



# Networks or Structures? Organizing Cultural Routes Around Heritage Values. Case Studies from Poland

Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska<sup>1</sup> · Anna Góral<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

The most common way of managing cultural heritage recently takes form of cultural routes as they seem to offer a new model of participation in culture to their recipients; they are often a peculiar anchor point for inhabitants to let them understand their identity and form the future; they offer actual tours to enter into interaction with culture and history, to build together that creation of the heritage, which so is becoming not only a touristic product, but, first of all, the space for cultural, social and civic activity. Yet, so far, according to what we know, the research problem concerning the method of cultural route organization (points on the route) into solid structures or more of the networked nature, has not been deliberated. A question arises, what values are brought by routes and how to organize routes to be the carriers of the values important for communities, where routes are functioning. And, as a consequence, if, from the point of view of the values of local communities, organizing solid route structures or organizing more widely-spaced, network-based routes would bring effects and what those effects would be. Thus, the posed question is of course scientifically imprecise because a network is a type of structure but presents a given direction for the development of cultural route structures. Our objective here is to present a certain solidity and rigidity of structure with dynamic and smooth understanding of the network. The research presented in the article is based on 3 case studies. We have selected for this purpose the three largest cultural routes in Poland, organized to various degrees. The outcome of the research was referred also to other cultural route organization research.

**Keywords** Organization networks · Heritage management · Cultural routes · Cultural routes organization

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✉ Anna Góral  
anna.goral@uj.edu.pl

Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska  
ewa.bogacz-wojtnowska@uj.edu.pl

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Public Affairs, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Culture, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

## Introduction

The past surrounds us everywhere. It is visible not only in tangible things, but also in stories, memories, practices of everyday life and those relating to exceptional events. Structures are permanent tracks of the past, while intangible resources are bonds to fulfill them with content and to embed them in the present time; they also affect our future-related decisions. The awareness of the relationship between artifacts and the present meanings assigned to them by the society is a basis of the cultural heritage concept (Hall 1997; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Ashworth 2015). While understanding the past, we refer to the role of heritage in shaping our present, as heritage explains our past and still is an inspiration for the contemporary goals (Lowenthal 1998, p. 5). It is worth stressing, though, that the manner in which people fill things with symbolic meaning changes with the passage of time and evolves together with the change in our perception of reality (Hall 1997, p. 61). Formation of the heritage concept was a consequence of the intention to preserve the outcome of the needs of a human being who looks not only for a shelter or a sense of security, but also for a sense of belonging (Vecco 2010) which will let him understand himself, the organizations co-created by him and the reality surrounding him “here and now” (Ashworth 2015). In our opinion this may be regarded as a sign of a new way of thinking about organizations and management, the starting point for which is a human being, his needs and values (Melé 2009; Kimakowitz et al. 2010; Keir 2017).

Cultural heritage is now seen as a crucial sphere in satisfying social, political and economic needs of the society (Pekham 2003; Ashworth et al. 2007). Taking into account the assumptions which lie at the heart of heritage we may conclude that the formation process of this resource is directly linked to the necessity to undertake organizational actions which will allow for organized, sustainable management of the owned resource bearing in mind the existing values relevant to local communities (Gawel 2011; Terzić et al. 2014; Makuc 2015). Therefore, the issue of heritage management is clearly humanistic as it refers to the space undergoing management processes and to cultural heterogeneity of places, the multitude of heritage stakeholders and the variety of their needs and values, among others in relation to what we say and how we are to talk about heritage (Holden 2015).

An important example of regional heritage management is a cultural route, i.e. a marked out and signposted tangible trail which connects sites and places selected according to an agreed thematic criterion, which is a unique and representative example illustrating broadly understood cultural heritage of a given region, community, ethnic group, national minority or nation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Global Report on Cultural Routes and Itineraries 2015). By presenting tangible heritage the route makes it possible to become familiar with, understand and promote intangible heritage while treating these two areas as inseparable (Gawel 2011). Such creations, with their flexible form, seem to be an optimal solution for the regions managing their heritage; such regions want to stimulate, in a relatively full and interactive way, the heritage process within the area managed by them. Cultural routes are now considered to be an important step both in the development of the heritage concept and in acknowledging its diversity (World Heritage Committee, 1994): “A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multidimensional dialogue across countries or regions, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time”. The fact that the value of routes is recognized internationally has contributed significantly to the development and wider promotion of this concept, in particular in Europe where route paths intersect practically all the European towns and regions. Cultural

routes are analyzed in particular in the following contexts: their functions and competences (The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes 2008), especially from geographical point of view; their significance for the development of local, regional and transnational tourism (Murray and Graham 1997); the area of cultural, social and civic activities (Ashworth et al. 2007); how routes are understood in local communities (Smith 2006).

Such an attitude to heritage management, seen through the prism of cultural routes, inspired us to undertake the research presented here. In this research cultural route was treated as a part of network structure which makes a profound impact on the region in which it was marked out. The main idea was to depart from perceiving a route only as a tourism product, thus considering it in terms of the regional economy, but to treat it as an important site which influences (and is influenced by) local communities, in line with the conviction that the main reference group for route functioning are the people who are constantly in its immediate vicinity (inhabitants) and not entities which appear within its area sporadically, sometimes only once (tourists), though the latter cannot be left out when talking about routes.

Until now, as far as we know, the research problem concerning the methods of route organization (points on the route) into solid structures or structures closer to loose networks or linear structures has not been discussed because cultural routes are deemed to be linear or network (Global Report on Cultural Routes and Itineraries 2015). Nevertheless, a question arises: what values the routes represent and how to organize routes to be carriers of the values important for communities in which the routes function? And, as a result, whether from the point of view of the values of local and regional communities organizing solid route structures will be more beneficial than organizing more widely-spaced, network-based routes. This is not only an organizational issue but also a deeply humanistic problem because it refers to man as a social being (Pirson and Turnbull 2011), to supporting his dignity and the right to lead a good life (Kostera and Pirson 2017) and well as his community activities which enable them to support not only the community itself but also individuals (Melé 2003). Cultural routes as an element of cultural heritage constitute an element of this heritage which may be deemed invaluable (Pirson et al. 2014), not only because destroyed routes cannot be restored but mainly due to the role they play for individuals and their communities.

## Regional Ecosystem of Heritage

The last decades in social science research show growing interest in the role of place in the development, analyzed not only from the perspective of various organizations operating on its area but mainly from the angle of people who create them as well as through the prism of tangible and intangible artefacts of their activities, which is a sign of a more humanistic approach to the surrounding world and its organizations (Kimakowitz et al. 2010; Pirson 2017). An interesting view of this issue is suggested by humanistic geography whose representatives – such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Relph or Anne Buttimer – when considering “the essence of place” make human being, seen in the context of culture and his regional heritage, the center of their interest (Tuan 1977; Buttimer 2001; Relph 2008). In this sense cultural heritage is perceived by researchers as something more than a structure having high artistic or historic value but mainly as an expression of human culture and of human relations with the place in which he functions. Such relations may vary: from cultural, identity-related, through social, to economic. This way heritage may be identified not only with the past but be treated as an important element of the present which shapes the identity of a place and its

inhabitants (Vecco 2010). In this context the words of Laurajane Smith (2006, 77) are of particular importance; she emphasizes that “heritage as place, or ‘heritage places,’ may not only be conceived as representational of past human experiences, but also as creating an effect on current experiences and perceptions of the world. Thus, a heritage place may represent or stand in for a sense of identity and belonging for particular individuals or groups”.

The process of formulating the contemporary paradigm of heritage over the last decades was accompanied mainly by the progressing change to priorities as regards protection of the past in terms of conservation and protection of heritage sites, where apart from aesthetic, artistic and historic souvenirs more and more attention started being paid to their usefulness in satisfying social, political and economic needs of the society (Pekham 2003; Ashworth et al. 2007). This change was reflected in a series of ratified international Conventions for heritage, as well as cultural policies implemented on the national and regional level and heritage management tools constructed for the purpose of their implementation. Successive postulates and paradigms concerning heritage management placed increasing emphasis on the paradox related to this, namely planning what in fact cannot be planned: the past. Such a changing approach to heritage also stemmed from the attempts to work out development sources alternative to traditional sectors of the economy, not only the sources which would enable “sustainable development” of towns and regions, but which mostly allow for free development of creativity of their inhabitants (Peacock and Rizzo 2008). For this reason, in the analyses concerning the future the role of cultural heritage is more and more often emphasized, not only in the planning of economic development, reflected e.g. in the developing sector of culture and creative industries, but also in the development of social and cultural sphere of places where heritage is perceived as a key reference point for shaping the identity of local communities associated with such heritage and a medium of values important for them (Ashworth et al. 2007; Graham and Howard 2008; Murzyn-Kupisz 2010; Purchla 2014). This was pointed out by e.g. David Throsby (2001), who nearly 20 years ago wrote about the role which the consciously managed cultural heritage may play in the development of cities and regions, and earlier by Gregory Ashworth and Voogd (1990), who stressed the role of heritage in the development of tourism.

What is important from the point of view of discussions presented in this text, contemporary heritage theoreticians in their disputes more and more often refer to the necessity to adopt an integrated approach to the issue of cultural heritage, departing from perceiving this issue through the prism of specific structures and focusing mainly on the social and economic impact of such resources on regions development and looking closely at the ecosystems created by them (Holden 2015; Góral 2017). The contemporary paradigm of heritage expressly emphasizes that this is not only a reference to the past but also a search for the place of the past and its role in forming the present (Graham and Howard 2008), thereby drawing attention to values attributed to heritage by contemporary societies. Such reflections have urged researchers dealing with management, economics, ethnography or cultural anthropology to ponder on the way the cultural heritage is organized and on what management structures will allow exploiting this resource fully in order to stimulate the development of places related to such heritage (Gawel 2011; Terzić et al. 2014; Makuc 2015). This seemingly obvious observation gave rise to the idea of cultural routes.

## Cultural Routes as a Manner of Heritage Organization

The most typical definition of a cultural route, proposed by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, states that these are “physically marked and characterized by having its own historic dynamics and [...] functions, presenting the development of humanity as multidimensional and continuous exchange of goods, ideas, knowledge and values within countries and regions, as well as between them throughout lengthy periods of time, causing mutual interaction of cultures in time and space, which is reflected in tangible and intangible heritage” (Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2008). Thus understood, cultural route in a way overcomes the primacy of the role played by traditional cultural institutions as regards the manner of presenting regional heritage by adding specific dynamic to its presentation and which is important in the context of our discussion, known and traditional concepts of managing organizations by giving them a more humanistic dimension. International Committee on Cultural Routes points out that key components of a route include context, content and cultural significance, where context refers to the space in which a route functions, content refers to tangible structures which constitute anchor points while also being an evidence of cultural richness of a region. It should be noted, though, that most scientists who carry out research on cultural routes analyze them from a purely spatial perspective, looking at the region iconography and at the impact of routes on both the spatial and economic development of regions.

When writing about cultural routes in the context of tourism Murray and Graham (1997, p. 514) emphasize that “Whatever the scale, the essence of itineraries is that they combine the opportunity for cultural consumption with points of sale of goods and services functioning around such culture and inextricably linked to it. As with the link between the historic sites and tourism in general, they encourage to continuously re-image places treating them as a kind of inspiration for development arising from nostalgia, memory and tradition related to places on the route”. Even though with these words researchers emphasize in particular the meaning of routes for tourism development, they also stress certain features of a route, such as its constant re-imagining, having roots in memory and tradition, which obviously draws our attention to the role of people and especially of local communities in routes functioning. This way a cultural route acquires a new, further dimension. Thereby, in particular in the dynamically developing world, a route seems to have the potential to make a considerable impact on the nature of cultural experiences of the region, not only for tourists but mostly for its inhabitants.

Such an approach to a route as a certain organizational structure of heritage moves the point of gravity in the discussion about routes from tangible resources forming the route (e.g. churches, castles) to the people present on the route in various roles. This is because cultural routes offer their recipients a new model of cultural participation and often constitute an anchor point for understanding their identity as well as for shaping the future; the actual journey - interaction with culture and history, co-creating this formation of heritage, which thus becomes not only a tourism product, but mostly an area for cultural, social and civic activities (Ashworth et al. 2007). It becomes not only a tourism product of the region, but mostly a space for local communities, who through their activities give meaning to routes (Weick 1995).

However, the phenomenon of cultural routes, which – in particular in Europe – in the last decades have benefited from their increasing popularity, is related not only to the new approach to heritage itself but stems mainly from innovative organization of routes, different from the previously adopted institutionalized management structure of heritage. Heritage – since it seems to be an extremely complex cultural formation which fosters relations between creators, producers and addressees of heritage (Góral 2017) – requires new, more humanistic

approach to management assuming that various entities should be actively involved in its management (Melé 2003; Pirson and Turnbull 2011): not only public sector organizations designated by the law but also, in fact mainly, entrepreneurs who create heritage products, tourists visiting structures situated on the route or people creating such heritage. By adopting such an approach to route organization a route is becoming a structure – an incredibly flexible network of points, shaped depending on the needs of the region and its inhabitants, their knowledge, experience, current visions of a given place, as well as the manner in which certain communities would like to be perceived. This content may differ and change with time, depending on who creates it at a given moment. Various heritage structures on the route have multiple meanings attributed to them; such meanings show the manners of perceiving heritage in a given community. Laurajane Smith (2006, p. 11) defines such functionalist thinking about heritage as “authoritarian heritage discourse which perceives heritage as a flexible structure changing with time and dependent on social status, origins and biography of the speaker, as well as the political situation or moment in history”.

Heritage management may therefore be understood as an extremely complex process and the heritage itself seems to be a collage of ideas about the past and the manners of using it in the present. As will be demonstrated in research presented here, such visions vary among “route attendants”: on the one hand this is an inventory which binds together the local community and reinforces its sense of unity and belonging, while on the other it contributes to economic development fostered by current needs of the addressees. Heritage will be defined differently by members of a local community, who will treat it as an element of their cultural identity, by tourists, who want to see in it attractions worth seeing or experiencing, by entrepreneurs, who perceive it from the angle of economic benefits, and by regional authorities seeking political contexts which may be used to manage a given community (Ashworth et al. 2007). It should be noted, however, that there is no studies on route potential, namely the capabilities (understood as attributes) which enable the creation of a varied cultural offer as well as to generate changes in the social and civic sphere. Route understood as cultural space influences the culture of the region. Not only nodal points of the route but also the path linking individual route points are important, therefore the places which do not have tangible items of the heritage used to construct the route are also subject to changes. A route seen from this perspective may be, and in practice often is, a pivot of changes with various activities built around it (this also refers to the changes to cultural landscape of the region).

## Organization Networks

If shaping cultural route takes the form of a network – organizations, informal groups, stakeholders or, in a broader sense, also inhabitants and tourists – we should look closely at what the “network paradigm in management” (Borgatti, Foster 2003) tells us. It is a conventional name for a heterogeneous research tradition referring to a description and evaluation of phenomena which differ from the previously acknowledged forms of business coordination, such as the market and hierarchy. Network, market and hierarchy are all considered to be typical for contemporary socio-economic relations, and sociology also adds communities to this group (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). Contemporary networks differ in terms of their nature, rules of operation and size (often also global), use information technologies, while gradually becoming the most important manner of organization in many areas of social life.

As Felix Stalder (2006) emphasizes, network theory aspires to be a great narration of today; one of the “fathers” of this theory, the creator of network language, M. Castells (1996), is of a similar opinion and announces the existence of a network society while at the same time underlining that this is also an answer to the challenges of contemporary world. Towards the end of twentieth century network has become an integral part of relations in the public sector, between the government and public administration (Frederickson, 2002).

What is interesting, network theory was not adapted to the theory of management until the 1980s, yet it was explored earlier by sociologists. According to some researchers, it is clear that we deal with network paradigm (this term is used by: Achrol 1997; Borgatti and Foster 2003), and in order to emphasize the significance of this theory they call modern times “the age of network”, supplementing hierarchy and market with network relations (Agronoff 2006). However, there are some who notice its fragmentary character and weaknesses when it comes to describing reality (McGuire 2002). The paradigm of whether network theories may be indisputably used to study relationships between organizations, apart from the theory of transactional costs, agency theory, dependence on resources theory, relationship marketing theory, relational exchange theory or interaction theory.

Network may be understood as a set of interconnected nodes (Stalder 2006) which may be individuals, groups or organizations (Brass et al. 2004). Connections, in other words ties or relations, are of varied intensity (weak-strong) and formality (formal and informal), with inconsistent stability and complexity, interdependent and self-organizing (Morçöl and Wachhaus 2009), which have different nature (e.g. transfer of resources, camaraderie – Gulati 1998), but are always non-hierarchical which means that no network entity is subordinated to another due to its formal position (O’Toole Jr. 1997).

Networks have various attributes. First of all, there are types of ties, starting from weak and strong (Granovetter 1973), formal and informal (Smith-Doerr and Powell 2005), degree of coherence (Barnes 1979), motives of creation (Provan and Lemaire 2012), range of activity (McGuire 2006), the aim of constructing networks and the manner of managing them (Kennis and Provan 2009). It is also important how knowledge emerges and spreads in networks (Uzzi 1997; McEvily and Zaheer 1999; Ahuja 2000; Powell et al. 2005;). Close, strong and dense interorganizational relationships within a network result in more effective dissemination of knowledge due to trust and creation of common norms and values (Uzzi 1997). Sparse and weak ties in turn are much less effective at transferring tacit and embedded knowledge, yet they allow bypassing redundancy and exploring new areas of knowledge by relying on sporadic relations (Burt 1992; Mariotti and Delbridge 2012).

The development of network-related research also resulted in the development of many streams of research on organization and management: actors and their relationship networks, organizational field (Powell and Di Maggio 1991), action network theory (Czarniawska 2004) and actor network theory (Latour 2005). Also, in the area of humanistic management network studies are being developed while stressing that interorganizational relationships go far beyond mere contracts and material profit (Kogut and Zander 1996) and that individuals do not maximize only their own profit but also balance their own interests with the interests of people (organizations) surrounding them, in line with the adopted moral principles (Dirksmeier and Pirson 2009; Pirson and Turnbull 2011). Network theories, for the purpose of our research, have become a basis for explaining the cooperation of organizations within cultural routes, in particular as regards:

- creation and dissemination of values within the cultural route network,

- types and nature of formal or informal ties between organizations from various sectors (public, private and non-government) and other entities (e.g. informal groups, parishes, and even groups of people united by some problem), which build cultural routes, and their impact on the choice of relations,
- value and significance of cooperation for all the entities within route networks being created and distribution of tasks within network,
- strong or weak interorganizational ties/relationships and the intensity of network actions (density of links, manners of communications),
- the role of “messengers” in cultural route network (for example, people who know organizations and entities within a route and may contribute to the development of interorganizational and inter-subjective relations).

## Research Methodology

The main research problem which we discuss here concerns the manner of organizing cultural routes which preserve values important for route communities. It is important for us to learn what values the routes represent and how to organize routes to be the carriers of values which are important for route communities (stakeholders). Ultimately, whether from the point of view of the values of local and regional communities organizing solid route structures will be more beneficial than organizing more widely-spaced, network-based routes. Thus, the question posed in the title is of course scientifically imprecise because network is a type of structure but presents a given direction for the development of cultural route structures. Our objective here is to present a certain solidity and rigidity of structure with dynamic and smooth understanding of the network.

In response to the presented problem, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: What are the common methods of organizing cultural routes and what are the values that organization process is taking place around?

RQ2: What are the features and characteristics of organizational structures of routes being studied?

RQ3: How are the route managing authorities’ and individual route stakeholders’ roles made up and to what extent are those roles permanently determined, depending on the adopted route organization (as part of more permanent structures or structures closer to network organizations).

We planned that the empirical part would include case studies. Case study is a research strategy focused on understanding the processes which take place within a given case or set (Eisenhardt 1989; Stake 2005). Case studies may be based on a single case or on multiple cases and concern various levels of the analysis (Yin 1984). Different types of case studies exist in literature. One of the most popular typology is the one put forward by Robert E. Stake which includes three types of case studies (Stake 2005): *intrinsic case study*, *instrumental case study* and, finally, *collective case study*, which we suggest here and which covers a few cases in order to better understand and explore the phenomena which are of interest to us. Our case studies are based on qualitative approach with the intention of showing and interpreting the image of the world (Kostera 1996, p. 36). The research process was accompanied by reflective thinking

which was a continuous process of examining and discussing the impressions, opinions, official documents and statements of people who are related to routes (Stake 1995).

We have selected the three largest cultural routes in Poland, organized to various degrees (Wooden Architecture Route in Małopolska, Silesian Industrial Monuments Route and the Piast Trail, situated across two voivodeships (Wielkopolskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie). This choice was determined by the following issues:

- While conducting research on cultural routes in Poland approximately 600 cultural routes were identified during an extensive search. For each route a short description was prepared; this description makes it possible to identify the route and to determine the heritage area, the operator and the level of development.
- We decided that more in-depth case studies would be carried out on 3 largest cultural routes, with the highest degree of organization, having the largest number of route points-sites, with the identity already built around regional heritage and values.
- None of the remaining cultural routes is organized this way or developed to such a degree. Therefore, these three routes are the best example and potential model or direction for route development.

The research was carried out in 2016. In order to collect data, in the study of each cultural route the following four research methods were applied:

- Focus group interviews with leaders of the organizations assembled on each route (3 group interviews per route, between 6 and 12 subjects participated in each interview) carried out in the field (in places important for route functioning). The fragments of focus groups interviews used in the article are marked with the letter “F”.
- In-depth interviews with operators of cultural routes (3 interviews as part of each study), also carried out in the field. The fragments of in-depth interviews used in the article are marked with the letter “W”.
- observations on cultural route (short participant observation), carried out during focus studies and visits to route points,
- analysis of organizational documents obtained during visits to the cultural route (reports and portfolios of organizations, websites of the route and of route organizations).

In-depth interviews were carried out on the basis of a partly structured interview questionnaire. Also, when a given issue was significant from the point of view of research participants, they were free to elaborate on it. Each of the interviews lasted for at least an hour. The interviews were recorded, with the consent of research participants, and then transcribed. In the case of focus interviews a scenario was used and such interviews were conducted in line with the rules of the art of conducting them. They were also recorded and then transcribed. All the available route documents, which referred in any way to the research problem, were also gathered. Notes of observations, which we took during route visits while conducting interviews and focus interviews, were also important. After the interviews have been transcribed and after the documents and notes of observations were put in order, data analysis commenced. Due to small number of interviews and documents, computer programs were not used for this analysis. Both researchers read the interviews and documents many times in order to identify the emerging dependencies and the holistic image of getting organized within a cultural route.

## Case Study – Selected Cultural Routes in Poland

### Wooden Architecture Route in Małopolska (WAR)

Wooden Architecture Route is a network of 255 sites, including churches, Orthodox churches, bell towers, old Polish mansions, wooden villas and open-air museums, which are among the most valuable heritage sites of the folk tangible culture. Eight sites from the network were entered in the World Heritage List of Unesco – 4 wooden churches (2003) and 4 Orthodox churches (or Tserkvas) (2013).

Wooden Architecture Route in Małopolska (WAR) has been developed systematically in Małopolska since 2001 by Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office, which is the official owner of the route, while the management of this route was entrusted to Małopolska Tourist Organization (MTO) - an association whose aim is to form and implement a policy on promotion and development of tourism industry in Małopolskie Voivodeship. Its members include: "local authorities of the region, local government units, local tourist organizations, industry and social organizations, scientific circles and entrepreneurs from the tourism sector" [MTO Articles of Association]. Legal entities prevail but MTO includes natural persons, too.

At first the route was entrusted in a semi-formal way because the Marshal's Office and MTO had not signed a formal contract: "At some stage, in 2008, the management was delegated to the Małopolska Tourist Organization but this was not done under any contract or document, this is an informal decision" [w-1]. Currently, since couple of years, MTO has been participating every year in competition for the execution of public task and has been awarded a typical contract by the Marshal's Office of Małopolskie Voivodeship to manage WAR. So, every year the route manager is unknown and it is difficult to understand why the Marshal's Office does not assign this task for 5 years, which is allowed by the Polish law. MTO manages the network as a whole while the sites which constitute the network also have their individual owners and managers: private individuals, parishes, public institutions and non-governmental organizations. The network of sites forming the route covers the entire administrative area of Małopolskie Voivodeship – at least one site included in route structure is situated in each municipality.

At the beginning network affiliation followed a semi-formal procedure: application for affiliation, an entry in the heritage registry and, of course, the structure had to be made of wood. Nevertheless, in the recent years stricter criteria were applied and the procedure was partly formalized because in order to be included in the route the structure must be open for public. Network affiliation also means that sites are marked with information boards placed on roads near the sites and along the roads leading to the sites. In the network there is no hierarchy of subjects, exclusion from network is extremely rare, and so is any form of "disciplining". This is because there are no standards of functioning within a network other than the ones established upon the "entry".

In it worth noticing that since 2008 a smaller network of route subjects functions within the network; it is a liquid network, renewed every year. This is the so-called Open Wooden Architecture Route and its sites are made available to tourists each summer. One year there are 60 sites, the next year 80, depending on the financial resources of MTO (which depend on subsidies of Małopolskie Voivodeship under the awarded contract), but the core is formed by UNESCO sites and the sites which accept tourists every year and specialize in providing services to such tourists. The financial aspect is important because under the contract MTO employs site hosts-supervisors who receive tourists and allow them to visit the site.

## Industrial Monuments Route (IMR)

The Industrial Monuments Route is a themed tourist car trail connecting 42 most relevant and interesting sights representing the industrial heritage of Silesia.

Work on the route started in 2004 and it was opened in 2005. It was an initiative of the voivodship's self-government, which coordinates and manages the trail to this day. The local authorities define the trail as „(...) a network of industrial culture heritage monuments and a branded tourist product of the Silesian Voivodship.” [The Regulations of the Industrial Monuments Route of Silesia Province]. The sites officially listed as part of the route are spread across 26 locations in the region. They are immovable properties of industrial culture associated with different manufacturing activities in connection with the industrial revolution and the modernization processes it entailed. The sites are related to the tradition of mining, metallurgy, power industry, railway, communication, textiles, water production and the food industry. The Industrial Monuments Route includes existing museums and heritage parks, inhabited worker colonies and running workshops. The objects are owned by the local governments, private individuals, as well as state and private companies.

The project is realized by the Industrial Heritage Promotion Office, which is part of the Department of Culture in the Silesian Voivodship Marshal's Office. The Office employs four people and takes advantage of public funding within an annually drawn budget. The spending policy is very stringent and allows only for specific, previously scheduled tasks to be financed.

The trail has a precisely formulated mission statement, regulations, functions and *modus operandi*. According to its creators, the route is a network tourist product and constitutes „a unique selling point” for Silesia Province among the regional tourist offers, which has substantially gained in value via synergy. Following the mission statement, the primary features of the Industrial Monuments Route as a networked tourist product include: *authenticity, originality, uniqueness and attractiveness* (The Regulations of the Industrial Monuments Route of Silesia Province, 2015).

The trail's cultural monuments are subject to regular audit, which used to be mandatory on entry and every 3 years thereafter. With the formal coordinator in place, the inspections are now carried out more frequently, to ensure that the attractions comply with post-audit recommendations. A classification and ranking of monuments has also been implemented, to reward excellence and galvanize those that are unable or unwilling to uphold the trail's standards. The operating activity of the monuments is regulated by various documents, including (1) The Route Development Plan, drawn up in 2015 which consists of two parts: analysis of the current situation, plus a development and promotion program, (2) Regulations of the Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian Voivodship. There are earlier outlines for incorporation into the network, codified before the aforementioned Regulations, in which some of the factors and requirements for joining include: well-documented authenticity of a given site as an element of the region's industrial heritage, spotless legal and financial situation, as well as ownership structure, adequate infrastructure to handle tourist traffic, expertise needed to create exhibitions, informational and promotional activity and readiness to participate in the annual festival *Industriada*.

The route's network continues to expand. Aside from heritage monuments, there are other entities being anchored – organizations which provide expertise and deal in cultural heritage. The goal is to improve the project's capacity in a number of fields, such as event organization, or influence on governing bodies and policymakers.

## The Piast Trail (TPT)

The Piast Trail is a tourist and historical trail which connects the most important objects and monuments related to the origins of the Polish State in the tenth century, Christianization of the region and the Piast dynasty. Unlike with other cultural routes, monuments officially listed as part the trail are located across two voivodships: Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland) and Kujawsko-Pomorskie (Kuyavian-Pomeranian).

At the initiative of Gniezno Starost Office, work on the route officially started in 2011, much later than WAR and IMR in southern Poland, which allowed the creators to build upon the experiences of the Industrial Monuments Route and the Wooden Architecture Route. However, the first mention of the trail can be traced back to 1966, in connection with the anniversary celebrating 1,000 years of Christianity in Poland. The millennial celebration sparked revived interest in the monuments in the area; several guidebooks extolled the unique qualities of the trail and marked its major walking tracks (Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2008). The tracks initially formed a characteristic 8-shape, which to this day can be found on indicative maps.

The existing concept of the route takes into account two main trails. The first one encompasses 15 settlements featuring objects or complexes, 30 stand-alone attractions and 4 urban or local routes (Poznań, Gniezno, Strzelno - Inowrocław – Kruszwica complex and Włocławek). The second trail encompasses 8 settlements featuring objects or complexes, 17 stand-alone attractions and 2 urban routes (Gniezno and Kalisz).

The trail management framework derives from a specific distribution of powers among the various entities. The first authority in question is the Piast Trail Academic Advisory Board, founded in May 2011 by the marshals of Wielkopolskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodships. The Board is composed of representatives of science, local government and industry from both provinces, with Starost of Gniezno as the body's chairman. The Board concerns itself with strategic policies, such as pursuit of the trail's mission statement, addition and removal of cultural objects, audit oversight, as well as study and research. Another authority – involved in the project since 2016 – is the Tourist Cluster „Wielkopolska Piast Trail” (which acts as coordinator for the Wielkopolska section of the trail). It is a product tourist organization founded by 19 local government units, municipalities and counties, which makes it a textbook grassroots initiative. Finally, we have the Inowrocław Local Tourism Office, as coordinator of the Kujawy section of the trail, assigned this task by the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship. The Piast Trail is further supported by: the Sports and Tourism Departments of Wielkopolskie Marshal's Office in Poznań and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Mashal's Office in Toruń, Wielkopolska Tourism Organisation (the previous coordinator), Kujawsko-Pomorskie Tourism Organisation, as well as array of local government units and cultural objects. The Tourism Organisation “Piast Trail from Gniezno” also has a stake in the project. Proper coordination is hindered by the fact that out of all the stakeholders only the Piast Trail Academic Advisory Board has national reach, whereas the other entities operate solely within the boundaries of their provinces, launching joint efforts if the situation calls for it.

The Piast Trail does not have a codified mission or development plans. The central document that establishes the trail and defines the objectives is a letter of intent titled “On the restoration of the Piast Trail,” drafted in 2012 by the province marshals. Aside from the foregoing document, the local government for Wielkopolskie Province had entered the route into various strategic documents. In particular, the Piast Trail is now considered one of the priority tourist products of the region, included in the Tourism

Development Strategy for Wielkopolskie Voivodship until 2020. Note that a similar initiative has not been undertaken in Kujawy.

It is difficult to assess the structure of the trail, as it is a work in progress (even though, as an idea at least, it is technically the oldest cultural route in Poland), while the still forming networks and affiliations between the objects and other organizations connected to the trail are often contradictory. The main organizations within the Piast Trail do not conduct any networking activity – no meetings, training courses, study visits, or other interactions, apart from three academic conferences cobbled together by the Advisory Board.

## Research Results

### The Role of a Community in Cultural Route Organization

When referring to the first question (“What are the common methods of organizing cultural routes and what are the values that organization process is taking place around?”) it should be emphasised that while observing how the studied cultural routes function one may have an impression that route is a flexible structure which is shaped depending on the current needs of the region and its inhabitants, their knowledge, experience, current visions of a given place, and these may change with the passage of time, similarly to route communities which evolve as well. The basic point of reference in the process of heritage management are people who, by building a particular narrative based on the things preserved from the past, memories and histories, create ecosystems around them. It should be emphasised that often, for the inhabitants of the region, monuments around them constitute a certain element of their everyday life, permanently inscribed in their landscape. This aspect of “normalcy” and commonality of historical monuments means time is required to come to the realization about how important an artefact they are for local communities. The development of routes in the studied cases played a role of an important impulse influencing the revitalization of local communities, initially comprising their increasing willingness to explore their own heritage, and as a result of the development, it led to being proud of their roots, the will to act for their community and heritage, and continue to actively co-create the route. One of the guides working on the route notes this fact: “*When I started to work at the site, residents were wondering what would I be doing there, they wanted the church to be theirs only, they didn't want tourism (...), [when tourists would arrive] some residents listened as well, they discovered what was in the church... I'm glad when locals come to visit the church, it's great when Japanese or Israeli come... but I'm the happiest when the locals do...*” [F-1].

In the case of WAR, the heritage in the form of a route validates local communities, through their touristic and economic activation it enables gradual recovery from poverty, which is quite common in rural areas of the route. It is worth stressing here that even though a route has its manager, each network accession is and has been voluntary; thus, a route is called by its members “a bottom-up network” founded on the local cultural and social capital. “*I am glad that this is bottom-up, nothing was tried to be imposed by some organizations. This is not like building a simple guest house...*” [W-1]. In the case of the Industrial Monuments Route, it was not only the revitalization of the function of former mines, but also the “explaining” of the mining region’s identity, the enhancement of the pride in the heritage and the existing industrial culture, as well as the activation around the route objects – once “only”

workplaces, now they have gained a deeper meaning, becoming centres of activity – cultural and economic – for local communities.

Our research shows that there is no one uniform way of organizing routes. Nevertheless, a cultural route always constitutes a certain network of various individuals and organizations. In the course of our research we managed to identify certain repetitive aspects of route organization which were present in all the studied cases. Conversations with various stakeholders engaged in the development of three studied Polish routes showed that the decision to establish routes usually depends on two factors. One of them is the willingness to show how unique of the region in which a route is to be situated and its inhabitants are compared to other regions but - notably - by finding and highlighting such an element of the region which all the communities inhabiting such an area could identify with. As it was stressed in interviews, *“Thanks to the route, residents notice the uniqueness of their site, they note the beauty of the place where they live.”* [F-1].

On the other hand, however, while seeing the need for economic stimulation of local communities which so far, in particular in rural areas (Małopolska region), have worked mostly in agriculture or which inhabit industrial areas (Silesia region), it is visible that there is a willingness to support the development of a new economic sector in the region, i.e. the sector of cultural and tourism services, thereby contributing not only to the economic but also to the social and cultural regional development. One of the guides summarized the phenomenon by saying: *“(…) There was a little church, when the route wasn't here... it was only for praying, And now it's much better, because there's the route, there's potential. Now there are concerts, visiting...”* [F-1].

It is worth emphasizing here how significant for route organization are informal relations between the guides working at the sites situated on the route; in fact, route organization develops on the basis of such relations. It is visible in e.g. recommending to one another the sites nearby and the services of guides working there or the opportunities to get involved together in projects organized in the region, which also stems from the conviction that both parties may benefit from such cooperation, which, among others, is developed strongly outside of the organizational structures on WAR and TPT.

## **A Route as a Network Structure**

When answering the second research question (“What are the features and characteristics of organizational structures of routes being studied?”) it should be noted that network structures emerge within routes and such structures differ in terms of their durability and arrangement. The studied routes were networks, differently shaped and coordinated. The Industrial Monuments Route is a network structure not only permanent and formalized but also strongly initiated from above, by the public sector. Organizations in the Industrial Monuments Route network undertake joint actions, also in a much formalized way. What is important is that the relations are collaborative because route manager not only strives for full integration of actions but also many actions within the route network are taken jointly on many levels. The hierarchy emerging in a network proves that network structure becomes more rigid and that permanent structures are built, even though the intentions of the coordinator are different (a network of independent entities making decisions together). To sum up, the Silesian route is to a large extent an already institutionalized network and it reflects the arrangement of the industrial heritage it explains. This route is the most permanent structure among the three studied routes.

The Wooden Architecture Route is a twofold structure. In this case we have (1) a formal structure covering all the sites which belong to the route, with a strong, smaller structure which has developed within this one; (2) a formalized network covering approximately one third of entities - route organizations where the coordinator takes some actions aimed at making the network more coherent, delegates certain tasks and implements minimum standards. Overall, though, route-related activities usually take place outside of the managing organization and are attributable to the activities of route entities themselves, who are often very much related to the wooden architecture site. What is important within a network is exchange of information, mutual informal contacts, referrals and helping one another in taking actions related to route heritage, which in fact are decisive for route development. Therefore, social and cultural capital of the Małopolskie voivodeship is of key importance in building a route, while the role of formal route coordinator and the methods and instruments used by such a coordinator to manage a network - route seem to be less important in this process. Notable lack of route hierarchy, developmental activity and cooperative relations between entities should also be emphasized. Network fragmentation (over 250 entities) reflects the existing socio-economic structure historically formed in the voivodeship (small business and agricultural entities which operate within various networks of mutual relations). At the same time the network is based on common ideas and values.

Last but not least, the Piast Trail is a fragmentary and fragile network, still under construction, with a few managing centers and two poorly connected network branches. The concept of the route was firm and well crystalized before its formal restitution but the current networks of relations are founded more on bottom-up relations, shared meanings and ideas, and developed much earlier, before the route was officially established. At the same time this route may be referred to as a technocratic network because the scientific board wants to have the strongest impact on its shape. Relationships within the network are diverse, even competitive. Fragmentary or incoherent nature of relations within a network is fostered by geographical extension of the route and the fact that it covers two administrative units - voivodeships. It is clearly visible that not only route sites but also the communities gathered around route towns compete with one another.

### **Durability and Development. Importance of Relations between Route Stakeholders in their Organization**

In another research question we discussed “How are the route managing authorities’ and individual route stakeholders’ roles made up and to what extent are those roles permanently determined, depending on the adopted route organization”.

In the case of studied routes we dealt with various models of route organization and their internal relations within networks were apparently diverse: firstly, the relations between network entities, and secondly, the relations between the manager and network entities, which we considered to be a sign of route organization stability. There was only one route with really durable management structure. The Industrial Monuments Route is the only route on which from the very beginning of its existence there is only one entity and a permanent team responsible for the coordination of activities carried out on the route, which influences the development of relations between individual route stakeholders and the roles of such stakeholders in a systematic and coordinated manner. This leads to gradual expansion of the Industrial Monuments Route community, not only to include heritage sites. New entities are

anchored, in particular the ones which may provide expert knowledge and are organizations dealing with cultural heritage.

As far as the other studied routes are concerned, the situation is less stable. As regards WAR, for years the organization responsible for route management has been MTO which has to participate in an open competition organized by WAR owner (which is the Małopolskie Voivodship), every year to become route operator. Therefore, every year there is a risk that the contract for route management will be awarded to another organization whose vision of route development will differ from the current vision. Relationships within networks vary. Firstly, the relations between network entities, and secondly, the relations between the manager and network entities. The former are strong, based on the sense of community of the regional heritage, often very interpersonal as well, where particular leaders work together with one another, which we will discuss further later on. Whereas relations between the WAR operator and particular entities are varied – they are the strongest within a smaller network, i.e. relations based on an official agreement and making an object available to tourists. In a broader network, there is no hierarchization of entities, and the exclusion from the network, or any kind of disciplinary action, occur extremely rarely. It is so, because there are no standards of functioning within the network in place, apart from those established at the outset: *“Among others, and before us, it’s the challenge to create a certain hierarchy. Not to sound bad – we don’t want to elevate some, and push down others, we only want to objectively assess where these objects rank, compared to one another, and determine certain categories.”* [F-1].

The Piast Trail has many managers: these are organizations having various profiles, competences and expectations concerning the route, which may be perceived as a risk in the context of route stability and its development as an organization. It is difficult to determine the structure of this route as it is being developed (though this route is the oldest in terms of the idea) and the emerging networks and relations between sites or organizations on the route often have completely opposite vectors: *„When it comes to the route, the physical, tangible layer dominates, sites are dispersed, only recently people started working on making a route more intangible”* [F-1].

It is worth emphasizing, though, that while stable function of route manager undoubtedly has an impact on creating route image and brand among external stakeholders, which is manifested in e.g. numerous awards and commendations for the Industrial Monuments Route as the best branded tourism product, this is not really reflected in the relations between internal route stakeholders - managers and heads of route sites. In the case of the Industrial Monuments Route, even though the community has worked out a route plan, participation in decision making is in fact limited, validation tools within a network are scarce, even though for many years there have been plans to establish an advisory body. A very important issue for a coordinator is entities networking, although it is clear that such activities build quite strong networks similar to permanent sites, also due to formalized procedures related to functioning of route sites. It should be noted that even though stakeholders-site representatives feel the need for stimulation and more profound networking, they clearly expect that such actions will be initiated and coordinated by Route coordinator. In the case of less organizationally stable WAR the situation is different. Even though MTO is the official route manager, when looking at WAR it is worth emphasizing that within this route there is a strong network of informal relations between tour guides who work at the sites situated on the route. This network gathers the most active WAR sites managers/heads - informal leaders of WAR community who initiate and coordinate many smaller, independent route undertakings. The activity of leaders and WAR members gathered around them is often based on friendship between “route attendants”

and the willingness to help one another. This is manifested in e.g. recommending to each other nearby sites and services of guides working there or the opportunities to get involved together in the projects organized in the region, which also stems from the conviction that both parties may benefit from such cooperation. The Piast Trail is similar in this respect, the network within the management structure is dispersed and the activities are in most cases not coordinated by any of the route managers. However, in the route area, mainly in the vicinity of its individual sites, many events related thematically to its profile are organized; from the beginning the organizers base their offer and promotion on route potential and they cooperate with one another. Nevertheless, in some cases lack of coordination on the Piast Trail results in competition between its entities who would like to take on a leader.

Our research lead to a conclusion that looser networks based on informal relations, bottom-up cooperation, as is the case with WAR and the Piast Trail, seem to be more durable in the context of route existence: they require route attendants to be more engaged and motivated. They make route members undertake activities and own actions on the route more willingly and more often.

## Discussion

The research we carried out reveal that there is no one way of organizing routes; their creation and functioning is contained in a rather broad definition of a cultural route that does not exclude the previously existing categories and types of cultural property, but it reinforces and synthesizes them, increases their significance and creates a joint system (ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes 2008; Karataş 2011). The studied routes in Poland, similarly to these in Europe and across the world, have both linear and network structures (Global Report on Cultural Routes and Itineraries 2015; Ward-Perkins and Tüdes 2016). Networks focus within them the organization of the route, while the designated traffic trails are linear. At the same time, practically every emerging route structure subjected to study is constantly being redefined, created and changed within a more or less expected shape, as these are relatively new structures of cooperation, continuously redefined both by the “points on the route”, organizers, and the community gathered around the route. Durusoy (2014) points out the richness and diversity of the route components, stressing as well multi-dimensional structures, using the history, “becoming” and gaining significance.

Taking a closer look at the structure of space in which the resources of the cultural heritage function, we can observe that what constitutes its important part is individuals or groups that perceive these resources as an opportunity for the development of the entire community, or the fulfilment of their individual needs (Uzzi 1997; Smith 2006). However, this development can be understood in different aspects: in social, economic, as well as cultural categories. Thus, stakeholders of the route, by fulfilling their needs through the use of cultural heritage resources, have a significant impact on their preservation and development, and at the same time, these resources significantly affect stakeholders themselves, their development and relations with the environment. Therefore, the interaction between cultural heritage resources and their participants becomes a dialogue based on such values as human rights, cultural democracy, diversity, mutual understanding and exchanges across boundaries, whose role in building routes and communities that create them was noted by the European Institute of Cultural Routes (The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes, 2008); they also constitute foundations of the humanist current in management (Pirson 2017; Melé 2003).

Already at the level of a cultural route definition, what is notable is the combination of a range of material elements of the heritage (points on the route) connected with other, immaterial values, i.e. a kind of combination of civilization processes, time and values important for the society or certain social groups (Van Oers 2004; Durusoy 2014). Similarly in our research, a crucial factor which has an impact on the decision to establish a route and on the process of organization and management of a cultural route is creating the underlying and continuously reinforced community of people, often not formalized and developing outside of the formal organizational structures. The created route community is founded on the willingness to give some meaning to both the organization itself - the route the community co-creates (Weick 1995; Maitlis 2005) and the work performed for such an organization (Wrzesniewski et al. 2003). At the same time, when observing the diversity of stakeholders drawing from cultural heritage resources, we can remark that they are connected by interdependencies that reflect, on the one hand, a “model” development process of the cultural heritage awareness among the resident of the region, and on the other hand, they display the complementary character of particular heritage stakeholders’ actions in the context of sustainable local development based on cultural heritage resources. These actions are accompanied by clear processes of emancipation and validation of particular stakeholders (Pirson and Turnbull 2011; Relph 2008) which proves that a route is a community of persons whose cooperation is often based on friendship between “route attendants” and on the willingness to help one another (Albert and Perouma 2017).

It is important to note that the type of community which led to the organization of cultural routes is not related to belonging to the same place because the sites and people related to routes are hundreds of kilometers away from one another and what they have in common are shared hobbies, interests and values (Walker, 2008; Melé 2009; Onyx and Leonard 2011). Communities of people on a route are at first usually informal and are initiated at grassroots level. With the passage of time, depending on needs and expectations of their members, such communities take steps towards making their actions formal. Route communities are usually formed around the so-called “anchor sites” (Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2008; Gawel 2012) which stand out in a certain way from other sites, e.g. in terms of the level of activity of their managers and local communities, recognizability in a larger group of experts, the available infrastructure which enables further actions and development. The idea of routes develops around such points (and is often also initiated by them) and they are treated as reference points for the other route sites.

The studied routes form network structures of varying sustainability, order and coordination. The most durable and formalized network is the Industrial Monuments Route, strongly initiated from the top by the public sector (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Provan and Lemaire 2012). This network is dominated by a public coordinator who is supported in comparison with other entities of the network (Mandell 2001). A hierarchy appears, unlike in the typically understood networks (O’Toole Jr. 1997), procedures in the network prove the calcification, formalization of relationships, building permanent structures. The network is rather closed (Burt 1997; Lee and Tamraker 2018), and the criteria for access are strictly formalized. In summary, the Silesian Route is to a large extent an already institutionalized network, which also reflects the arranged order of the industrial heritage it explains. This route is the most sustainable structure out of the three studied trails.

The Wooden Architecture Trail is a dual structure, where the network is built rather on social and cultural capital (Coleman 1988). It is a network within a network: smaller, more integrated network in bigger, but at the same time weaker, related network (Provan and

Sebastian 1998). In their entirety, route activities occur mostly outside of the managing organization, thanks to the activity of route entities themselves, often closely related to the wooden architecture objects. Elements important within the network include the exchange of information (Uzzi 1997; Burt 1997; Adler and Kwon 2002), unofficial contacts (Selden et al. 2006), recommendations and mutual assistance in activities around the route heritage which, in fact, determine the route development, but also regional growth development (see also Safford 2009). We should also stress a strongly ahierarchical nature of the route, a growing scope of activities (McGuire 2006) and relationships of cooperation between the entities. The fragmentation of the network (over 250 entities) reflects the existing economic and social structure, shaped historically in the voivodeship (small business and agricultural entities functioning within various networks of mutual relations). At the same time, the network is based on a strong community of ideas and values.

And finally, the Piast Trail is a fragmented and unsustainable network (Greenhill and Lupu 2017), under construction, with several management centres and two, feebly connected arms. At the same time, it could be called a technocratic network (a strong influence of scientists), relationships within the network are diversified, as well as competing (Covey and Brown 2001). The fragmentation or incoherency of relationships within the network is exacerbated by the geographical sprawl of the trail and its borders (Provan and Kenis 2008). The competition is clearly visible not only among the objects on the trail, but also among communities around the towns along the route.

Generally, in all the studied cases either one organization manages a route (or only coordinates the activities), or this is the aim (as is the case with the route in Wielkopolska region, even though the situation is complicated because the route area spans two voivodeships). It may therefore be concluded that routes-networks are managed by a leading organization (Kennis and Provan 2009). Organizations-route points in Silesian and Małopolskie voivodeships expect that the leading organization will undertake network-forming and management actions and they are usually able to submit themselves to the management procedures and methods applied by such an organization because they see it as beneficial. Also, the Piast Trail is formally networked only from the top down, built a bit forcefully by individual managing organizations. The previous informal network which connected sites on the Piast Trail was founded on certain values and ideas; subsequent management and organizing caused resistance, competition among route entities and occurrence of various organizations which are to coordinate route operations.

Formal networks, stronger and often also hierarchical, emerge where the public sector is the route coordinator. It may be explained by an organizational isomorphism or functional overlap (Craig and Porter 2004), in particular mimetic isomorphism, as in the light of G. C. Homans' theory (1958), cooperating individuals are prone to emulating one another to achieve greater benefits within the relationship. Non-governmental organizations that coordinate route activities in the Małopolska and Wielkopolska region build less formal networks, leaving networking to route organizations themselves, bottom-up leaders, or even local communities.

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formed around the so-called “anchor sites” (Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2008; Gawel 2012) which stand out in a certain way from other sites, e.g. in terms of the level of activity of their managers and local communities, recognizability in a larger group of experts, the available infrastructure which enables further actions and development. The idea of routes develops around such points (and is often also initiated by them) and they are treated as reference points for the other route sites.

Thus, route organization is a less or more formalized community of people and organizations sharing the same values and goals. Routes are created and managed by various entities: public organizations, NGOs, with the participation of private entities and in many cases with the participation of informal groups and individuals who are passionate about local heritage. What seems to drive the development of the idea of a route and the subsequent implementation of such an idea, regardless of its underlying motivations, are mostly (1) the willingness to cooperate expressed by people who are directly related to the places on the route and who are often engaged in their management; (2) the willingness to share own cultural wealth; (3) the conviction that own region and culture are unique; (4) the willingness to stimulate local communities and engage them in managing the development of regions they live in; (5) passion and engagement of individuals and organizations who want to introduce changes in their surroundings. A skillful combination of such motivations makes the created regional route become more profound as it becomes a type of medium for changes in regions (Góral 2016). The heritage forming such a route (historic sites) is in turn a starting point for shaping the “here and now” of local communities, thereby becoming a stimulus for economic development, influencing the situation on the labor market and animating social cohesion.

## Final Conclusions

The main objective of our study was to examine the manners of organizing Polish cultural routes which preserve values important for route communities. It was also important for us to learn what values are brought by routes and how to organize routes to be the carriers of values which are important for route communities (stakeholders). The study was based on analyzing case studies of three largest cultural routes in Poland; therefore we may not generalize our conclusions. However, with respect to the analyzed cases we take the liberty of presenting a few thoughts which we consider most important.

We attempted to show in the text that the structure of heritage routes may be different and change with time, depending on who and why creates it at a given moment. The very idea of a cultural route seems to be a sign of a humanist thinking about an organization and management where people, the artefacts they create and the values they hold constitute a basis for route creation, and the organization of cultural routes takes the form of a community of people who want to achieve the set objectives together, on the basis the values and beliefs they share. This is because a cultural route is a structure used for heritage management; within this structure the operations aimed for the preservation of historical monuments and memory which form the tangible layer of a route are complemented by living people, their knowledge, cultural practices, standards of conduct, internal regulations of the communities in which they operate and their living space (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Stewart Hall (1997, p. 61) when writing about the concept of cultural heritage management underlined that “It is us, the human community, that fills things with symbolic meanings and gives importance to them. These, however, with the passage of time, are evolving together with the change in the perception of reality”.

Our research has shown that, firstly, the basic point of reference in the heritage management process organized in the form of a cultural route are people who by building a certain narration based on the things, memories and stories preserved from the past form the surrounding ecosystem. This happens at various levels, starting from the micro-scale, where we talk about local heritage, often associated with the term “little homeland”, through the meso-scale, most often referring to the defined administrative borders (e.g. regions), macro-scale - the country, where we talk about national heritage, and, finally, the global scale of human heritage.

Secondly, an extremely important asset of many routes and their sites is their symbolic dimension and the meaning given to them by local communities, which may be treated as an indicator of emotional bonds between inhabitants and a given site, a group of sites or landscape dominants. The locals remember many route sites as e.g. functioning work places. After they were closed and transformed they became leisure areas; it was often necessary to take extra effort to convince former employees and their families that such a change was sensible, as well as to acquire them as customers, sometimes even as “ambassadors” of such sites. Cultural routes, which also in a way protect heritage sites, are often used to preserve such elements of the past which allow local communities to ingrain in the present and, to quote the words of Lowenthal (1998, p.5) cited in the introduction, they are used to build the “here and now” of the inhabitants of the region inspiring them to undertake new economic activities, e.g. in the area of tourism, as well as social and cultural activities related to e.g. an increase in civic activity (willingness to preserve own heritage) or development of artistic creativity manifested in e.g. the work of local handicraft artisans.

Thirdly, the structures adopted by cultural routes vary, starting from network relations which are fragmentary and under development, through very loose, bottom-up networks (Małopolska route) up to formalized and hierarchical permanent sites, such as the Industrial Monuments Route. It is worth emphasizing that the type of adopted route structure (loose, built at grassroots level on the basis of relations between people, or more formalized, with top-down construction and management) has a significant impact on how a route is organized and how it develops. Looser structures create more space for the activities of people who form the routes; more autonomy generated by such sites favors genuine involvement of people in development. More formalized structures in turn, even though they are better at organizing their internal relations and the manner in which a route operates, contribute in a natural way to the decrease in engagement and initiative of people who form a route in favor of the management, which in the long run may be contrary to the very idea of cultural heritage.

Our studies allowed us to notice that route sites are structured, focused, shaped and managed by, and in response to, the requirements of the present day in which contemporary societies function. Route structures as such and the legacies forming them are therefore open to constant review and change while at the same time being a source and outcome of social interactions, both within a given group and between groups, the artefacts selected by them and the values assigned to them. Such processes are exemplified in the studied routes: while observing the development of individual routes one may notice various directions in which their structures evolve, as well as the ideas for routes formed by people who create and manage them. The conclusions we present may be treated as an inspiration for more interest in organizations management, in particular in the area of cultural heritage and the culture, based on loose networks co-created by a large group of stakeholders. Such an approach, even though it is different from the currently dominating (even in the cultural sector) classical approach to cultural institutions management, may be an interesting alternative stimulating greater involvement of stakeholders in the life of an organization, and as a result in its development.

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