

Traditional Music Festivals in Lower Silesia: Translocal Heritage in a Post-Migration Region

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Abstract

Transformed after 1945 by resettlements, Polonisation and cultural policies, Lower Silesia is today a post-migration region in which music and identities are shaped within translocal networks. Drawing on the concept of trans-locality and the notion of translocal cultural heritage, the article analyses three festivals: Festiwal Tradycji Dolnego Śląska (Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions), Wrocławskie Kluskwicki (Wrocław Stonechats), and Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie (Homely Playing and Singing Festival of Contemporary Folk Culture). It examines the types of ensemble that perform there and the musical repertoire presented. The festivals provide an inclusive space for communities whose transmission of musical tradition has been disrupted, enabling participants to express belonging and negotiate relations between mobility and locality. They reveal a multi-layered cultural landscape in which minority traditions and hybrid practices coexist.

Key words

Lower Silesia, translocality, cultural heritage, traditional music festivals, folk ensembles

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Introduction

Lower Silesia, a region profoundly transformed by post-war resettlements, is a clear example of a post-migration social landscape in which cultural practices are shaped by mobility, discontinuity and hybridisation. This article does not suggest that all contemporary inhabitants of Lower Silesia share the same migration experience. Rather, it focuses on the long-term cultural consequences of the post-war resettlements and policies that shaped the region after 1945. Despite the absence of an uninterrupted local tradition, music has become an important medium through which contemporary communities express belonging and define their relationship to place.

Previous research has focused mainly on historical processes of resettlement, Polonisation and cultural policy in the region. Less attention has been paid to how contemporary cultural practices produce forms of heritage under conditions of disrupted transmission. The article addresses this question through the analysis of traditional music festivals. It asks how “tradition” is defined and presented during these events, and how different cultural references are brought together in this post-migration region.

It argues that contemporary folk music festivals in Lower Silesia contribute to the construction of translocal cultural heritage. These events bring together repertoires, performance styles, costumes, and symbolic references associated with different regions and historical experiences. They therefore provide a useful context for observing how mobility and locality intersect in contemporary cultural practice.

Drawing on the concept of translocality (Appadurai 1996) and the notion of translocal cultural heritage (Kurpiel 2019), the article analyses three contemporary traditional music festivals in Lower Silesia: Festiwal Tradycji Dolnego Śląska (Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions), Wrocławskie Kluskwicki (Wrocław Stonechats), and Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie (Homely Playing and Singing Festival of Contemporary Folk Culture) in Smolnik. It first outlines the theoretical framework of translocality and its application to heritage studies, followed by a brief discussion of the historical context of post-war transformations in Lower Silesia. Subsequently, after introducing the methodology and empirical material, it analyses the three festivals and comparatively examines how translocal heritage is performed and negotiated in these contexts.

Theoretical framework: Translocality and heritage

To interpret the phenomena discussed in this article, I draw on the concept of translocality developed in studies of globalisation and migration,

particularly in the work of Arjun Appadurai (1996). From this perspective, locality is not understood as a stable, territorially bounded entity, but as something produced through social practices and relations. It is shaped by connections between different places rather than by fixed boundaries.

This perspective is particularly relevant to post-migration regions. In contexts shaped by displacement and resettlement, cultural practices are often formed under conditions of discontinuity. Rather than developing through uninterrupted transmission within a single community, they are shaped by the coexistence of elements associated with different places of origin and different historical experiences. This process also involves the ongoing negotiation of identities shaped by mobility, social change and multiple cultural references (Bauman 2001; Jawłowska 2001).

To describe this situation more precisely, I draw on the concept of trans-local cultural heritage proposed by Anna Kurpiel (2019). In her approach, the cultural heritage of Lower Silesia is understood through the relation between mobility and locality. Practices, objects and meanings circulate across spatial and temporal boundaries and are recontextualised in new settings (Kurpiel 2017). In postsocialist contexts, such processes are also shaped by discontinuities and by the need to reorganise existing practices rather than simply continue them (Burawoy – Verdery 1999). Similar processes of returning to the past and redefining local identities have also been discussed in studies of postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe (Verdery 1996; Hann 2019).

From this perspective, locality is not fixed but formed through relations between different places, temporal layers and cultural references. Cultural forms may therefore refer to more than one place of origin and may combine elements associated with different historical experiences.

This conceptual framework allows cultural practices to be analysed without the presumption of the existence of a stable and continuous local tradition. Instead, it makes it possible to examine how cultural elements are selected, combined and presented as “tradition” in specific contexts. In this article, this framework is used to analyse contemporary traditional music festivals in Lower Silesia, focusing on how different cultural references are brought together within a post-migration region.

Methodology and material

This study is based on qualitative research conducted at selected traditional music festivals in Lower Silesia. The analysis draws on participant observation, documentation of performances, and informal conversations with performers and organisers. The material includes field notes, audio

and video recordings, as well as festival programmes and other available documentation.

The three festivals were selected for analysis because they represent different organisational models and different approaches to tradition. The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions presents selected ensembles from different parts of the region and is organised by the regional authorities in Wrocław. The Wrocławskie Kluskwicki festival is based on open online applications. The Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie festival in Smolnik follows a different approach, as its rules encourage the creation of new songs composed after 1945, including songs with new lyrics referring to contemporary local life. This selection makes it possible to compare the different ways in which “tradition” is defined and presented.

My participation in the analysed festivals has taken different forms. I regularly attend the Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions as an invited audience member. During the first edition of this event in 2008, I also performed as a member of the Representative Lower Silesian Song and Dance Ensemble Wrocław. At the other two festivals, I have participated as a jury member, at every edition of Wrocławskie Kluskwicki, and at the festival in Smolnik since 2012. This long-term involvement has provided me with familiarity with the field and facilitated access to performers and organisers. At the same time, it requires a conscious effort to maintain analytical distance when interpreting the material.

The analysis focuses on selected aspects of festival practice, specifically repertoire, performance style and the ways in which “tradition” is defined and presented. Attention is paid to the relations between different elements of performance, such as music, costume and declared regional affiliation. The study does not aim to provide a complete description of each festival. Instead, they are treated as case studies through which the broader processes related to the construction of tradition in a post-migration region can be observed.

Historical context

After 1945, Lower Silesia became a region of radical demographic and cultural change. Almost the entire pre-war German population was expelled, while new inhabitants arrived from different parts of Poland and from elsewhere in Europe. They included settlers from the former Eastern Borderlands, central and southern Poland, Romanian Bukovina, northern Bosnia, France and Belgium (Czapran 1987; Jasiewicz 1987; Thum 2005). National and ethnic minorities were also resettled in the Western and Northern Territories. These included, among others, Jews and the Lemkos

(Rusyns), the latter arriving in 1947 as a consequence of Operation Vistula.¹ These migrations created a heterogeneous social landscape in which different regional traditions, dialects, memories and musical practices came into contact within one territory (Rostworowska 1996).

The new authorities sought to integrate the region with the rest of Poland and to legitimise the post-war border changes through the idea of the “Recovered Territories” and their return to the Polish *macierz*, or motherland (Kaczocha 1981; Thum 2005).

In cultural policy and propaganda, special importance was placed on the Polish character of the region and on selected elements of the folklore of Polish-speaking autochthons (Fiedor – Orzechowski 1959; Simonides 1987). In the field of music, this process was supported by the collection and popularisation of Lower Silesian folk songs, especially in the work of Józef Majchrzak. His publications and radio programmes devoted to the musical folklore of the Polish-speaking autochthons of Lower Silesia became an important source for later staged representations of regional folklore (Majchrzak 1955; Majchrzak 1970; Majchrzak 1983; Gacek 2019). (Fig. 1)

Many song and dance ensembles took part in May Day parades, harvest festivals and regional celebrations. They often performed in “Lower Silesian” folk costumes modelled on pre-war German village dress and sang about Polish-speaking Lower Silesian autochthons rather than repertoire associated with their members’ regions of origin² (Dumin 2009: 101). (Fig. 2&3)

At the same time, the traditions brought by settlers did not form one coherent regional system. Cultural processes differed between towns and villages, and also between villages settled by one regional group and those inhabited by people of diverse origins (Jasiewicz 1987; Berendt 2000). In many places, dialects, customs and ritual practices were gradually limited to the private sphere or abandoned.³ Mixed marriages, modernisation and the adoption of urban models of life weakened the continuity of in-

1 Operation Vistula (Akcja “Wisła”) was a 1947 Polish government campaign that forcibly resettled around 140,000 Ukrainians, Lemkos, and other minorities from southeastern Poland to the country’s western and northern territories, with the aim of suppressing Ukrainian nationalist movements (Syrnyk 2024).

2 Folk costumes modelled on pre-war styles continue to be used as stage dress to this day, not only in stylised ensembles but, on occasion, also in village ensembles (Dumin 2017: 113).

3 An example is the disappearance of shepherds’ songs from the repertoire of the Pieniny highlanders, who were resettled in Krościna Wielka near Trzebnica in Lower Silesia, despite initial attempts to introduce pastoralism to this area. The monotonous, lowland landscape of Lower Silesia did not favour the continuation of the pastoral repertoire (Buczak 1989: 172).

Str. 4 SŁOWO POLSKIE

DOKUMENTY POLSKOŚCI ZIEMI DOLNOŚLĄSKIEJ

PIESNI
KTÓRE PRZETRWAŁY WIEKI
(ze zbiorów Mgr. J. Majchrzaka)

JÓZEF Kurzawa należy do ludzi pogodnego ducha. Od najmłodszych lat chciwie wchłaniał opowiadania o dawnych dziejach swojej okolicy. W jego ukrytej przed oczyma policji bibliotece, mieszkała polska księżka. Nade wszystko interesowała go polska pieśń, a że obdarzony był bystrą pamięcią, łatwo sobie te pieśni przyswajał.

Sylwetkę Józefa Kurzawy ujrzymy niedługo na ekranach naszych kin, w nakręcanym obecnie filmie o Dolnym Śląsku pod tytułem „Od Wrocławia”.

Podczas ostatnich odwiedzin Józef Kurzawa zaśpiewał nam taką piosenkę:

J - dzie chłopek z mia - sta, i spiął so -
A ko - blytka sa nim, U - rz - ko - so -
bie,
Jak o - na go de - go - ni - ta,
O siunia go u - de - ry - ta, i chłopek le - ty.

Figure 1 A newspaper article from the series
“Documents of the Polish Character of Lower Silesia.
Songs that Have Survived for Centuries”. Source:
Słowo Polskie 1954, 248: 4.

tergenerational transmission (Simonides 1988; Misiak 1989; Topp 2008). As a result, Lower Silesia did not develop a stable musical tradition based on long-term local continuity.

As Berendt notes, attitudes to tradition also differed between generations. The first settlers often remained attached to the homelands they had left, while people born in Lower Silesia lived between family traditions and the pre-war heritage of the region. The youngest generation more often turned away from tradition and identified with mass culture (Berendt 2000: 156). This historical disruption of transmission is the key condition for understanding contemporary festival practices in Lower Silesia.

Case studies: Three festivals

The following section analyses three traditional music festivals in Lower Silesia: the Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions, Wrocławskie Kluskwicki,



Figure 2 Jubilee of the 20th anniversary of the ensemble Tęcza from Radzików. Concert in Dzierżoniów (1970). Choir in stylised Lower Silesian folk dress and Lublin-region costumes. Source: Ziemia na nowo rozbudzona pod red. Dionizego Sidorskiego, Wydawnictwo Artystyczne - Graficzne RSW Prasa, Wrocław 1972.



Figure 3 The Representative Lower Silesian Song and Dance Ensemble Wrocław. © Reprezentacyjny Dolnośląski Zespół Pieśni i Tańca "Wrocław".

and the Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie Festival of Contemporary Folk Culture in Smolnik. They were selected because they represent different organisational models and different ways of defining “tradition”. The first festival presents a broad regional panorama of Lower Silesian folk groups. The second is a competition that focuses on traditional vocal repertoire. The third reserves a special place for songs composed after 1945 and for new lyrics referring to contemporary local life.

Together, through these festivals it is possible to observe how repertoire, costume, performance style and regional affiliation are combined in public presentations of tradition. In each case, I examine what kind of traditions are presented, who defines them, which performers are included, and which forms of musical practice are regarded as more or less “authentic”.

Types of Lower Silesian folk ensembles

Lower Silesian folk ensembles may be divided into three groups. The first consists of song-and-dance ensembles, established primarily in large cities between the 1950s and the 1970s. They perform songs and dances from different regions of Poland in staged choreographic forms. Their programmes often include one suite based on the musical folklore of Polish-speaking Lower Silesian autochthons.

The second group consists of regional folk groups whose members share a common regional origin. Examples include Pojana, associated with the culture of highlanders from Romanian Bukovina, Ocice, reflecting the heritage of re-emigrants from Bosnia, and Kyczera, which draws on Lemko culture. Their repertoire may be based on family transmission, fieldwork, publications, or on newly composed songs performed in a recognisable regional style.

The third group consists of regional folk groups consisting of members with diverse regional backgrounds. Their repertoire usually includes popular songs, folk songs from different parts of Poland, and original compositions. Many ensembles from the second and third groups have been active since the 1980s and 1990s, and new groups continue to be formed.

Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions

The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions (*Festiwal Tradycji Dolnego Śląska*) is the largest and most visible regional gathering of folk groups in Lower Silesia. It is considered one of the most important events of its kind in the region (Majeran-Kokott 2013: 76). Since 2008, it has been held at the

Wrocław Opera, organised by the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. It presents selected folk groups from various parts of the region and is accompanied by speeches by local politicians, anniversary awards for ensembles, and fairs offering regional products.

The festival does not take the form of a competition. Its main aim is to present the diversity of folk groups in Lower Silesia. Its name refers to Lower Silesian traditions in the plural, reflecting the contemporary image of the region as a space of cultural diversity, in which different traditions and identities are considered valuable (Gacek 2017; Jasiewicz 1999: 129).

The groups that perform at the festival are selected from the large number of ensembles active in the region. In the early editions, they were chosen by an ethnologist and radio editor working on the folk-music programme on Radio Wrocław. Today, the ensembles are nominated by local authorities, and the programme is prepared by the Marshal's Office. The audience mostly consists of members of the invited groups and their families, local ethnographers, people involved with folk culture, and representatives of regional institutions.

Each group presents a short programme of its own choice. In the case of ensembles with members of mixed regional origin, the repertoire often consists of popular songs or well-known folk songs from various parts of Poland. Such performances are frequently accompanied by stylised costumes, "Lower Silesian" costumes modelled on pre-war German village dress, or costumes associated with other Polish regions. These visual elements do not always correspond to the repertoire performed. (Fig. 4)

A different impression is created by ensembles that refer to a more clearly defined regional or ethnic background, such as Lemko groups or those that



Figure 4 Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions (2022). One of the ensembles dressed in Lower Silesian folk costume. Photograph by the author.

draw on the heritage of Romanian Bukovina. Their performances are more readily perceived as “traditional”, as they establish a clearer correspondence between repertoire, language, performance style and the group’s regional or ethnic roots. The festival thus reveals two coexisting models of tradition: one based on mixed and reassembled elements, and another based on a more recognisable continuity of regional transmission.

The structure of the festival also highlights the absence of a single shared regional musical repertoire. Each evening the concert usually ends with a presentation by a song-and-dance ensemble from a selected Lower Silesian town. At the end of the event, all the ensembles and the audience are invited to sing together. This raises the question of which song could serve to unite this diverse gathering in a common performance. Usually, the choice falls on a popular song from the national repertoire or a patriotic song. There is no single Lower Silesian regional song that is able to fulfil this function.

The mixed character of Lower Silesian festival practice is particularly evident in some performances. In 2018, for example, the ensemble Czerwone Róże from Dobromierz performed a Polish song composed after 1945 that incorporated yodelling (Kulka 2018). Another example is the performance of the ensemble Wiolinek from Brzeźnica near Bardo. During the 2014 festival, the group presented a Podhale Highlanders’ song and *obyrtka*, a dance associated with the Beskids. Its stage image and musical accompaniment, however, combined elements associated with several different regional traditions. The costumes evoked Bavarian dirndl and German highlander imagery, while the instrumental line-up was not typical of Carpathian highlander music. In the same performance, the group also presented Upper Silesian dances, including the *mietlarz* and *trojak* (Poniatowski 2014).

Together, these examples show that the festival provides a framework in which elements of different origin can be combined and presented as part of Lower Silesian folk practice. The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions therefore presents tradition as a broad inclusive regional category. It offers a platform for groups with different histories, repertoires and levels of continuity. At the same time, its inclusive format reveals the absence of a single stable musical tradition rooted in long-term local transmission.

Wrocławskie Kluskwicki

Wrocławskie Kluskwicki has a different character. It is a smaller festival, also held in Wrocław, and takes the form of a competition. From 2019 to 2021, it was organised by the Representative Lower Silesian Song and Dance Ensemble Wrocław, with financial support from the Municipality of Wrocław. The second edition, in 2020, was held online because of the

COVID-19 pandemic. It has an open application process and participants do not have to belong to a folk group.

The competition is focused on traditional vocal repertoire. Participants present two songs, either as soloists or as members of a group. The repertoire may be sung in a regional style or in an artistic arrangement. The competition is addressed primarily to Lower Silesian folk groups and soloists, rather than to song-and-dance ensembles or professional choirs. However, in practice, it has attracted other types of performers.

This makes Wrocławskie Kluskwicki a useful case for observing how “traditional repertoire” is understood and evaluated in practice. Some participants perform songs transmitted within their families or local communities. Others use arranged versions popularised by stage ensembles, including the State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble Mazowsze. For example, during the third edition, the group Przyjaciółki from Niedźwiedzice performed the Podlasie song “*Już mi się doprawdy panieństwo skończyło*” in an arrangement modelled on the version by Mazowsze (Reprezentacyjny Dolnośląski Zespół 2021).

In this festival, “tradition” is defined mainly through repertoire and vocal style. The competition format makes differences between inherited, arranged, and staged repertoire more visible. Performances based on a clearer relation between repertoire, style and group origin are more easily recognised as traditional. This is suggested by the fact that laureates have often included soloists and ensembles continuing the musical traditions of their regions of resettlement.

At the same time, Wrocławskie Kluskwicki does not exclude more mixed or staged forms. Rather, it illustrates that the category of “traditional repertoire” is broad and requires evaluation in each performance. The festival therefore reveals a tension between the understanding of tradition as inherited repertoire and understanding tradition as repertoire selected, arranged and performed within a contemporary festival context.

Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie in Smolnik

The Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie festival represents a third model. It takes place in the town of Smolnik, near Leśna, in the western part of Lower Silesia, close to the Czech border. It has been organised since 2011 by the Centre for Culture and Sport in Leśna, in cooperation with local institutions and initiatives, including the village council and the local government. The organisers drew inspiration from the Jan Iwaszczyszyn Festival of Contemporary Folk Culture in Kamień Pomorski, another festival situated in the Western Territories (in West Pomerania), which began in 1996.

Like Wrocławskie Kluskwicki, the Smolnik festival takes the form of a competition judged by a jury. Participants come mainly from the western part of Lower Silesia, although several groups from neighbouring regions are also invited. The distinctive feature of this festival is its repertoire requirement. Participants are required to present three pieces, including one song composed after 1945. This rule creates a space for songs composed in the period following the post-war resettlements.

These newly composed songs are often based on new lyrics set to older melodies. Their words refer to contemporary village life, local landscapes, everyday problems, or memories connected with resettlement in Lower Silesia. In this case, “tradition” is not limited to repertoire transmitted from previous generations. It also includes creative forms that arose after migration and resettlement in the new region. The songs composed by Józef Herbut are an important example of this type of creativity.⁴ Together with his wife Janina, he leads the Herbut family folk band from Tomisław near Bolesławiec. The ensemble uses both traditional and modern instruments, including violin, accordion, drums, electric guitar and bass guitar. Electric and bass guitars may also be interpreted as contemporary substitutes for plucked instruments known from the musical practice of Polish settlers from Bosnia. In this context, modern instruments do not exclude the performance from the field of folk practice. Rather, they become part of a contemporary local musical style. (Fig. 5)

The Smolnik festival also shows that contemporary folk practice in Lower Silesia may include elements taken from different cultural contexts. A striking example is the performance of the ensemble Bukowina from Zdroisko near Gorzów Wielkopolski at the 2023 festival. The group presented the popular Lemko song “*Karczmareczka*” in a Polish-language version and in its own musical arrangement, using instruments such as acoustic guitar, bass guitar, cajon, shaker, and devil’s fiddle (Jablonski 2024). Although the group came from a neighbouring voivodeship, this type of performance is close to practices observed among Lower Silesian ensembles.

In comparison with the two festivals discussed above, the Smolnik festival offers the clearest example of tradition understood as a contemporary creative practice. The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions presents the diversity of regional groups, while Wrocławskie Kluskwicki focuses on traditional vocal repertoire. The Smolnik festival, by contrast, makes space for songs that are not old in chronological terms, but are rooted in local experience, village life and the post-war history of settlement.

4 He has published several collections of poetry, in which he describes both Bosnia, the country of his childhood, and the landscapes of Lower Silesia (Herbut 2019).



Figure 5 Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie (Homely Playing and Singing) Festival of Contemporary Folk Culture in Smolnik, 2023. Perła Ensemble from Przybyłowie. Photograph by the author.

For this reason, the festival broadens the meaning of tradition. Tradition is not only something inherited from previous generations; it may also be created, adapted and performed in response to the experience of living in a post-migration region. In this sense, *Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie* illustrates how newly created local musical forms can become incorporated into contemporary Lower Silesian folk culture.

Comparative analysis

The three festivals discussed above differ in scale, institutional framework and formal organisation. At the same time, they reveal a number of similar processes. In each case, “tradition” is not presented as a single stable, and clearly bounded regional form. Rather, it is assembled from elements connected with different regions, historical experiences and performance models.

This is especially visible in the case of ensembles whose members have diverse regional backgrounds. Their repertoire often includes songs from several regions of Poland, popular songs, newly composed pieces, or songs adapted to the needs of stage performance. At the same time, costume, performance style, and declared regional affiliation do not necessarily point to the same geographical origin. Such performances show that Lower Silesian tradition is often constituted from a combination of elements that do not share a common origin.

A different model appears in the case of ensembles with a more homogeneous regional or ethnic profile, such as groups connected with Lemko culture, Romanian Bukovina or the heritage of re-emigrants from Bosnia. Their repertoire, language or dialect, costume and performance style are more often linked to a specific tradition. For this reason, such performances are more easily recognised as “traditional” within the festival context.

The differences between the festivals are also connected with their institutional frameworks. The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions presents a broad regional panorama and allows for a wide range of forms of folk practice. Wrocławskie Kluskwicki, as a competition focused on vocal repertoire, makes questions of evaluation and musical style more visible. Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie in Smolnik offers a special place for songs composed after 1945, and therefore accommodates new musical forms that emerged after migration and resettlement in Lower Silesia.

The festivals also differ in the way they evaluate performances. In competitions, such as Wrocławskie Kluskwicki and Swojskie Granie i Śpiewanie in Smolnik, greater importance is placed on the relation between repertoire, style and group origin. Performances that show a clearer link with a particular regional or family tradition are therefore more easily recognised as traditional. The Festival of Lower Silesian Traditions has a broader formula, allowing greater space for mixed repertoires, staged forms, and combinations of elements from different regions. This shows that the meaning of “authenticity” depends not only on the performance itself but also on the type of festival in which it is presented.

From a comparative perspective, these festivals demonstrate how trans-locality works in practice. Elements originating in different regions and historical periods are selected, combined and presented within a Lower Silesian frame. In this way, the relation between mobility and locality becomes visible in concrete festival practice, which can be observed in repertoire, performance style, costume, language, place of origin, and institutional evaluation.

Conclusion

After 1945, Lower Silesia developed as a post-migration region in which local communities were formed under conditions of cultural discontinuity. The traditions brought by settlers from different regions were only partially maintained. They were often transformed or abandoned, and were rarely transmitted in an uninterrupted form across generations. As a result, the contemporary cultural landscape of the region cannot be described in terms of a single, stable, and continuous local tradition.

The festivals analysed here bring together diverse forms of musical practice and create spaces in which different understandings of “tradition” can coexist. The repertoire performed during these events refers to a range of regional and historical contexts. Forms of presentation vary from staged folklore to practices rooted in family transmission, as well as newly composed songs referring to contemporary local life. The festivals also provide opportunities to make music together, to encounter different musical practices, and to share different experiences and perspectives on music and performance (Gacek – Dąbrowski 2009: 160).

In this sense, these festivals reveal a cultural context in which locality is constructed through the combination and recontextualisation of diverse elements. The cultural forms presented on stage do not belong exclusively to a single place or historical moment. They emerge from relations linking different regions, temporal layers and forms of cultural experience. The festivals therefore provide a setting in which mobility and locality intersect in practice.

At the same time, these events function as inclusive contexts for performers whose cultural practices do not rely on uninterrupted intergenerational transmission. This inclusiveness may also be understood in relation to broader evaluative frameworks of traditional music in Poland, which tend to privilege continuity of transmission and more clearly defined regional traditions. This is particularly evident in relation to the National Festival of Folk Bands and Singers in Kazimierz Dolny, one of the major national events devoted to traditional music in Poland, whose regulations favour performances based on traditions that are historically rooted and locally transmitted. In practice, such criteria exclude many Lower Silesian performers, whose musical practices have been shaped under conditions of post-war displacement. As a result, regional festivals in Lower Silesia have developed as alternative spaces in which these practices can be presented and recognised. They allow participants to express their relationship to place and to cultural heritage in ways that do not depend solely on continuity of tradition. Instead, these relationships are built through reconstruction, reinterpretation, and the creation of new forms of local practice. In this sense, the festivals contribute to the formation of a regionally specific yet translocal musical landscape.

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