscapes connected with religious warship.
5. Protection of fortresses and military complexes.
6. Protection of relicts in cultural landscape.
7. Protection of sites and objects linked with historic personalities and events.

In the Lodz voivodeship there are four cultural parks representing three theme categories of protection: protection of relicts in cultural landscape (Sieradz), protection of sites and objects linked with historic personalities and events (Leszczynek), protection of cultural landscape in complexes of historic buildings currently situated outside of strict city centres (Zgierz, Lodz). The above-mentioned cultural parks in the Lodz voivodeship differ a lot from one another on many grounds, such as, e.g., history, characteristics of cultural heritage, functions or date of establishment.



**Table 1.** Typology of cultural parks in Poland

Cultural parks established to:	Locations in Poland
1. Protect cultural townscape of ancient city centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stare Miasto [Old Town] Cultural Park in Wrocław,</li> <li>– Stare Miasto [Old Town] Cultural Park in Kraków,</li> <li>– Old Town and Dominican Monastery Cultural Park in Jarosław,</li> <li>– Koneskie City Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Krupowki Cultural Park in Zakopane,</li> <li>– Old Town Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Princely Town of Brzeg Cultural Park.</li> </ul>
2. Protect cultural heritage encapsulated in complexes of historic buildings situated outside of strict city centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Weavers' Town Cultural Park in Zgierz,</li> <li>– Stary Radom [Old Radom] Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Wilanów Cultural Park in Warsaw,</li> <li>– Piotrkowska Cultural Park in Łódź.</li> </ul>
3. Protect (mainly) cultural landscape in non-urbanised areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jeleniogorska Valley Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Zakopińska Valley Cultural Park,</li> <li>– "Hałda Popłuczkowa" [The Friedrich Mine Washing Tip] Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Warmia Landscape Route Gietrzwałd-Woryty Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Mickiewicz Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Causeway Area Cultural Park in Bierun,</li> <li>– Cultural Park of the Castle Hill and Budzówka and Nysa Klodzka Rivers Valley in Kamieniec Zabkowicki.</li> </ul>
4. Protect landscapes connected with religious worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Kalwaria Pakoska Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Eight Blessings Cultural Park in Sierakowice village,</li> <li>– Jewish Cemetery Cultural Park in Żory,</li> <li>– Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Cultural Park.</li> </ul>
5. Protect fortresses and military complexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fortress Cultural Park in Srebrna Góra,</li> <li>– Twierdza Klodzka Fortress Cultural Park.</li> </ul>
6. Protect relicts in cultural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Wietrzychowice Cultural Park,</li> <li>– St. Oswald Church Cultural Park in Plonków,</li> <li>– Sarnowo Cultural Park,</li> <li>– Dolina Trzech Młynów [Three Mills Valley] Cultural Park in Bogdaniec,</li> <li>– Grodzisko (Settlement) Cultural Park in Wicina,</li> <li>– Castle Hill Cultural Park in Sieradz,</li> <li>– Osada Lowcow Fok [Seal Hunters Village] in Rzucewo,</li> <li>– Klasztorne Stawy [Monastery Ponds] Cultural Park.</li> </ul>
7. Protect sites and objects linked with historic personalities and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural Park of ethnographic sub-region of Kutno associated with the Romantic poet Józef Bohdan Zaleski,</li> <li>– "Ossów the Gate to the Battle of Warsaw 1920" Cultural Park.</li> </ul>

Source: authors' own work based on: [www.dworniczak.com/parki-kulturowe-w-polsce-rozmieszczenie-i-typologia/](http://www.dworniczak.com/parki-kulturowe-w-polsce-rozmieszczenie-i-typologia/), [10-06-2018].

**Table 2.** Characteristics of cultural parks in the Lodz region

Cultural park	Established on	Heritage characteristics
Miasto Tkaczy [Weavers' Town] Cultural Park in Zgierz	30.12.2003	A 19th century settlement of drapers – historic wooden architecture mixed with traditional urban layout in one place.
Castle Hill Cultural Park in Sieradz	09.2009	The area of ancient town within which the castle was later erected on an oval grass island in the valley of the rivers Warta and Żeglina (more than 600 m from the Old Town market). (Plan Ochrony Parku Kulturowego[Protection Plan for Cultural Park], 2009, p. 30)
Cultural Park of ethnographic sub-region of Kutno associated with the Romantic poet Jozef Bohdan Zaleski in Leszczynek	28.04.2015	A palace and garden complex with monuments and natural assets. Protection efforts are motivated by the wish to cultivate the memory of the Romantic poet Józef Bohdan Zaleski who lived and worked there and to preserve features typical of the culture of the region. (Resolution No. VI/35/2015)
Piotrkowska Cultural Park in Lodz	09.12.2015	The layout of Piotrkowska, together with Wolnosci Square and Moniuszki Street (former Meyer's Precinct) preserved in their authentic and integral shape. The sites were awarded with the prestigious title of a Historic Monument (the most protected category of monuments in Poland) "Lodz – multicultural landscape of an industrial city". The area includes buildings in different architectural styles: Classicism, Art Nouveau, Historicism, and Modernism.

Source: authors' own work.

Because of the diversity and theme-related differences each cultural park in the Lodz voivodeship fulfils a different function. The oldest one amongst them, the Weavers' Town Cultural Park, is focused on historical education and social integration, which it promotes by organising events for the residents of Zgierz and for visitors. It has got a well developed cultural, catering and hotel service infrastructure.

Castle Hill Cultural Park in Sieradz covers the area of the ancient historic city and the nearby town market with shops and restaurants. In summer, the old city hosts cyclical cultural and entertainment events. Cultural events organised in the park in Sieradz make it a perfect recreational, integration, and historic destination.

Events organised in the cultural park established in the ethnographic sub-region of Kutno associated with the Romantic poet J. B. Zaleski in Leszczynek turn it into a recreational and historic area that performs educational and integration function. Local residents and visitors may take part in a number of cultural and recreational events.

Piotrkowska Cultural Park in Lodz extends protection over the historic area, one of the most recognisable places associated with Lodz. From the very beginning, Piotrkowska has been a shopping street. Nowadays, besides being a shopping area, Piotrkowska fulfils recreational, integration, historic, and cultural functions. It is filled with restaurants, cafes, pubs, clubs, shops, business headquarters, commercial offices and institutions. Piotrkowska also becomes a stage for concerts, fairs, sports and cultural events organised on different occasions and attracting big numbers of residents and visitors from Poland and from abroad.

Moreover, as shown by results of the social surveys carried out with the involvement of representatives of local authorities and civil servants from local administration dealing directly with cultural parks, the main function of park areas is to protect cultural heritage (table 3).

**Table 3.** Area and functions of cultural parks in Lodz voivodeship as seen by representatives of local authorities and administrative units responsible for these parks

Cultural park	Main functions
Piotrkowska Cultural Park in Lodz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection</li> <li>• tourist</li> <li>• social</li> </ul>
Castle Hill Cultural Park in Sieradz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection</li> <li>• cultural</li> <li>• recreational</li> </ul>
Weavers' Town Cultural Park in Zgierz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection</li> <li>• cultural</li> <li>• integration</li> </ul>
Cultural Park of the ethnographic sub-region of Kutno associated with a Romantic poet Józef Bohdan Zaleski in Leszczynek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection</li> <li>• cultural</li> <li>• integration</li> </ul>

Source: authors' own work based on research.

According to respondents, each of the above cultural parks protects, above all, elements of cultural heritage typical of given areas. Yet, due to their nature, parks play a number of other functions serving the needs of local communities. Interestingly, results of studies suggest that cultural parks also have a powerful impact on integration. As indicated by respondents, the setting up of cultural parks in Zgierz and in Leszczynek and activities undertaken to this end in collaboration with the local community and local business circles have strengthened the identification with the area and integrated local residents.

## Cultural Heritage and Its Protection as a Factor Generating Sustainable Development –Case Study of Weavers Town Cultural Park in Zgierz

Cultural park is an arrangement used in monument protection, which awards protection to an entire area with all property and structures situated there together with the surrounding space. There are pros and cons to this format. Social surveys with the participation of residents were carried out in Zgierz where the first cultural park in Poland was established back in 2003.

Results of these pilot studies indicate that throughout its operations the park has managed to occupy a remarkable place in the minds of local people. As many as 80% respondents (out of 50 questionnaire studies) declared being aware of its existence in Zgierz and 20% said they did not know that the city owns such a valuable area protected as a cultural park. Besides, only 10% of those who claimed they knew about cultural park have never visited it. Thus, the majority of investigated population are not only aware that there is a cultural park in Zgierz, but they also visited it and enjoyed its attractions. The most often visited places in the Weavers' Town Cultural Park in Zgierz are the Museum of Zgierz (52% respondents) and Weavers Cafe & Bistro [Café&Bistro U Tkaczy] (32% respondents). Respondents also stressed that they like walking in this area (42% respondents).

Results show that the cultural park established in Zgierz 15 years ago contributes to the development of the town and impacts the identity of local residents. The majority of respondents (94%) could successfully name cultural heritage of Zgierz, its tangible and intangible elements (i.e., property, sculptures, culture, and language) of high value, which provide an excellent source of knowledge available for present and future generations and can be used in the future as foundations of social and economic potential. Only 6% of respondents see elements of cultural heritage as something material, which can be considered outside of immaterial context (culture, tradition or language).

A clear majority of respondents included in the study (84%) also stressed that cultural heritage of Zgierz is very important as evidence of common history that needs to be cherished and developed. According to respondents, cultural heritage, because of its uniqueness and specificity of its components, makes an important basis for historic education and for building the awareness of local community (66% respondents), as well as for preserving the identity of the place (68% respondents). In the minds of residents of Zgierz, this heritage brings in an important potential for the development of tourism (62% respondents).

In the course of the study, respondents identified functions fulfilled by the cultural park in Zgierz. Most of them (74%) claimed that the main function of the park is the cultural function because of the number of cultural events organised there. The park also hosts cultural organisations and institutions of culture (Museum of Zgierz, Wood Preservation Centre, etc.). The majority of respondents also pointed to the educational (62%) and social (34%) functions as primary functions of a cultural park. Cultural park offers workshops and educational walks. Besides, respondents mentioned recreational (20%), tourist (16%), protection (11%), and integration (8%) functions of the cultural park in Zgierz. It is worth noting that the main function of the cultural park, i.e. – protection – identified as such by representatives of local authorities and organisational units responsible for cultural parks was seen as marginal by residents compared to other most often mentioned cultural, educational or social functions.

Cultural heritage is seen by respondents from Zgierz as a key factor that impacts the development of the town (3.82 on a scale from 0 to 5). This factor was enumerated together with local social capital, which ranked the highest in the eyes of residents (3.86 – we used the scale from 0 (no impact) to 5 (very big impact) upon the development of the town/city), cultural heritage (3.82), and economic potential of the town (3.74), but also high quality education (3.68), creativity, and entrepreneurship of local community (3.66). We need to bear in mind that most respondents believe that the above factors exert big or very big impact on the development of the town.

Interestingly, when asked about benefits from having a cultural park in Zgierz, respondents (Zgierz residents) most often pointed to the deepening of historic education, building residents awareness and identity (62% respondents), and the protection of cultural heritage (62% respondents). Residents of Zgierz are also aware of other benefits of the presence of a cultural park in their town, such as promotion of the place among local community and external users as a site of high cultural value (54% respondents) and putting the space covered by cultural park in order (48% respondents). Other benefits listed by respondents include the enhanced investment attractiveness to new business operators interested in locating their businesses in the cultural park (40% respondents) and putting in place bans and limitations aimed at reducing destruction within the area (26% respondents). Local people are aware of many benefits resulting from the presence of the cultural park in Zgierz, which materially contributes to the protection and maintenance of the existing cultural heritage but also significantly determines the development of the area in accordance with sustainable development principle.

According to respondents, the biggest threats to elements of cultural heritage are posed by the ignorance of owners of buildings who tend to neglect necessary major repairs or do not carry out current repairs of immovable structures (82% respondents) and by society who through their conduct may inflict destruction on monuments (intentional devastation or acts of vandalism) (58% respondents). Another often mentioned threat includes repair, restoration, regeneration or adaptation works conducted in a non-professional way by people who do not perform their work properly. Speaking of the awareness of representatives of local authorities and organisational units who take care of cultural parks, there is a constant threat that care for technical shape and the condition of cultural heritage objects will be neglected and the intergeneration transmission of the nature and value of local cultural heritage will get disrupted. This last threat remains almost unnoticed by the residents, who are natural carriers of the specific character and outstanding value of local cultural heritage of Zgierz.

## Conclusions

Social awareness about the value of local cultural heritage is on the rise, however, as a non-renewable resource cultural heritage must be covered with proper protection and care and it must be well managed. We need to rationally manage and protect elements of local cultural heritage to preserve it for future generations and to maintain the identity of these places. Excessive and thoughtless exploitation may lead to irreversible consequences.

Most respondents claimed a cultural park is a correct format to protect cultural heritage because restoration plans and principles of protection laid down in resolutions and provisions of local development plans considerably facilitate the management of the protected areas and offer an array of tools that help to more effectively enforce these rules.

By protecting cultural landscapes, a cultural park covers the entire area with natural and man-made objects. It not only contributes to spatial order but also guarantees sustainable development. Cultural parks in Poland offer a wide range of elements of local heritage typical of respective areas in which they have been established. Very often parks host institutions of culture and businesses, which expand their service offer, help learn about the history of places, shape the identity and awareness of local population, and make people aware of the need to protect valuable areas of local cultural heritage.

Results of studies conducted among the residents and representatives of units that supervise cultural parks in the Lodz region suggest that cultural heritage is an appreciated element of culture. Respondents are increasingly

more aware of the existence of local heritage and threats with which it is faced. They highlight the need to especially protect common identity and history and take care of these places, while observing the principles of spatial order and sustainable development. Respondents see cultural parks as educational, recreational and cultural (rather than protection) spaces, which may mean that units which manage cultural parks are increasingly more skilful at combining protection with the inclusion of cultural heritage into development processes and its use by the local community.

### The contribution of the authors

Ewa M. Boryczka – 50% (concept and objectives, literature review, data analysis, writing).

Justyna Michalak – 40% (concept and objectives, literature review, research, data analysis, writing).

Piotr Rzeńca – 10% (concept and objectives, literature review).

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