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**Title: The significance of dissonant socialist modernist cultural heritage in the development of cities**

*Znaczenie trudnego dziedzictwa kulturowego socmodernizmu w rozwoju miast*

**Abstract**

The architectural heritage of the Polish People's Republic (PRL) constitutes a specific category of cultural resources characterized by an ambivalent nature. Its perception is shaped primarily by historical and political conditions as well as by the socio-economic realities of the socialist system in which it emerged, which places it within the category of so-called "dissonant heritage." This negative perception is further reinforced by aesthetic controversies, the progressive technical and functional degradation of many buildings, and numerous unfortunate renovation and modernization efforts that often disregard the original architectural values. An additional challenge lies in the relatively young age of socialist modernist heritage, which is subject to ongoing cultural reinterpretations, making it difficult to clearly define its contemporary role and to ensure adequate legal protection. As a result, these resources currently function in urban space at a crossroads, posing a significant challenge for long-term management and development policies.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to identify the significance and potential of socialist modernist cultural heritage in the processes of urban development in Poland. The research is conducted across three analytical dimensions: heritage awareness, the territorial impact of heritage resources, and their cultural and economic value. The main objective is operationalized through three specific goals: identifying the extent to which socialist modernist heritage is incorporated into urban development policies, determining its competitive (strategic) potential, and conducting a comprehensive valorization of heritage resources.

The study is situated within the field of regional studies and adopts an interdisciplinary research perspective. Its theoretical framework is based on three key concepts: the theory of local (endogenous) development, the resource-based view of strategic management, and David Throsby's theory of cultural capital. The theory of local development constitutes the leading theoretical framework, emphasizing the role of endogenous, territorially embedded resources such as cultural heritage in initiating and strengthening local development processes. The resource-based view is employed to assess the strategic value of socialist modernist heritage in the context of building sustainable competitive advantages for cities. Throsby's theory of cultural capital

provides a foundation for a holistic valuation of heritage, encompassing both cultural and economic dimensions, including use and non-use values.

The subject of the study comprises non-residential socialist modernist buildings characterized by diverse functional uses, a high degree of architectural authenticity, and significant cultural value. The selected buildings are located in cities that previously served as regional (voivodeship) capitals. Both the selection of cities and the choice of buildings were purposive. The research population includes cultural heritage stakeholders grouped into two main categories: direct property holders (owners and managers of socialist modernist buildings) and territorially oriented institutions, including public authorities, non-governmental organizations, and scientific and research institutions.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the research problem, the study employs a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative techniques within a hermeneutic research framework. The applied methods include historical-interpretative analysis, logical argumentation, and field-based study methods. The analysis of academic literature, archival materials, strategic planning documents, and on-site observations enabled the development of a comprehensive knowledge base of the examined resources, presented in the form of the *Atlas of Socialist Modernist Heritage*. Empirical research was conducted using CAWI and CATI survey techniques between 2023 and 2024. The surveys were used to assess the strategic potential of heritage resources through the VRIO framework and to estimate their economic non-use value using the willingness-to-pay (WTP) method.

The dissertation consists of seven chapters combining theoretical and empirical analyses. The initial chapters address issues related to the perception, protection, and management of cultural heritage, with particular emphasis on difficult heritage and socialist modernism. Subsequent chapters focus on the role of heritage in local development processes, the axiological foundations of heritage valuation, and the methodological framework of the research. The empirical part of the study presents the results of the identification and spatial distribution of socialist modernist heritage resources, their territorial impact, strategic value, and economic valuation. The dissertation concludes with a synthetic summary verifying the research hypotheses and outlining both theoretical contributions and practical implications.

The research findings indicate that despite a relatively low level of social awareness and limited strategic use in urban development policies, socialist modernist cultural heritage possesses significant development potential. When properly recognized, valued, and managed, these resources can become an important component of cities' territorial capital, enhancing their attractiveness, competitiveness, and local identity, and contributing meaningfully to sustainable urban development.