

The aim of the project is to recognize the role of the cultural heritage of the Polish Spisz region in the formation of the general look of the region and the processes of comparison to the neighbouring regions, national culture, as well as to high and popular culture, lastly, in shaping perceptions of each other by the locals. The following topics are connected with the aforementioned issues: the degree of cultural continuity in the region; forms of cultural imports from neighbouring regions; the role of memory; the importance of intra-regional debate about the local culture, attended by the local authorities, associations, regional activists and external experts; and the impact of the local culture on people's attitudes and choices. The detailed subjects of the study will be: communal artistic activities aimed at maintaining local culture, activities of local folk groups, regional education at schools, local press and books, festivals, competitions, workshops and amateur theatrical performances. It is worth adding that this top-down initiatives are often accompanied by spontaneous, bottom-up actions: art rooted in the local tradition, similarly architecture, local cuisine, and even the establishment of private regional museums. Cultural heritage seems to be nor a museum collection neither a theatrical scenography, because it plays a very active, emergent role in the local culture, indispensable for the maintenance, as well as the transformation of the regional identity. Scholars still pay too little attention to understanding such phenomena, especially those belonging to the legacy of the older folk culture. Such a characteristics of the local heritage could be visible only with the usage of a very intensive ethnographic fieldwork. It means a relatively long-term presence of a researcher in the studied community and focusing on those features of culture, which play a crucial role in the self-identification of the inhabitants of the region, their ethical and aesthetical choices, their attitudes to the past, to themselves, to the environment and religion. Typical techniques of such methods include: the observation of everyday and holiday life, interviews with individuals and groups, taking photos, reading regional community forums and press, the analysis of local art and craft. The proposed approach can help to shift the focus of research inside the community group and its culture. The findings of the study may also contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena of the local public life: civil society, the idea of a civil homeland, civil memory, the potential absorption of external patterns and the place of the region in a wider whole, i.e. in the nation-state and in supranational structures (e.g. the European Union).