

The main objective of the dissertation was to analyze the characteristics of local governments that predispose them to better management of cultural heritage, and therefore its more effective protection and use as a resource in local development. From this perspective heritage management is conceived as an element of a broader management of local development. A deeper understanding of the reasons why municipalities are more strongly committed to and engaged in exploiting the potential of cultural heritage as a vehicle for local development can therefore contribute to a more nuanced perspective on the more effective carrying out of public tasks by public authorities on the local level and enrich general theories of local development by including issues related to monuments and intangible heritage.

The dissertation proposes a multi-stage model explaining factors differentiating the degree of engagement of local governments in the management of heritage. Firstly, the problem at hand was considered in the context of broader considerations related to local development, with an emphasis on the usefulness of selected theoretical approaches applied by economists to the analysis of the issue. The next step was to develop the author's own classification and catalogue of tools, which the local government can implement in order to benefit from the use of heritage in local development.

The scope of use of these selected tools, as well as its geographical distribution has been verified on the basis of a nationwide survey conducted by Statistics Poland (GUS) in 2019 (with the use of a questionnaire form co-created by the author), which incorporated data from all local communities in Poland on the relevant level (N=2477). Both the classification of the tools for heritage management and the analysis of the outcome of the abovementioned survey have allowed the author to develop – using a point-valuation method – an original, multi-factor indicator of the level of commitment of the local government to the use of cultural heritage management tools at its disposal. This, in turn, has enabled her to elaborate the typology of local governments' level of commitment to heritage management, present a ranking of these communities, and has created the possibility of comparing municipalities in this respect. The next stage of the investigation was to determine the relationship between selected socio-economic or cultural conditions (explanatory variables) and the level of local governments' commitment to the use of cultural heritage management tools (the explained variable). The results of the regression analysis have led to singling out these features which, in the Polish context, have the greatest impact on the commitment of the local government to heritage management.

The results of the above were further elaborated within the framework of a qualitative research focused on case studies in a selected Polish region, which allowed for the verification of quantitative findings, as well as inclusion of conditions specific to a given community that are difficult to quantify in the analysis. For this purpose, the intensity of activities of local governments in the Silesian Voivodeship with respect to heritage was analyzed in order to identify particularly active communes in its area and conducting case studies focused on them.

As a result of the research process carried out in the abovementioned manner, based on both quantitative and qualitative data, it was possible for the author to propose a set of the most important factors influencing the use of cultural heritage in local development by local governments. This typology includes systemic conditions, conditions related to the possibility of assessing the effectiveness of activities, territorial conditions, universal factors and factors specific to a particular community. The dissertation deepens and broadens the existing research related to the links between cultural heritage and local development studies by focusing on a selected heritage stakeholder type (local government), presenting the analyzed phenomenon in the context of the entire country and a selected region, and apart from previously dominant qualitative approaches introducing a quantitative approach which may be replicated in other national contexts or from a longitudinal perspective.