



MATEUSZ SZAST

University of Agriculture in Krakow

A MODEL OF CULTURAL CAPITAL CONVERSION IN THE COMMUNITY OF RUDNIK NAD SANEM

INTRODUCTION

Rudnik nad Sanem is a small town in south-eastern Poland, historically associated with wickerworking and basket production. For more than 150 years, wicker craftsmanship has constituted an important element of the local economy, social organisation, and cultural identity¹. The town therefore provides a particularly useful case for examining how traditional artisanal practices may function as a mechanism of cultural capital reproduction and conversion within a local community.

The article analyses the mechanisms through which cultural capital associated with wickerworking is transmitted and converted into social, symbolic, and economic resources. Particular attention is devoted to intergenerational transmission, local institutions, social networks, entrepreneurial activity, and symbolic practices embedded in the public space of the town. The analysis draws primarily upon Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and social field, supplemented by selected

Correspondence addresses: m.szast@urk.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-5677-6471

¹ Wikliniarstwo [<https://rudnik.pl>].

elements of James Coleman's and Robert Putnam's approaches to social capital. Empirically, the article is based on qualitative longitudinal research conducted in Rudnik nad Sanem between 2022 and 2026, combining field observations with the analysis of historical, institutional, and local documentary materials.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach focused on Rudnik nad Sanem, a local community historically shaped by wicker craftsmanship and basket production. The case study design was selected to examine the long-term processes through which wicker-related knowledge, skills and practices are transmitted, institutionalised and converted into social, symbolic and economic resources within a specific local setting. The analysis therefore considers not only the persistence of wickerworking traditions, but also the relationships between craftspeople, families, enterprises, local institutions, non-governmental organisations and municipal actors involved in their reproduction and contemporary transformation.

The research employed methodological and source triangulation, combining participant and non-participant observation with the analysis of historical, institutional, press and digital materials. These sources were examined comparatively in order to reconstruct the development of the local wickerworking ecosystem, identify the actors involved in the transmission and institutionalisation of wicker-related cultural capital, and analyse the relationships between craft production, entrepreneurship, cultural institutions and the symbolic representation of wickerwork in the public space of Rudnik nad Sanem.

The analytical strategy draws on interpretative sociology and the qualitative tradition of community studies, with particular attention to the meanings attributed to local practices, institutions and representations of wickerworking heritage (Geertz 1973; Yin 2018). Within this framework, Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, habitus and field were used as analytical categories for interpreting the transmission, reproduction, institutionalisation and conversion of wicker-related resources (Bourdieu 1986, 2005).

RESEARCH AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The article aims to analyse the mechanisms enabling the transformation of cultural capital associated with wicker craftsmanship into social, symbolic, and economic capital within the local community of Rudnik nad Sanem.

The following research question was adopted: through what mechanisms, and to what extent, can cultural capital rooted in traditional craftsmanship contribute to the socio-economic sustainability and continuity of a local community?

In order to further develop the principal research problem, several detailed research questions were formulated:

- In what ways is the cultural capital associated with wickerworking transmitted within the local community?
- Which institutions and social actors participate in the reproduction and preservation of wickerworking traditions?
- How do social relations and local networks support the conversion of cultural capital into other forms of capital?
- What role is played by local institutions, non-governmental organisations, and enterprises in sustaining the local wickerworking ecosystem?
- What contemporary limitations and challenges affect the intergenerational transmission of wickerworking traditions?

The article seeks to provide an in-depth sociological interpretation of a specific local case without universalising the analysed mechanisms across all local communities. For the purpose of conceptual clarity, the following analytical categories are employed:

- transmission — intergenerational transfer of knowledge and skills;
- reproduction — reproduction of social structures, traditions, and cultural practices;
- conversion — transformation of one form of capital into another;
- institutionalisation — incorporation of informal practices into institutional structures;
- legitimisation — acquisition of symbolic recognition and social legitimacy.

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The empirical material used in the study was collected during successive periods of fieldwork conducted in Rudnik nad Sanem and its immediate surroundings between 2022 and 2026. The research was conceived as a qualitative longitudinal study of a local community, allowing for the observation of continuity and change in the social, institutional and symbolic functions of wickerworking over this period (Neale 2021). Participant and non-participant observation encompassed local cultural events, exhibitions, workshops and other initiatives connected with wickerworking, as well as the activities of the Wickerwork Centre and the presence of wicker objects and installations in the public space of the town and municipality. Particular attention was paid to situations in which different categories of local actors — craftspeople, entrepreneurs, representatives of cultural institutions, associations and local government — participated jointly in the reproduction, presentation and promotion of wickerworking traditions.

Field observation was accompanied by systematic photographic documentation. The photographic material recorded both material manifestations of wickerworking — including traditional and contemporary products, large-scale wicker forms, public-space installations and elements of everyday use — and the institutional and symbolic settings in which wickerworking heritage is presented and reproduced. Photographic documentation was also used to record historical and documentary materials made available through the Wickerwork Centre, including displays concerning the development of basketry education, local production and enterprises, as well as the historical role attributed to Ferdinand Hompesch² in the development of the Rudnik wickerworking centre. The photographs were treated not merely as illustrative material, but as a complementary source enabling observations made in the field to be confronted with documentary, press and institutional evidence.

The field material was supplemented by an analysis of historical and contemporary documentary sources. These included publications devoted

² Ferdinand Hompesch-Bollheim, <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand.Hompesch-Bollheim> [access: 13.03.2026].

to the history and development of wickerworking in Rudnik nad Sanem, materials available at the Wickerwork Centre [Centrum Wilkniarstwa w Rudniku nad Sanem], local institutional documents, statistical and demographic data, and local press materials. Particular attention was given to sources documenting the emergence and development of basketry education, the organisation of craft production, the activities of local enterprises and associations, and the changing forms through which wickerworking has been represented as an element of the cultural identity of Rudnik nad Sanem.

A further category of material comprised publicly available information produced by contemporary wickerworking enterprises operating in Rudnik nad Sanem and the surrounding area, including company histories, descriptions of production, product catalogues and commercial websites. These materials were used primarily to examine the continuity of family-based craft and entrepreneurial traditions, contemporary forms of wicker production and distribution, and the ways in which enterprises themselves refer to local tradition and wickerworking heritage. Such sources were interpreted as self-representations of the enterprises concerned and were therefore confronted, where possible, with field observations and other documentary materials rather than treated as independent evidence of the historical processes they describe.

The press material comprised issues of *Przegląd Rudnicki*, a local periodical published by the Society of Friends of the Rudnik Region [Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Rudnickiej]³, as well as other local press materials. Copies of this periodical were accessed through municipal library collections and were also found during field research at local distribution points, including “Chata Skrzata” (literally, “Gnome’s Cottage”), a privately operated retail shop in the centre of Rudnik nad Sanem. The latter observation is noteworthy as it indicates that locally produced historical and cultural narratives circulate not only through formal cultural institutions, but also through everyday spaces of the local community.

The collected material was subjected to qualitative content analysis based on a thematic categorisation framework, supplemented by

³ Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Rudnickiej, Profil organizacji, <https://spis.ngo.pl/188927-towarzystwo-milosnikow-ziemi-rudnickiej> [access: 13.02.2026].

comparative analysis (Schreier 2012). An analytical key was developed around five principal categories corresponding to the research problem: (1) wickerwork and craft practices; (2) transmission and tradition; (3) production and entrepreneurship; (4) institutions and social networks; and (5) local identity and symbolic representation. Within these categories attention was paid to recurrent references to wickerworking skills and their transmission, family and professional networks, craft and industrial production, local enterprises, institutional actors, forms of cooperation, and the symbolic representation of wickerworking in local public space and discourse. The same analytical categories were applied, where relevant, to field observations, photographic documentation, press materials, institutional sources and materials produced by wickerworking enterprises, which enabled evidence originating from different types of sources to be compared and triangulated. The purpose of this procedure was not merely to establish the frequency with which particular themes occurred, but above all to reconstruct the social relations and mechanisms through which wicker-related cultural resources have been transmitted, institutionalised and converted within the local community. Observations were recorded in field notes and supplemented by extensive photographic documentation.

RUDNIK NAD SANEM — THE POLISH CAPITAL OF WICKER

Rudnik nad Sanem is a small town in south-eastern Poland, located on the San River in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, with a population of approximately 6,375 inhabitants as of 2024⁴. Granted municipal rights in 1552, the town remained a relatively small locality until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the development of wicker craftsmanship contributed to its economic revival. A significant role in this process was played by Count Ferdinand Hompesch, who financed the education of local inhabitants at a basketry school in Vienna and supported the establishment of a local basketry school in Rudnik in 1878. From the late nineteenth century onwards, wickerworking became an important

⁴ *Rudnik nad Sanem*, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudnik_nad_Sanem [access: 15.01. 2026].

element of the local economy and social structure and, over time, of the town's cultural identity. This historical trajectory provides the context for analysing the contemporary reproduction and conversion of wicker-related cultural capital⁵ (Chmiel 1998; Wójcik 2010).

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND ITS CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS: THE CASE OF POLAND'S WICKER CAPITAL

The theoretical framework of the article is centred on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of capital reproduction and conversion, habitus, and social field, supplemented by selected elements of James Coleman's and Robert Putnam's theories of social capital. Bourdieu conceptualised social capital as resources embedded within durable networks based on mutual recognition and group membership (Bourdieu, Passeron 1970), while cultural capital may assume embodied, institutionalised, and objectified forms (Bourdieu 1986). Especially important for this analysis is the possibility of conversion between different forms of capital. Social capital is not reducible to cultural or economic capital, but may operate as a 'multiplier' facilitating access to other resources and increasing the possibilities of their mobilisation (Szast 2017).

Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus provide a framework for locating these processes within a particular social environment. The field constitutes a social space in which actors possessing different resources cooperate and compete, while habitus refers to dispositions, values, and schemes of action acquired through socialisation (Bourdieu 1986). Rudnik nad Sanem may accordingly be approached as a local wickerworking field in which craftspeople, enterprises, institutions, and organisations participate in the reproduction and conversion of resources associated with wickerworking. Within this field, an artisanal habitus is reproduced particularly within family and occupational environments. Access to wickerworking-related cultural capital is therefore neither universal nor evenly distributed: practical competencies and knowledge are transmitted through particular familial, professional, and community

⁵ Marek Florek, Gmina i miasto Rudnik nad Sanem. Historia, <https://rudnik.pl/twoja-gmina-twoj-urzad/historia/> [access: 05.02.2023].

networks, potentially differentiating actors' possibilities of converting these resources into symbolic and economic advantages (Bourdieu 1986).

James Coleman's approach is particularly useful for interpreting the intergenerational transmission of artisanal knowledge through social relations that facilitate the circulation of skills, norms, and practical knowledge (Coleman 1988; Coleman, Hoffer 1987). Robert Putnam's (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital extends this perspective beyond the transmission of competencies. Bonding ties may sustain internal cohesion, local identity, and the reproduction of tradition, whereas bridging ties facilitate relations with external actors and access to resources extending beyond the immediate community. In the case of Rudnik nad Sanem this distinction provides a conceptual framework for analysing both the internal reproduction of wickerworking traditions and the community's relations with institutions, markets, and other external actors.

THE LOCAL WICKERWORKING ECOSYSTEM: ACTORS, RELATIONS AND FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

The empirical material indicates that wickerworking traditions in Rudnik nad Sanem are reproduced within a historically formed local ecosystem comprising craftspeople and their families, wickerworking enterprises, cultural institutions, associations and local government. These actors perform distinct but interdependent functions related to knowledge transmission, production and distribution, preservation of local memory and public representation of wickerworking heritage. Their relationships create the social and institutional conditions within which wicker-related cultural capital is reproduced and converted into economic, social and symbolic resources.

A central institutional position within this ecosystem is occupied by the Wickerwork Centre, which opened to visitors, including tourists and local residents, on 22 May 2007 as a cultural institution of the Municipality of Rudnik nad Sanem. It documents the history of the craft, organises exhibitions and educational activities, and facilitates the transmission of practical skills through demonstrations and workshops (Szast 2023). Field research indicates that these functions intersect: the Centre links local

government, craftspeople, cultural practitioners, residents and visitors, thereby connecting the preservation and transmission of inherited cultural resources with their contemporary public circulation and municipal promotion.

Non-governmental organisations constitute another component of the ecosystem, particularly through the mobilisation of local networks and the preservation and circulation of knowledge about Rudnik's wickerworking heritage. These functions are performed, among others, by the Society of Friends of the Rudnik Region and the Association for the Development and Promotion of the Municipality and Town of Rudnik nad Sanem [Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Rozwoju i Promocji Gminy i Miasta Rudnik nad Sanem] A particularly instructive example is *Przegląd Rudnicki*. Its content incorporates wickerworking into wider narratives of local history, persons, institutions and events, thereby contributing to the preservation and circulation of local memory. Field observations additionally showed that its circulation extended beyond formal institutions: in 2022 copies were available at a town-centre newsagent, while later fieldwork documented their availability at "Chata Skrzata". The circulation of the periodical through libraries and ordinary retail spaces illustrates how locally produced cultural narratives become embedded in the everyday social life of the community.

The mechanisms described above can be observed more closely in the activities of particular family enterprises operating within the contemporary wickerworking economy of Rudnik nad Sanem. PATKAR, founded by Stanisław Szydełko in 1991, describes itself as a family enterprise and currently combines the production of wooden and wicker goods with an extensive system of distribution directed, among others, towards wholesalers and retail chains⁶. The company's development illustrates a transition from locally embedded craft-based production towards a more diversified form of entrepreneurial activity, in which traditional materials and competencies coexist with technological investment, product development and access to wider markets. An even more explicit example of intergenerational transmission is provided by

⁶ PATKAR Sp. z o.o., b.d., *O nas — PATKAR*, <https://www.patkar.com.pl> [access: 13.05.2026].

Polska Wiklina and its MISiak collection⁷. In presenting the collection, the enterprise itself refers to a multigenerational family tradition and describes wickerworking craftsmanship as being transmitted within the family from one generation to the next. At the same time, this inherited competence is not reproduced in an unchanged form: traditional wickerworking techniques are employed in the production of contemporary decorative and household objects adapted to changing consumer preferences. The case thus provides a particularly clear example of the manner in which embodied cultural capital transmitted within the family may become a resource for contemporary entrepreneurial activity. A further example is HEJS, associated in contemporary institutional materials with Jerzy Bigos⁸. Its presence alongside other wickerworking enterprises in local initiatives demonstrates that the economic actors of the wickerworking sector do not operate exclusively within the sphere of production and trade. PATKAR and HEJS were among the sponsors of Wiklina 2025, an event devoted to the public presentation and promotion of wickerworking traditions in Rudnik nad Sanem. Their participation reveals a reciprocal relationship between the economic and symbolic dimensions of the local wickerworking ecosystem: enterprises benefit from the recognition of Rudnik as a wickerworking centre, while simultaneously contributing resources to initiatives through which this identity is publicly reproduced and legitimised.

These cases also reveal that enterprises occupy different positions within the local production and distribution chain. The contemporary wickerworking economy encompasses direct production, the purchase of goods from local craftspeople and smaller producers, product development, wholesale and retail distribution, and access to markets extending beyond the locality. The resulting structure connects family-based transmission of competencies, craft production, entrepreneurial organisation and commercial exchange. Consequently, the local wickerworking system should not be understood as a collection of autonomous firms, but as a differentiated network within which cultural competencies, goods,

⁷ Polska Wiklina, *Kolekcja MISiak*, <https://polskawiklina.pl> [access: 13.03.2026].

⁸ HEJS Sp. z o.o., *HEJS — wyroby z wikliny*, <http://www.hejs-wiklina.pl> [access: 15.02.2026].

economic resources and symbolic meanings circulate between actors occupying different positions.

The annual Wicker Days festival [Dni Wikliny] similarly combines the public presentation and sale of wicker products with exhibitions, workshops and other cultural activities, linking commercial exchange with the public representation of local heritage.

A further example is the 2nd International Artistic Wicker Open-Air Workshop organised in Rudnik nad Sanem in 2026, during which artists from Poland and abroad created wicker forms subsequently incorporated into the town's public space. Organised through cooperation between the Wickerwork Centre, municipal authorities and other local actors, the event illustrates the institutional reinterpretation of wickerworking: artisanal knowledge and material are transferred into public art and the symbolic representation of place. The transformation of the local wickerworking economy should also be viewed against the broader processes of socio-economic restructuring and uneven modernisation affecting Polish rural and local communities after 1989 (Halamska 2011).

THE MECHANISM OF CAPITAL CONVERSION

The mechanisms of capital conversion in Rudnik nad Sanem may be interpreted as a multi-layered social process in which cultural capital associated with wickerworking traditions undergoes a gradual transformation into social, symbolic, and economic capital. The process is not linear, but based on reciprocal relations between the family, local institutions, social organisations, the market, and the symbolic space of the town. In the analysed case, cultural capital functions as a primary resource around which other forms of capital are organised.

The empirical material makes it possible to reconstruct this process more precisely. In the case of Rudnik nad Sanem conversion begins with the possession and transmission of wickerworking knowledge and practical competencies. Historically, these resources were transmitted through vocational education, family environments and occupational networks; today, they continue to be reproduced through family-based craft practices, enterprises, workshops and institutional educational activities. Their significance, however, does not derive solely from their

preservation. Cultural competencies acquire different forms of value depending upon the social and institutional setting in which they are mobilised: they may become a basis for productive activity and income, a resource facilitating participation in professional and community networks, or an element through which Rudnik and its inhabitants are publicly represented and recognised.

This circulation of resources does not imply their equal distribution. Although wickerworking functions as a collectively recognised element of local identity, the empirical material indicates that access to some of the resources enabling its productive and commercial utilisation is socially embedded. An inhabitant may participate in the symbolic community constructed around wickerworking without possessing the practical competencies, family connections, occupational experience or commercial networks through which wicker-related cultural capital can be converted into economic activity. The continuing presence of family-based wickerworking enterprises provides a particularly visible example of this mechanism: craft knowledge, familiarity with production, commercial experience and professional relations may be accumulated and transmitted within family and occupational networks. Such networks do not merely preserve knowledge; they may also facilitate access to producers, markets and forms of commercial organisation. The distinction between collective identification with wickerworking heritage and differentiated access to the resources associated with its productive and commercial utilisation is therefore fundamental to understanding the local structure of capital.

The first and most direct trajectory leads from cultural to economic capital. Practical knowledge of wickerworking, transmitted within particular family and occupational environments, provides a resource that can be incorporated into craft production and entrepreneurial activity. The cases of contemporary family enterprises discussed above demonstrate that inherited competencies may be combined with product diversification, commercial organisation and access to markets extending beyond the locality. The economic value of wickerworking knowledge is therefore produced not simply by possessing a craft skill, but by embedding that skill within networks of production, distribution and exchange.

A second trajectory concerns the conversion of cultural into social capital. Wickerworking provides a common frame of reference

around which relations between craftspeople, entrepreneurs, associations, cultural institutions and municipal actors are organised. The cooperation documented in connection with local exhibitions, workshops and the annual *Wicker Days festival of Rudnik nad Sanem* demonstrates that craft-related cultural resources may serve as a basis for establishing and maintaining relations extending beyond family and occupational networks⁹. In this process, inherited competencies cease to remain exclusively individual or familial resources and become incorporated into broader networks of cooperation.

A third trajectory leads towards symbolic capital. Wickerworking is represented in the public space of Rudnik through exhibitions, monuments, large-scale wicker installations, cultural events and references to the historical role of Ferdinand Hompesch. Field observations and photographic documentation show that wicker has become a recurrent visual marker of the town, extending beyond places directly connected with production. In this context, the recognition attached to wickerworking is transferred to the locality itself: a craft historically associated with economic activity becomes a means of representing Rudnik, legitimising its distinctiveness and reproducing its image as a wickerworking centre.



Figure 1. Monument to Ferdinand Hompesch in Rudnik nad Sanem as an element of the symbolic representation of local wickerworking heritage (photo by the author, 2026).

Importantly, the conversion process is not unidirectional. Economic actors themselves participate in the reproduction of symbolic capital. The involvement of wickerworking enterprises in the sponsorship and organisation of local events means that resources generated through commercial activity may be reinvested in the public presentation of

⁹ Centrum Wikliniarstwa, *Sponsorzy imprezy „Wiklina 2025 Rudnik nad Sanem”*, <https://mokrudnik.pl/sponsorzy-imprezy-wiklina-2025-rudnik-nad-sanem/> [access: 13.07.2026].

wickerworking heritage. Conversely, the symbolic recognition of Rudnik as a wickerworking centre strengthens the cultural context within which local enterprises operate. Economic and symbolic capital thus enter into a reciprocal relationship rather than constituting separate outcomes of the same tradition.

The historical scale of wickerworking demonstrates that the conversion of craft competencies into economic resources was not limited to individual workshops. After World War I, following the restoration of Polish independence in 1918 after 123 years of partition, Rudnik nad Sanem contained 12 export-oriented wicker enterprises and more than 20 firms operating on the domestic market, while during the interwar period approximately 3,000 cottage workshops employed around 15,000 individuals. In 1928, the annual value of wicker production was estimated at 3,600,000 zł (Szast 2023). These figures indicate that locally accumulated craft competencies had become embedded within an extensive system of production, employment and exchange, thereby acquiring a collective economic significance extending considerably beyond individual possession of artisanal skills. In this sense, social capital may perform the function of a ‘multiplier’ of other forms of capital by facilitating access to resources embedded within networks of cooperation (Szast 2017).



Figure 2. Large-scale wicker sculpture in the public space of Rudnik nad Sanem, illustrating the incorporation of wickerworking heritage into the contemporary urban landscape (photo by the author, 2026).

Field observations conducted between 2022 and 2026 in Rudnik nad Sanem and the surrounding municipality documented the extensive material presence of wickerworking in public space. This includes large-scale wicker sculptures, such as the dragon presented in Figure 2, an oversized basket, a gate in Kopki near the sports field, a wicker outdoor altar at the Caritas centre, a wicker mushroom in Chałupki, as well as waste bins, flowerbeds and seasonal installations. Partic-

ularly visible are the annual displays of large wicker Easter eggs and Christmas installations near the town hall. The Easter installation documented during the 2023 fieldwork (Figure 3) illustrates the incorporation of wickerworking into the seasonal and ceremonial representation of the town. These observations indicate that wickerworking is not confined to the sphere of craft production and commercial exchange. It has become materially embedded in the public landscape and functions as a readily recognisable visual representation of Rudnik nad Sanem. In this sense, wicker is converted from practical craft knowledge and material production into symbolic capital: it identifies the town, distinguishes it from other localities and provides a publicly accessible representation of local heritage.



Figure 3. Wicker as an element of seasonal representation of local heritage in the public space of Rudnik nad Sanem (source: author's field research, 2023).

The case of Rudnik nad Sanem thus suggests that the conversion of cultural capital is conditioned by the structure of the local social field. The same inherited cultural resource may acquire different values depending on the position of particular actors within the wickerworking ecosystem: for craftspeople and enterprises it may retain an economic dimension, whereas for cultural institutions and local government it may operate primarily as a resource of symbolic representation, heritage-making and place promotion. This does not invalidate Bourdieu's concept of capital conversion; rather, it demonstrates how the forms and possibilities of conversion are shaped by historically constituted local relations between families, enterprises, cultural institutions and municipal actors (Bourdieu 1986).

The Rudnik case therefore reveals a circular rather than linear mechanism of capital conversion: culturally transmitted competencies support production and economic activity; economic and institutional resources sustain networks and public cultural practices; and these

practices, in turn, reproduce the symbolic value of wickerworking and reinforce the conditions under which its cultural capital may be transmitted to subsequent generations.

This circulation, however, should not be understood as implying equal access to the resources involved. The empirical material points instead to a distinction between the collective availability of wickerworking as a symbolic resource of local identity and the socially embedded character of the competencies, relations and commercial experience through which it may acquire economic value. The local wickerworking ecosystem thus combines a broadly accessible symbolic heritage with more restricted mechanisms of transmission and economic conversion rooted in family, occupational and institutional networks. It is precisely this coexistence of collective symbolic appropriation and differentiated possibilities of practical conversion that constitutes one of the distinctive features of the Rudnik case.

CONCLUSION

The case of Rudnik nad Sanem demonstrates that the conversion of cultural capital embedded in a local craft tradition is neither linear nor confined to a single sphere of social life. The empirical material reveals a system in which wickerworking competencies, family and occupational networks, entrepreneurial activity, local institutions and symbolic representations remain interconnected. Cultural capital associated with wickerworking acquires economic value through production and trade, social value through relations of cooperation, and symbolic value through institutionalisation and the public representation of local heritage. These processes are reciprocal: economic and institutional resources support the reproduction of wickerworking heritage, while its symbolic recognition provides a cultural context for local economic and social activity.

At the same time, the analysis reveals an important distinction between the collective character of wickerworking heritage and access to the resources through which it may acquire economic value. Wicker constitutes a broadly recognisable element of local identity, whereas practical competencies, occupational experience and commercial relations remain socially embedded and may be accumulated and transmitted

within particular family and professional networks. The reproduction of local cultural capital should therefore be understood as a differentiated social process involving actors with unequal access to the resources required for its practical and commercial utilisation.

Contemporary wickerworking also demonstrates a continuing reinterpretation of inherited tradition. Its incorporation into public art, cultural events and the urban landscape indicates that wicker increasingly operates not only as a utilitarian material, but also as an artistic medium and a resource in the symbolic representation of place. This symbolic dimension does not replace its economic function, but coexists with production and commercial activity within the local ecosystem.

The durability of craft-based cultural capital therefore depends not merely upon the survival of particular skills, but upon the relations through which they are transmitted, institutionalised, economically mobilised and symbolically legitimised. The resulting mechanism is circular: transmitted competencies support productive and entrepreneurial activity; economic and institutional resources sustain networks and public cultural practices; and these practices reproduce the symbolic value of wickerworking and the conditions for its further transmission. Rudnik nad Sanem thus illustrates how a historically constituted craft tradition may be continuously reworked within a changing local social field rather than simply preserved as a relic of the past.

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Abstract

This article analyses the mechanisms through which cultural capital rooted in traditional craft is converted into social, symbolic and economic capital within the local community of Rudnik nad Sanem. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of capital conversion, together with James Coleman's and Robert Putnam's approaches to social capital, the analysis is based on qualitative longitudinal research conducted between 2022 and 2026, combining field observations with qualitative content analysis of historical, institutional, press and digital material. The findings indicate a circular mechanism of capital conversion: knowledge and skills in wickerwork support economic activity and social networks, while institutional and economic resources enhance the symbolic value of wickerwork and create conditions for its further intergenerational transmission. The case of Rudnik nad Sanem demonstrates how a locally rooted craft tradition can function as a continuously reproduced resource for the social, economic and symbolic development of the local community.

keywords: capital conversion, wickerwork, craft heritage, local community, Rudnik nad Sanem

MODEL KONWERSJI KAPITAŁU KULTUROWEGO W SPOŁECZNOŚCI
RUDNIKA NAD SANEM

Mateusz Szast

(Uniwersytet Rolniczy im. Hugona Kołłątaja w Krakowie)

Abstrakt

W artykule poddano analizie mechanizmy konwersji kapitału kulturowego zakorzenionego w tradycyjnym rzemiośle w kapitał społeczny, symboliczny i ekonomiczny w społeczności lokalnej Rudnika nad Sanem. Analizę oparto na koncepcji konwersji kapitałów Pierre’a Bourdieu, uzupełnionej o ujęcia kapitału społecznego Jamesa Colemana i Roberta Putnama. Analiza opiera się na jakościowych badaniach longitudinalnych prowadzonych w latach 2022–2026, łączących obserwacje terenowe z jakościową analizą treści materiałów historycznych, instytucjonalnych, prasowych i cyfrowych. Wyniki wskazują na cyrkularny mechanizm konwersji kapitałów: wiedza i umiejętności wikliniarskie wspierają aktywność gospodarczą i sieci społeczne, natomiast zasoby instytucjonalne i ekonomiczne wzmacniają symboliczną wartość wikliniarstwa oraz tworzą warunki jego dalszej transmisji międzypokoleniowej. Przypadek Rudnika nad Sanem pokazuje, w jaki sposób lokalnie zakorzeniona tradycja rzemieślnicza może funkcjonować jako stale reprodukowany zasób rozwoju społecznego, ekonomicznego i symbolicznego społeczności lokalnej.

słowa kluczowe: konwersja kapitałów, tradycje rzemieślnicze, wikliniarstwo, społeczność lokalna, Rudnik nad Sanem