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FOLKLORE AND POPULAR CULTURE IN THE TOURIST OFFER OF POLISH TOWNS IN THE TRANSFORMATION PERIOD

Folklore and popular culture, being ones of the most integral elements of every nation's culture, are important factors distinguishing regions. They become particularly significant while creating cultural and tourist offers of the regions and towns, especially in the transformation period which – defined by the political and economic changes – usually brings about dramatic changes in the social field. It is worth mentioning that the freedom of expression leads to a growth in the importance of folklore and popular culture in regions and their heritage becomes more and more valuable to the local community.

Such an interest gains importance especially during the time of political and economic transformation of Europe into the European Union, when the citizens' sense of identification with their land increases.

It is interesting to observe how, during this period (it started together with free market changes, reaching the climax with the formal access to the European Union) the offer of folklore and popular culture developed in Polish towns. Among the most important elements of this offer we should enumerate folk events, as well as elements of material culture which are best seen in the urban landscape (open air museums should be considered as such). During the period between 1989 and 2004 the number of cultural events taking place in towns increased considerably. It can be stated that each year folk events are becoming more and more important. Among them one can find events with a long history going back to the calendar of events, as well as new ones which appeared only during the last 15 years.

Jarmark Dominikański (The Dominicans' Fair) held in Gdańsk, with its tradition of over 700 years, belongs to the first group of events. It was initiated in 1260 by Pope Alexander IV's edict which granted the Dominicans the right of organizing the fair. This long-lasting tradition was discontinued

during World War 2. In 1972, however, the fair was re-launched as a trade event. *Jarmark Dominikański* regained its full character with numerous folk elements in 1996.

The second group of folk events can be represented by the event taking place in Lower Silesia – Międzynarodowe Targi Chleba (the International Bread Fairs) in Jawor, organized since 1997. It is worth mentioning that this is not the only folk event in this region. Apart from that, one can mention Legnica, with its fifth edition of the Blacksmiths Contest in 2004, the third Cucumber Festival or Folklore Banquet and also the thirteenth International Folk Festival in Strzegom, or the fifth International Festival of Co-op Art Groups. It is difficult to assess the number of cultural events taking place in the whole country. During the research period the first juxtaposition was prepared only on 1 January, 2000, when Polish Tourist Organization act was issued.

The Polish Tourist Organization (PTO) was formally founded on 25 June, 1999 (*Journal of Laws* No. 62, item 689), beginning its activity on 1 January, 2000. Among many goals, the clause (5) (1) reads as follows: "creation of a positive picture of Poland in tourism in the country and abroad, creation of the climate of cooperation between units of the central and local administration and organizations concentrating entrepreneurs and tourist associations". Consequently, the clause (5) (3) shows the ways of realization of the goals mentioned. One of them is "presentation and publication of promotional materials".

Among many detailed tasks to be carried out by the PTO, according to the act mentioned above, there is an obligation to elaborate a professional calendar of cultural, sports and tourist events for each year. The above is the responsibility of the publishing department of the PTO. Every time before the season starts, information about cultural, sports and tourist events for the next year is collected. Then, the proposals sent in by local tourist organizations and departments of local authorities responsible for tourism policy in the region are considered and those representative of particular regions and the country, being possibly the most attractive for tourism movement, are selected. This definitely raises the importance of such events.

Below, a short analysis of the offer proposed by the PTO for each of the last five years, *i.e.* the period 2001–2005, will be presented. The examination of such a short span of time only is the result of the short activity of the PTO. The lack of the calendar for the year 2002 in the present analysis results from the lack of this issue in the archives of the PTO (till the very last moment the author was not able to access the 2002 issue of the calendar, although he had been assured of assistance in this matter). Nonetheless, it is worth analyzing the remaining four years (Fig. 1) and observing the tendencies dominant at the very beginning of the creation of the offer and its place in the agenda of the PTO's activities for the successive years.

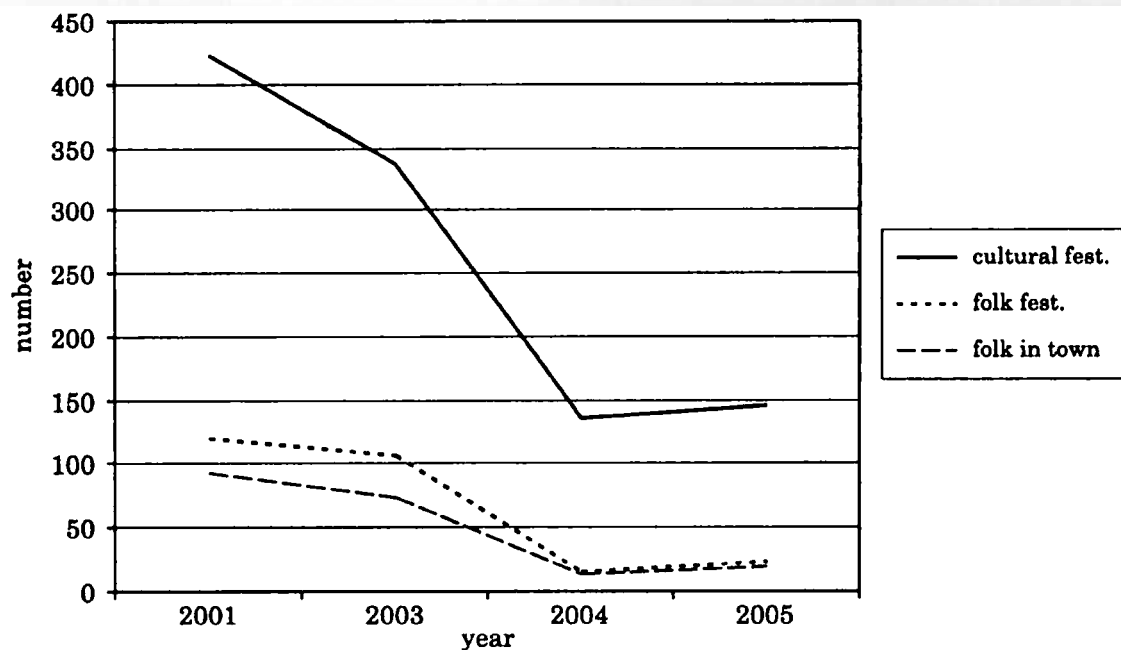


Fig. 1. Cultural festivities 2001–2005

Source: authors' own elaboration

An important thing for the sake of this research is recurrence of the set of events that is a base for elaboration of the calendar. Every time the set of approximately 1,000 different events of cyclic or accidental character is mentioned.

Out of 422 cultural events in the calendar for the year 2001, 121 (28%) were the festivities which were totally or partly of folk character. Almost 77% – 93 events of 121 folkloristic ones – took place in towns of different sizes, but it has to be stressed that smaller towns, with the inhabitant population below 10,000, are the majority here. Among 75 towns which offer folkloristic events, there are 15 cities with the number of inhabitants above 100,000: Gorzów Wlkp., Częstochowa, Kielce, Chorzów, Bielsko-Biała, Zielona Góra, Gdańsk, Tarnów, Łódź, Cracow, Radom, Toruń, Opole, Białystok, Rzeszów. One fact has to be mentioned here: in these 15 cities, 29 different festivities are offered, which makes 31% of the total number of the folkloristic events presented by the PTO. That shows the importance of the cities as venues of folkloristic events. An important role in this group is played by Cracow, with 6 different festivities in the year 2001, and Białystok, Toruń and Łódź with 3 folkloristic events per year in each city.

The calendar elaborated by the PTO for the year 2003 contained proposals of 338 different cultural events. Among them 88 were festivities of folkloristic character, which makes 26% of the total number of all cultural events. Almost 83% (73 of 88 folkloristic festivities) took place in 49 towns, of which the majority were smaller ones, with the number of inhabitants below 100,000. Only 17 cities like: Rzeszów, Chorzów, Sosnowiec, Katowice, Zielona Góra, Zabrze,

Gdańsk, Lublin, Słupsk, Gorzów Wlkp., Warszawa, Toruń, Kielce, Cracow, Poznań, Białystok and Rybnik were cities with the number of inhabitants exceeding 100,000. For the first time Warsaw appeared there – the only town with the number of inhabitants higher than 1,000,000. 38 folklore events took place in the above-mentioned cities – 52% of the total number of this kind of festivities shown in towns. In this group, the most important role was played by the following: Cracow (9 events), Poznań (7 events), Gdańsk (4) and Białystok (3 folkloristic events).

In the year 2004, declared by PTO as a year of culture in Polish tourism, the number of cultural events decreases to 136 events included in the PTO's official calendar. Among these festivities only 15 (!) can be described as those of folklore character, which makes 11% of the total number of cultural events. Almost 93% of the total number of folklore festivities, which gives 14, is placed in towns. The majority of 16 towns (the difference in number of towns comes from the character of one of the festivities – "A week of the Beskidy culture" – takes place in several towns) are small towns with the number of inhabitants below 100,000. The number given is surpassed by four cities: Bielsko-Biała, Gdańsk, Zielona Góra, Cracow, where only Gdańsk proposes more than one folklore event – two. Still, of all folkloristic events in 2004, 33% took place in big cities.

In the calendar elaborated and published on the Internet for the year 2005 the number of cultural events increases slightly to 145. In this group, 24 events can be considered as folklore ones, which makes up 17% of the total number in the PTO's offer. Almost 75% (18) take place in 22 towns. In this group, only 6 are held in cities with the number of inhabitants above 100,000. Nevertheless, 9 events (50%) occur in towns like: Zielona Góra, Katowice, Gdańsk, Poznań, Lublin and Cracow. The most important role is again played by Cracow, with 4 events, which accounts for almost a half of the total number of town festivities.

A partial analysis of each year and the graph and the table showing the summary for the investigated period lead us to the following conclusions:

1. The situation of folkloristic festivities is unstable and there is a lack of their permanent presence in the calendar of festivals despite their occurrence in reality. A good example of this phenomenon might be Poznań – a big city, where folkloristic events are treated so differently in such a short period of time: in the year 2003 seven different festivities of folk character took place there, but there were no such events organized in 2001 or in 2004, and just one in the year 2005. Out of the 22 big cities mentioned in all the calendars only 3: Cracow, Zielona Góra and Gdańsk are included in each. It is hard to believe the rotation of folkloristic events in big cities is so considerable over such a short time of investigation, *i.e.* between 2001 and 2005.

2. There can be noticed a decrease in the number of cultural festivities every year. The worst statistics are for the year 2004 – ironically, that year was pro-

claimed the year of culture in the Polish tourism. There was a slight change for the better in the year 2005, when the number of festivities increased to 9 events – 6%.

3. There is a rather chaotic selection of cultural events presented in the calendars despite having at the disposal a set of approximately 1,000 events every year.

4. There can be noted a decrease in the importance of folkloristic events in the group of cultural festivities: from 28% of events of folkloristic character in the year 2001 to 11% in the year 2004 – declared by the PTO a year of culture in tourism (!). The situation changed in 2005, with 17%, but it is still worth mentioning that there were planned only 24 festivities for that time!

5. There followed a decrease in the number of towns offering folkloristic events: from 75 in 2001 to 16 in 2004 and 18 in 2005. The same trend is observed in cities with the number of inhabitants above 100,000: from 15 in 2001 to 4 and 6 in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

6. The share of towns in the presentation of folkloristic events offers has grown. Despite the initial hypothesis the main part of folkloristic events take place in towns. In the year 2001, these events totaled 77% of all cultural festivities, in 2003 – 83% and in the record year 2004 – 93%, while during 2005, 75% of the folklore events were to be held in towns. Each year big cities become more and more important. In the year 2001, 32% of the events took place in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and in 2003 and 2005, 50% of the festivities took place in towns. The most important city was Cracow – present in the offers included in each calendar: in 2001 – 6 events, 2003 – 9, 2004 – 1, 2005 – 4. An exception is the year 2004, when Cracow was hosting only one folklore event.

7. Towns are the centers focusing culture of the region and presenting their richness. It is due to their possessing necessary technical facilities, which are present more often in towns than in rural environment. That is why big folkloristic events usually take place in towns and normally these festivities are placed in the PTO's calendar.

8. More important towns, according to the number of organized folkloristic events, are these from the regions of pure Polish descent, taking into account folklore and popular culture. Festivities in towns from Western Poland (Opole or Słupsk) appear seldom and in the PTO's calendar, folkloristic events from these regions occur even more rarely.

9. The spectacular and picturesque character of folkloristic festivities makes them even more attractive for cities, where they take place, but at the same time they usually undergo certain changes. In many cases, within the frame of a main folklore event a few different additional events take place. There is a rule: the smaller town, the more important the folkloristic event is in the local calendar of events and the "purer" it is in its folklore character.

In a different way the presence of open-air museums in the tourist offer of towns shows elements of the material popular culture (Table 1).

Table 1. Open-air museums in Polish towns

Open-air museum name	Town	Opening year	Surface (ha)	Represented region
Muzeum Wsi Białostockiej	Białystok – Osowicze	1993	38	Eastern Podlasie, Eastern Mazowsze and Augustowsko-Suwalskie lake district
Górnosłański Park Etnograficzny	Chorzów	1975	22	Dąbrowskie basin and Upper Silesia region with subregions: Beskid Śląski, Podgórski, Pszczyńsko-Rybnicki, Industrial, Lubliniecki
Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej	Lublin	1979	25	Lubelskie region
Muzeum Wsi Radomskiej	Radom	1980	32	Radom's region
Sieradzki Park Etnograficzny	Sieradz	1976	–	Sieradz's region
Ethnographic Museum	Toruń	1974	1.7	Kujawy, Kaszuby, region Bory Tucholskie region, Kociewie and Chełmińska and Dobrzyńska land
Sądecki Park Etnograficzny	Nowy Sącz	1975	17	Four ethnic groups: Lachowie from Sącz region, west part of Pogórzanie, Sądeccy Highlanders and Łemkowie Nadpopradzcy
Museum in Łowicz	Łowicz, Maurzyce	1968/94	1/17	Łowickie Principality region
Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej	Opole	1970	10	Opole Silesia region
Museum in Koszalin – department of ethnography	Koszalin	2001	–	Region of Jamneńska culture

Source: authors' own elaboration

Among the open-air museums located in big cities in Poland (among the nine presented in the table above, seven are cities with the number of inhabitants over 100,000), the majority of them having been founded before the year 1989. Only Muzeum Wsi Białostockiej and the ethnographic section of Koszalin museum have been founded in the last 15 years. So it is difficult to call such development a dynamic one. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that establishing an open-air museum is a fairly long process: between the decision and the opening day dozen years pass. Surely it can be said that the

transformation period has brought in a new way of using such an element in tourist offers. Almost each open-air museum located in a town prepares temporary exhibitions in an attractive way, thus promoting the popular culture of the region. An important item of tourist cultural offers of towns are different types of events, not necessarily folkloristic ones, which influences the number of tourists visiting museum with such offers. The table below (Table 2) shows just the most important events and exhibitions that can be visited at chosen open-air museums.

Table 2. Temporary exhibitions in open-air museums

Open-air museum	Temporary exhibitions
Górnośląski Park Etnograficzny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people promotion - Spring and Easter in embroidery - Mandals - Days of addiction prevention - Bears are around us - My adventure in museum - Them dreadful scarecrows - On the wooden architecture of Silesian voivodeship route - Ritual year on Upper Silesia
Museum in Koszalin – department of ethnography	<p>Jamneński Fair – the first of many events in the series. In the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IV International Barrel Organ Festival - Performance of stars of children's TV programs - Collectors exchange - Selling crafts products - Photos in monidła - Contests for children
Muzeum Wsi Radomskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Around the table" (different functions of the table in everyday life) - <i>Ronsardum vidi</i> – introduction to Jan Kochanowski and Renaissance - Exhibition of laureates of Oskar Kolberg prize works - East traditions in Poland - Wooden architecture heritage in Poland
Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people's historical session: II Respublica: problems great and small, - The memory shorter each time, - National product, - A tale of two childhoods
Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exhibition "Kroszonki Opolskie 2004" - "Gible – former tops of village' s houses" - "Sing-boards and add posters of village shops in Opole Silesia region" - Artistic exhibition "May in open-air museum. Master and student 2004" - Photography exhibition "Monuments of wooden village architecture in Opole Silesia Region 2004"

Table 3. Outdoor events in open-air museums

Open-air museum	Outdoor events
Górnośląski Park Etnograficzny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Folklore holiday in the museum: 1 May – church fair (opening of the season): Silesian wedding (prepared by Upper Silesia Union), Review of Silesian choirs and orchestras - 22, 23, 29, 30 May, 6 June – “Wici Folklorystyczne” 25th regional review of folklore groups - 1 June – Children’s day/Misialia (teddy bear day) - 13 June – Crafts day – living open-air museum - 7, 14, 21, 28 July, 4, 11, 18, 25 August – holidays in the museum (event – each holiday Wednesday – for children) - 25 July – Honey day - 29 August – Harvest home festival - 12 September – Bread day - 26 September – Potato day
Muzeum Wsi Radomskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theatre meeting: “Grandmothers of Harry P.” - Fair for young people – Spring welcome in the museum - Celebration of Palm Sunday celebrations - Family festival “May in the museum” - Bread festival - Potato festival
Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 April. Palm Sunday. Winter farewell – Spring welcome and “4th presentation of the traditional Easter tables PALETA 2004”. - 4–18 April. Exhibition of Easter eggs from the archives of the museum - 3 May. Patriotic-religious event - 5 May. Everyday life in the family of Książkowie in Teodorówka - 11–12 May. Cultural heritage of the region - 16 May. Agrotourist fair - 28 May. Festival of tales, legends and myths - 31 May. Eliminations to the All-Poland Festival of Folk Bands and Singers in Kazimierz Dolny - 13 June. Haymaking in the museum - 20 June. Consecration of fields - 23 June. St John’s night in the museum - 24–25 June. Harvest in the museum - 15 August. Assumption of Holy Mary - 22 August. Bread festival - 12 September. From the farmstead to the fair and little towns - 26 September. “I have stayed in a little town” - 28–29 September. The region’s cultural heritage - 3 October. Potato lifting - 5 December. Santa Claus in the museum - 27 December 2004 – 6 January 2005 – Between Christmas Eve and Epiphany
Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 April. Easter Fair – a folklore and trade event - 9 May. “Ecological Picnic” - 1 June. “13th children’s fair in the museum” - 8 August. “4th Knights’ Party” - 3 October: “Autumn Popular Art Fair”

Source: authors’ own elaboration

Within the frame of complementary offers prepared by open-air museums, the outdoor events are the most popular ones and also play their role in the expansion of the tourist movement since usually this factor is the main attraction for the tourist flow. Table 3 contains juxtaposition of the most important outdoor events at open-air museums in towns, so in this way their diversity and seasonality could be shown. Although the majority of such events take place between the spring and the autumn time, one can meet also some offers in the winter season, when open-air museums are usually closed. A good example is the offer proposed by Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej.

The free market reality has put the open-air museum into a new context and museums try to find their new place on the market of cultural and tourist offers of towns. Temporary exhibitions and outdoor events usually increase the number of visitors, which means they also do the exact financial support. This helps satisfy the main mission that open-air museums in Poland are designed to fulfill, *i.e.* preservation of the heritage of different regions of Poland for scientific and didactic purposes.

Summarizing, every year folklore and popular culture become a more and more important item of the cultural and tourist offer of big towns and cities in Poland. The changes that occurred in the years 1989–2004 also shaped their role in the cultural landscape of towns. The multiplicity and variety of cultural events based on folklore led to their elaboration within the frame of the calendar of events proposed and promoted by the Polish Tourism Organization. Also, in the case of open-air museums, outdoor events are becoming more and more important for the tourists flow – most of them being set against the folkloristic background. The period of transformation is also one of forming such an offer and choosing those elements for it, which are the most suitable to effectively create the most complex tourist offer to be proposed by the given town.

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