

Organ festivals in the context of sustainable development and heritage interpretation

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How to cite:

Bernat, S. (2025). Organ festivals in the context of sustainable development and heritage interpretation. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 67(67): 107-128. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.12775/bgss-2025-0007>

Abstract. The present study explores the topic of organ festivals/organ music as part of the world's cultural heritage. Its objective is to examine the role of organ festivals in heritage interpretation and sustainability in relation to organ festivals in Poland, including those with an international scope. The method used was a diagnostic survey directed to three social groups: students and research/teaching staff from various research centres in Poland, as well as organisers of organ festivals in Poland. Separate questionnaires were prepared for the audience (students, academics) and the organisers. The study also took into account secondary materials (mainly those available online). In addition to qualitative data, quantitative data was also obtained, thus giving a multi-faceted view of the subject under study. Festivals accessible to the public can not only help to bring forgotten or neglected historic organs back to concert condition or to support the building of new concert-grade instruments, but also to increase the sensitivity of audiences to beauty and stimulate their interest in their cultural heritage (i.e., instruments, venues, music). This requires a proper interpretation of the heritage and an emphasis on the relationship of organ culture with sustainable development.

Article details:

Received: 04 July 2024
Revised: 29 January 2025
Accepted: 18 March 2025

Key words:

cultural studies,
music tourism,
festivalisation,
cultural industry,
cultural heritage,
pipe organ,
Poland

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1. Introduction

Organ/organ music festivals have been held in numerous places around the world for many years. They can be regarded as a cultural phenomenon because they usually take place in the summer holiday season when cultural institutions have a break. This makes them an additional attraction not only for the local community, but also to holidaymakers staying in resorts that promote music culture (Jędrysiak & Wyszowska, 2019). Organ festivals include those with rich traditions, featuring the most valuable, historic instruments, which attract tourists and music lovers, as well as those in smaller urban or rural centres where organs are of no special historical value but have the capacity to bring high culture, through live performances, to ordinary citizens who rarely take advantage of what cultural institutions have to offer (Wrona, 2007). As noted by Barwinek (2022), festivals are mainly the result of a strong need to bridge the gap between high culture and the tastes of the general public. According to Szwarzman (2022), the organisation of organ festivals does not entail any special organisational difficulties; the instrument itself is sufficient.

The organ is the oldest keyboard instrument and reflects the era in which it came into existence. Organs can be found almost all over the world, mainly in churches or chapels, but also in concert halls and arenas, shopping centres, cinemas and theatres. Historic organs are recognised as an important element of tangible and intangible (sonic) cultural heritage (Bernat, 2022a; Šercer & Kavić, 2013). The organ has become an instrument that dominates the surrounding space and thus has no equal in the entire history of music (Spengler, 2001). It combines beauty and craftsmanship with monumental sound, which makes this instrument capable of filling any space and thus adding a new dimension to perception (Koukal, 2017). The organ is also a broad area of research, subject to diverse interpretations (Urbańczyk, 2011). In 2017, UNESCO recognised organ-building skills developed and passed down to successive generations, as well as organ music as a universal language conducive to interreligious understanding, by inscribing organ craftsmanship and organ music in Germany on the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. This was an acknowledgment of many centuries of organ heritage of not just one country but also the entire world, as well as its contribution to sustainable development (Gerner, 2021).

No comprehensive study of organ/organ music festivals has been undertaken so far. Only

references to a handful of organ festivals can be found in studies on music festivals (Bernat, 2004; *Oddziaływanie festiwalii...*) and cultural heritage evaluation (Bedate et al., 2004). The present study seeks to fill this research gap. Its objective is to recognise the role of organ festivals in sustainable development and heritage interpretation. The study was focused on organ festivals in Poland, including those with an international scope.

The paper represents a geography-based approach, particularly with regard to the geography of music as a subfield of the cultural geography or human geography. The geography of music is primarily focused on the patterns of location and diffusion of music and instruments, as well as the spatial contexts for the performance and consumption of music (Kearney, 2010). The impact of music festivals as a research problem in socio-economic geography has been highlighted by authors such as Cudny and Rouba (2012), Rerek and Dłużewska (2016) and Matykowski and Zmudzińska (2022). From the geographical point of view, a festival can be defined as an organised socio-spatial phenomenon that takes place at a time specifically guaranteed for its organisation, outside of everyday activities, one that forms social capital and celebrates selected elements of tangible and intangible human culture (Cudny, 2016). Various aspects of music festivals have been examined. It has been noted that the organisation of festivals (including music festivals) nowadays is an important factor shaping urban space (Cudny, 2016; Smith et al., 2022) and influences local and regional development (Gibson & Conell, 2012). The time of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which some festivals were suspended or moved online, was particularly challenging for the organisation of festivals (Woodward et al., 2023). Therefore, it has been observed that a robust festival industry needs to be built using a model for managing risk as part of a sustainable development strategy (Lorincz et al., 2023).

It should be noted that the research topic undertaken is also related to studies on music tourism (Barański, 2018; Bolderman, 2018; Cafiero et al., 2020; Rerek & Dłużewska, 2016) and festival or concert tourism (Miedzińska, 2008; Cudny, 2013; Pioś et al., 2014; Dychkovskyy & Ivanov, 2020). As Rerek and Dłużewska (2016) observed, music tourism cannot exist without the other elements of tourism, as tourists seek to experience the landscape, enjoy the gastronomic facilities, have to choose their transport and accommodation, and shape their own experience according to their financial status or the amount of time available.

The changing world of music festivals has been the subject of comparative studies conducted by Négrier et al. (2013), according to whom the scarcity of research on festivals results from their relatively recent emergence on the cultural scene. The festival sector did not develop until the last quarter of the 20th century, and the festival trend continues. In addition, the diversity of these events made it difficult to identify them as a separate sector. Nonetheless, studies on festivals in Europe developed significantly from the 1960s, and especially in the late 1980s and at the turn of the 21st century, coinciding with the renewal of cultural life associated with the return to democracy in some countries. Studies have also focused on how festivals can function as a lever for local economic development (Gibson & Conell, 2012). Investigating electronic dance music events, Świergiel and Buczkowska (2009) note that the frequently mentioned benefits of attending these events included getting away from reality, relaxing and surrendering oneself to emotions. The problems cited included getting to the destination, as well as admission prices and cultural differences in the case of events taking place abroad.

Music festivals are an increasingly important part of the cultural sector (Golemo & Kupis, 2023). In addition, they are a cyclical opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and learn directly about the cultures from different circles and regions. They can also serve as a subject of research on developing societies. They reflect broader social change, but they can also trigger such change. Festivals also have an impact on space, for example through local infrastructure. The phenomenon related to the increase in the number of festivals and their impact on culture and space, referred to as “festivalisation”, is one of the more interesting phenomena in the modern world (Benett et al., 2014; Golemo & Kupis, 2023). Festivalisation leads to the “commoditisation” of culture (Kuligowski, 2013), but it also reflects the growth of the cultural and entertainment function and the development of the creative sector in cities (Cudny, 2016). Festivals contribute to the cultural revival of cities and to initiatives aimed at maintaining and improving the physical substance of places, sites and localities, as well as their revitalisation. Festivals are the cause and catalyst for the emergence of various desirable social relationships; they initiate and channel social development processes and have a positive impact on the vitality and engagement of the local community. Finally, they attract tourists and can have a positive impact on the aesthetics of space (Rohrscheidt, 2020).

According to Kuligowski (2022), festivalisation (considered in the context of the cultural industry and McDonaldisation) took over all forms of cultural activity in Poland in the second decade of the 21st century. The actual number of festivals is difficult to estimate, however. The year 1989 in Poland saw the beginning of a transformation of the political and economic system that allowed a greater openness to global culture. This had an impact on music festivals that encompassed diverse music genres and were attended by artists from all over the world.

Poland is a country with significant organ heritage – from well-preserved historical organs and organ music to a rich tradition of organ building and organ festivals (Note 1). This is influenced by historical, cultural and natural determinants. Over the course of history, the Catholic Church has played an important role within the present-day borders of Poland, while in the territories formerly occupied by Prussia, Protestant churches have been the most influential. In both cases, the pipe organ has had an important function as an instrument accompanying the liturgy. Despite communist domination in the second half of the 20th century, religion and sites of worship did not disappear from the landscape of Polish cities and villages, and after the fall of communism, the organ tradition was reborn with great impetus. Unfortunately, there is no information on the number of organ festivals taking place in Poland. Around a dozen such events have been identified in the database of the Polish Music Information Centre (POLMIC), which is outdated because the latest data it contains are from 2015. On the other hand, the “Organ music festivals in Poland” page in Wikipedia includes only ten events. There is also a Facebook group dedicated to organ concerts (Note 2) Its goal is to create a kind of guide to organ performances in Poland. The group welcomes organisers of organ festivals and concerts (solo and other), musicians and music lovers who are familiar with this kind of event or are searching for organ music events. However, the group does not offer much information on organ/organ music festivals. Knowledge about these events can better be found by referencing specific festivals for which relevant websites are prepared. Unfortunately, a synthesis of information on all organ festivals in Poland is not possible due to numerous events not having an online presence. Some opportunities for creating a list of organ/organ music festivals are provided by grant programmes of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (e.g., Music, Accessible Culture). The results of the calls for proposals for the various editions of each

programme also include such events, on condition that the organiser has submitted an appropriate grant application. Summing up, it should be noted that although organ (organ music) festivals are commonly organised in Poland, their number has not been estimated yet. Nonetheless, it should be assumed that they form a significant part of the cultural life and have an impact on many different dimensions. The aim of the paper is not to create a database of such events; it is rather to identify their role in sustainable development and heritage interpretation. The research process was intended to reveal, among other things: how participants and organisers perceive the impact of organ festivals on space, local and regional development, and sustainable tourism; what role is played by heritage interpretation; and whether local communities are involved in the organisation of festivals. In addition, attention was drawn to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Sustainable development and heritage interpretation

Human beings are at the centre of sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. The concept of sustainable development therefore envisions a lasting improvement in the quality of life for present and future generations, which is integrally linked with improving the condition of the environment (Skowroński, 2006). The quality of life should be improved by reducing or eliminating production and consumption patterns that disrupt this development. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to re-evaluate existing lifestyles and embark, with a new awareness, on a new path of development, leading towards quality rather than quantity. Three aspects of sustainable development are most commonly identified: social, economic and environmental. As Pawłowski (2006) observes, sustainable development is multidimensional and should be examined on seven levels, i.e. ethical, ecological, social, economic, technological, legal and political, with ethics-based consideration forming the basis.

In late-modern societies, culture takes on a particular significance, as it can be at once a goal and a means of development and, above all, a regulator of development (Janikowski & Krzysztofek, 2009). Culture is an integral part of sustainable development. It infuses society with fundamental values that are no less important than ecological, social and economic issues. Dessein et al. (2015)

distinguished three possible approaches to including culture in the concept of sustainable development. The first approach (culture for sustainable development) is an extension of the well-known sustainable development model based on three pillars (economy, environment and social cohesion) to include the realm of culture as a fourth pillar of development. In the second approach (culture for sustainable development), the role of culture is much more significant; it becomes a force that underpins and influences the other three areas of development. The concept of cultural sustainability can be linked to the concept of cultural capital (Throsby, 1999) and the discussions in the late 1990s and early 21st century (Hawkes, 2001; Järvelä, 2023). As Throsby (2017) notes, the successful implementation of the concept of sustainable development should view all elements of the model (economic system, social system, cultural system, environment) holistically, as an interconnected whole. In addition to this, inter- and intra-generational equity (including concern for the protection and development of cultural capital and widespread access to culture), recognising the importance of cultural diversity and applying the precautionary principle are important in cultural sustainability. The 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* emphasised that culture and cultural policies are key to achieving at least nine of the 17 sustainable development goals. Culture is a facilitator of economic growth, employment growth, as well as social cohesion and regional and local development. However, the importance of culture is not sufficiently recognised in the 2030 Agenda. This is why, in 2022, a group of experts prepared a report highlighting the underestimated role of culture as a driver of the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (European Commission, 2022). The report also recommends that the cultural and creative sectors pursue environmentally friendly and inclusive solutions and practices to build resilience among representatives of the younger generation.

It should be noted that the importance of culture in urban policies has been increasing noticeably since the 1970s and 1980s. Culture has also become an important element of revitalisation projects in degraded areas, especially post-industrial and post-military sites. It has also become instrumental in tourism development. This phenomenon can be described as cultural focus or “culturotropy” in thinking about the development of contemporary cities and regions (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2020). In the case of Poland, the perception of culture as a determinant of the development of a given area was absent from politics and science for many years. It

was not until Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 that culture was recognised as an important part of local development. This change was further reinforced by the contest for the title of European Capital of Culture 2016, which generated an unprecedented interest in culture in large Polish cities (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2020).

Efforts towards sustainability have also encompassed the festival sector. Indeed, events, especially regular and large events, have an impact on the environment, society and economy, in both positive and negative ways (Lorincz et al., 2022). Pressure on the environment can manifest itself in, for example, the accumulation of waste, the degradation of vegetation, and noise and artificial light pollution (Cierjacks et al., 2012). Festivals can also become unique events that contribute to changing the existing lifestyles of participants, discovering alternative solutions in everyday life, and creating a sustainable model of living (Browne et al., 2019). In addition to environmentally friendly outcomes, festivals can have positive economic effects (e.g., jobs, local suppliers, producers, stimulation of investment, development of infrastructure) and social effects, including the strengthening of identity, nurturing of local values, development of cultural competencies, and well-being of residents (Rollins & Dellamere, 2007; Yolal et al., 2016). It should be emphasised that festival organisers are increasingly prioritising efforts towards sustainable development (Lorincz et al. 2023). For festivals organised in Poland, a manifesto, called the Responsible Festival Code, was drawn up in 2020. In essence, the *Code* is based on four cornerstones: relations with neighbours, care for the environment, relations with participants, and cooperation between festivals. People associated with large-, medium- and small-scale festivals alike have subscribed to the Code. Although it is difficult to assess the scale of the manifesto's impact as yet, the initiative is valuable and indicates in a new direction of action (Kuligowski, 2022). Previously, a practical guide entitled Green Festivals (*Zielone Festiwale*) was published (2013).

According to Tilden (2019: 42), the "father of modern interpretation", heritage interpretation refers to "educational activities aimed at discovering meanings and connections between different contents through the use of preserved objects, direct experience and illustrative means, rather than through the mere communication of facts in words". As Rohrschedt (2019: 7) observes, heritage interpretation is "an activity focused on its multidimensional message, participants' experience of (heritage), and its social use by means of direct

confrontation with its tangible and intangible manifestations, their professional, context-based presentation, and involvement of participants". Heritage interpretation helps facilitate a personal reading and understanding of heritage and to inspire people to reflect on it, adopt attitudes serving its preservation, and to use it as an integral component of an individual's participation in culture. Heritage interpretation in cultural tourism can also be described as the art of intentional communication of meanings (Kaczmarek, 2021). The art of interpretation is intentional in that the presentation of meanings and communication of their essence is based on suggestion. The path of interpretation can be a creative choice, not something imposed. The constructor of meanings "leaves the door open" to individual interpretations. Interpretation should thus be creative. According to Tilden (2019), it should aim at conveying a vision of the whole rather than its part. In addition, it should spark the interest of the participants and be linked to their experiences. In interpretation, it is important to shape sensitivity to beauty. This is a key issue for our spiritual development. In the sphere of aesthetics, however, the interpreter should move carefully. Tilden claims that beauty is the most real, but it is also intangible, a factor without which man would lose the will to live. Sensory contact with the beauty of the landscape and wildlife is important, as is the beauty of artefacts, i.e. human aspirations to create beauty. Therefore, visitors to heritage sites should be provided the best possible access to places where this beauty can be seen and understood, and conditions should be created for these sites to be properly appreciated. Appropriate interpretation, according to Tilden (2019: 88), translates to recognising the need and taking action for preservation. "When interpreting, we understand; when we understand, we appreciate, and when we appreciate, we protect." By explaining the sense and meaning of something and by inspiring the acquisition of knowledge, heritage interpretation is thus an excellent tool for sustainable development education. In 2008, the International Council for the Conservation of Monuments and Historic Sites (ICOMOS) adopted the *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*. It formulates principles for the interpretation of cultural heritage, including: accessibility and understanding of heritage, concern for place and context, preservation of authenticity, concern for inclusivity of interpretation. When interpreting a place, consideration should be given to the significance and value of the place, the surrounding landscape, cultural traditions, and music, among others. It was concluded that

the development and implementation of heritage interpretation and presentation programmes should be integral parts of the management process of heritage sites. Interpretation should be an integral part of the conservation process, enhancing visitor awareness and explaining actions taken to maintain the physical integrity and authenticity of heritage resources. All elements of interpretation should ensure effective conservation of heritage resources, and interpretation programmes should also provide equitable and sustainable economic, social and cultural benefits to all stakeholders in the process through education, training and employment opportunities in interpretation programmes (ICOMOS 2008). However, the effectiveness of heritage interpretation in areas of sustainable development is relatively poorly documented (Nowacki, 2021).

3. Material and methods

The method used in this study was a diagnostic survey addressing three groups: spatial science students and research and teaching staff from various academic centres in Poland, as well as organisers of organ festivals in Poland. Separate questionnaires were prepared for the audience (students, academics) and the organisers. The study also took into account secondary materials (mainly those available online). In addition to qualitative data, quantitative data were also obtained, ensuring a multi-faceted view of the subject under study.

The first survey involved 33 academics and 37 students of spatial studies (geography, spatial management, tourism and recreation) who voluntarily gave their informed consent to participate in the survey. However, the number of student responses to most of the questions was much lower due to the lack of interest in organ festivals. Despite this, they were taken into account for comparison with the responses of academics. The research was carried out using the CAWI method. The survey questionnaire was available online on Google Forms as well as in paper format. All the participants were informed that the survey results would be used for scientific research purposes. They were also assured of anonymity. The respondents' answers were presented in the form of graphs in Excel. For open-ended questions, the most frequent responses were grouped together and a selection has been cited.

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions (of which seven were open-ended) concerning organ

concerts and organ music festivals. However, this paper considers only some of the questions, namely those relating to sustainability and heritage interpretation in the context of organ concerts/festivals. In particular, respondents were asked whether a concert was enriched with information about the organ instrument and the music performed, and whether the information provided was useful for interpreting the cultural heritage (venue, instrument, music). In addition, respondents were asked for their opinion on whether organ concerts, festivals and organ music can be a sustainable tourism attraction, and whether they can have an impact on local and/or regional development. Finally, they were asked how an organ festival or organ music festival affects the space. Most of the questions above could be answered with "Yes", "No", or "I do not know." Only the last question used a five-degree scale: 1 – very low impact, 5 – very high impact. If the answer to questions about the impact on development and space was a "Yes", a short justification was requested. The other questions in the questionnaire had a general character. The respondents were asked: Have you ever taken part in an organ music concert? Was the concert part of a festival? Where and when did it take place? What was the reason for your participation in the concert? What did you like and not like about the concert (the good and bad sides)? Would you recommend concerts in this venue?

The second survey concerned selected organ festivals. Organisers of 50 organ festivals were invited to complete the questionnaire. They were selected based on the POLMIC database and the availability of information on festivals (including the email address of the organisers) online. First of all, festivals with at least three editions were selected with the aid of Google search and email. In the responses to the invitation to participate in the survey, information about 27 festivals was obtained (Table 1, Fig. 1). In several cases, emails to the organisers were sent three times to ensure as many responses as possible.

Since the festivals listed include almost all the provinces of Poland, both large cities and small centres, the survey group can be considered representative, particularly considering the fact that the number of all organ (organ music) festivals in Poland is unknown.

A questionnaire consisting of 33 questions, mostly open-ended, was used. However, this paper considers only some of the questions, namely those relating to sustainability and heritage interpretation. In particular, respondents were asked wheth-

Table 1. List of organ festivals surveyed

No	Name of festival	Place
1.	Elbląski Festiwal Organowy [Elbląg Organ Festival]	Elbląg
2.	Festiwal Muzyka Organowa w Katedrze [Organ Music at the Cathedral Festival]	Katowice
3.	Festiwal Muzyki Kameralnej i Organowej "Kamedulskie Wigry" [Chamber and Organ Music Festival]	Wigry
4.	Festiwal Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej "Per Artem ad Astra" ["Per Artem ad Astra" Organ and Chamber Music Festival]	Krasnobród
5.	Festiwal Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej w Dreźnie [Organ and Chamber Music Festival in Dresden]	Drezdenko
6.	Festiwal ORGANY PLUS+ [Organ Plus+ Festival]	Gdańsk
7.	Jesień Organowa im. Feliksa Rączkowskiego Busko Zdrój-Skalbmierz-Miechów [Busko Zdrój-Skalbmierz-Miechów Organ Autumn]	Busko Zdrój, Skalbmierz- Miechów
8.	Lato Organowe w Krotoszyńskiej Bazylice [Krotoszyn Basilica Organ Summer]	Krotoszyn
9.	Lubelska Wiosna Organowa [Lublin Organ Spring]	Lublin
10.	Mariackie Koncerty Organowe [Organ Concerts at St. Mary's]	Kraków
11.	Międzynarodowe Dni Muzyki Organowej w Olkuszu [International Days of Organ Music in Olkusz]	Olkusz
12.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Młodych Organistów im. Śląskich Muzyków Kościelnych [International Young Organist Festival]	Opole and Opole Diocese
13.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej w Giżycku [International Organ and Chamber Music Festival in Giżycko]	Giżycko
14.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej w Leżajsku [International Organ and Chamber Music Festival in Leżajsk]	Leżajsk
15.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej w Łukowie [International Organ and Chamber Music Festival in Łuków]	Łuków
16.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej "Organy Archikatedry" w Warszawie ["Organ at the Archcathedral" International Organ Music Festival in Warsaw]	Warszawa
17.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej w Oliwie [Oliwa International Organ Music Festival]	Gdańsk
18.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Organowej w Puławach [International Organ Music Festival in Puławy]	Puławy
19.	Międzynarodowy Festiwal Organowy im. Christiana Schлага [Christian Schlag International Organ Festival]	Świdnica
20.	Międzynarodowe Koncerty Festiwalowe [International Festival Concerts]	Końskowola
21.	Międzynarodowe Spotkania z Muzyką Organową w Dęblinie [International Meetings with Organ Music in Dęblin]	Dęblin
22.	Organowe Siedlce [Organ in Siedlce]	Siedlce
23.	Organy Solo i Kameralnie [Solo and Chamber Organ]	Łódź
24.	Pasłęcki Festiwal Organowy [Pasłek Organ Festival]	Pasłek
25.	Świętojańskie Koncerty Organowe im. Mariana Dorawy [Organ Concerts at St. Johns']	Toruń
26.	Świątokrzeskie Koncerty Muzyki Organowej i Kameralnej [Holy Cross Organ and Chamber Music Concerts]	Lublin
27.	Zaduszki Organowe im. prof. Jana Jargonia [Organ on All Souls' Day]	Kraków

Source: own study

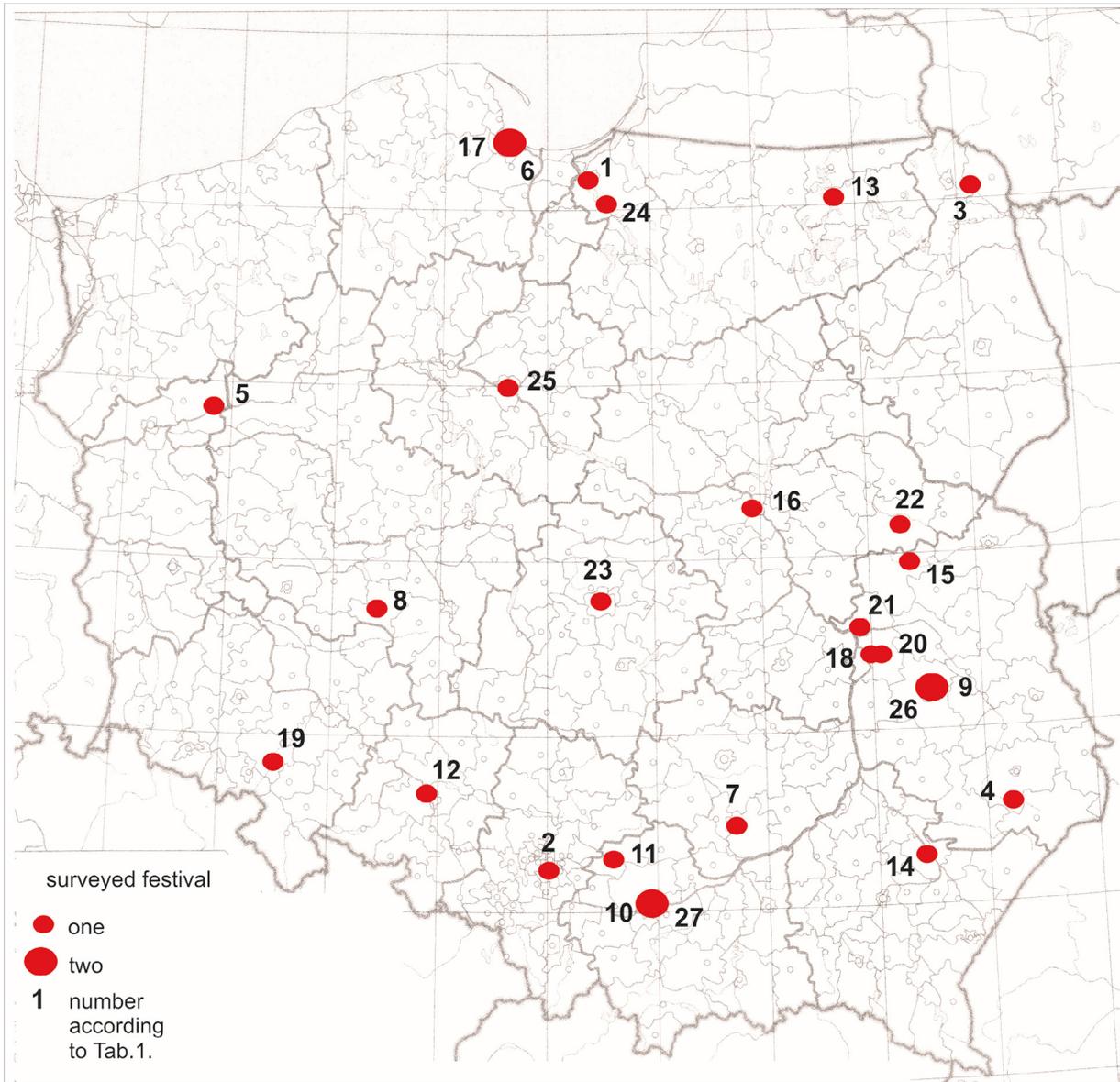


Fig. 1. Location of surveyed festivals (numbering according to Table 1)
 Note: author's work

er local communities (residents) were involved in the organisation of the festival, to what extent the festival impacted local and regional development and had an effect on the space, and whether cultural heritage (music – the pieces performed, the instrument, the venue) was interpreted during the festival. A five-degree scale was used (1 – very low impact, 5 – very high impact). Additionally, respondents were asked to provide a justification of their answers and indicate the basis of their evaluation of the impact. The other questions had a general character (location, instrument, year of the first edition, origins of the event, frequency, duration

of one edition, average number of participants and concerts of a festival, type of concerts, admission to concerts, organisers and cooperation with other entities, sources of funding, scope of impact, events accompanying the concerts, uniqueness, website or social media site, manner of promotion, broadcasting of concerts, impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, organisational challenges so far). Based on the content analysis of answers to open-ended questions, the recurring answers were collated. Furthermore, selected statements concerning the festival's impact on the space were cited.

4. Results

4.1. Organ festival participants

In the survey of the participants, their relationship with organ music concerts was examined first. Among the students surveyed, only eight persons (21.6%) replied that they had taken part in an organ music concert, compared to 32 (97%) of the research/teaching staff. As regards concert venues, churches in Lublin and Lublin Province were most

frequently identified by students, while Gdańsk-Oliwa, Leżajsk, Święta Lipka, Kazimierz nad Wisłą, and churches in Lublin were mentioned by the academics. Only two of the students surveyed replied that a concert was part of a festival, compared to ten of the academics. Chance (unplanned participation), the venue or the artist were cited as the main reasons for attending the concert (Fig. 2).

Further questions had a more detailed nature, related to the organ- and music-related information conveyed at the concert. In the first case, most of the students indicated the absence of such information,

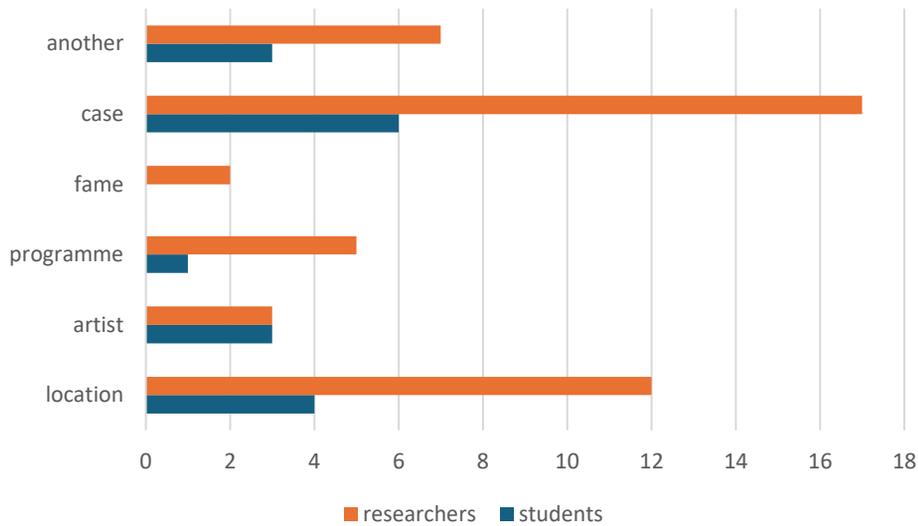


Fig. 2. Distribution of answers to the question: "What was your reason for attending the concert?"
Note: author's work

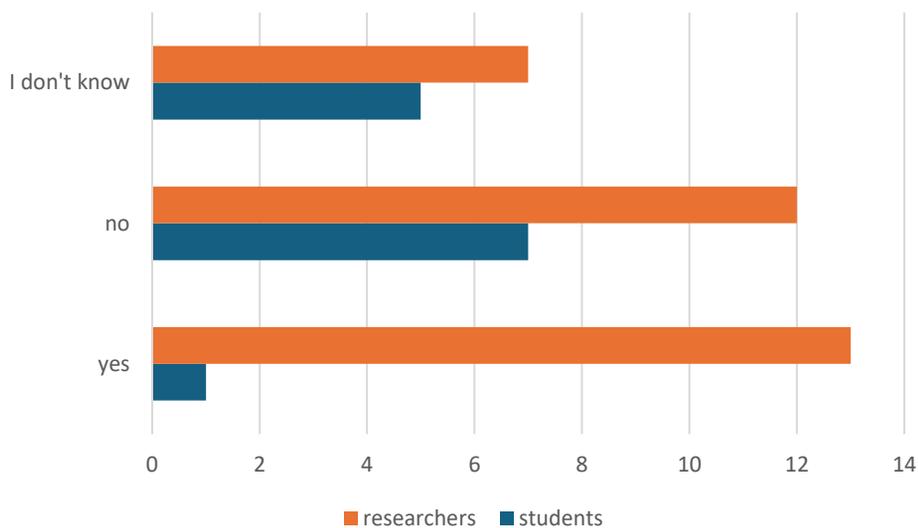


Fig. 3. Distribution of answers to the question: "Was the concert enriched with information about the organ instrument?"
Note: author's work

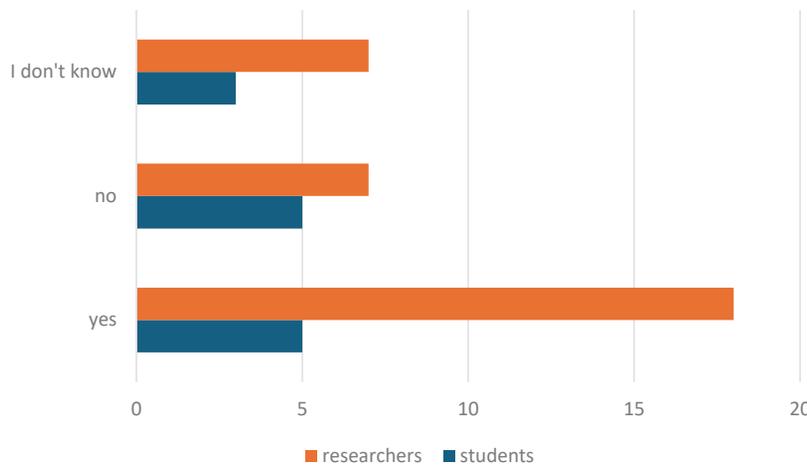


Fig. 4. Distribution of answers to the question: "Was the concert enriched with information about the music performed?"
Note: author's work

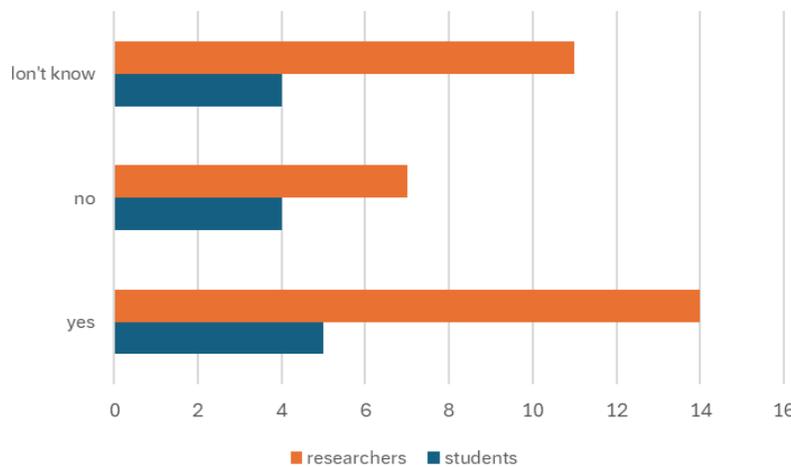


Fig. 5. Distribution of answers to the question: "Was the information provided useful for interpreting the cultural heritage (object, instrument, music)?"
Note: author's work

while most of the academics indicated that such information was communicated (Fig. 3).

Significant number of people in both groups highlighted the information on music that was provided (Fig. 4).

The information communicated was useful for interpreting cultural heritage, according to the majority of the respondents (Fig. 5).

Also, according to most of them, organ concerts/festivals can be a sustainable tourism attraction (Fig. 6). In the case of students, there is also a

fairly high proportion for whom the answer to the question was "I do not know".

Organ/organ music concerts can influence local and/or regional development according to most of the respondents (Fig. 7). Among other observations, the respondents noted that:

Organ festivals and concerts are an added attraction and a very interesting part of the programme of, for example, a trip or another kind of stay (convention, scientific conference, social meeting, etc.); they are

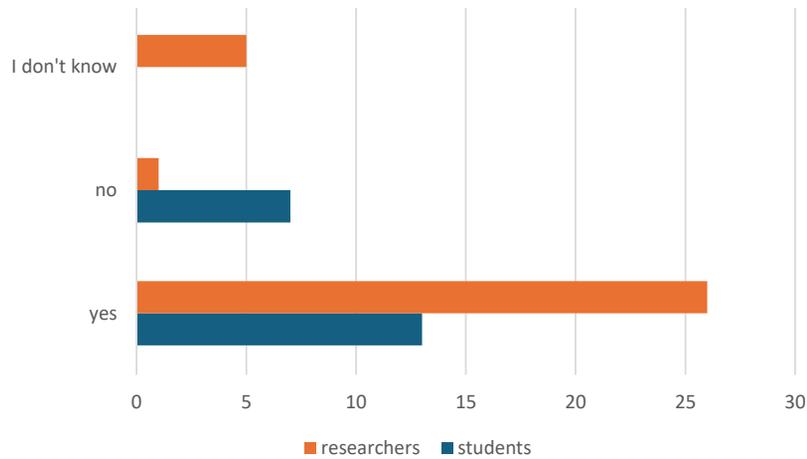


Fig. 6. Distribution of answers to the question: "In your opinion, could organ concerts/festivals/organ music be one of the attractions of sustainable tourism?"

Note: author's work

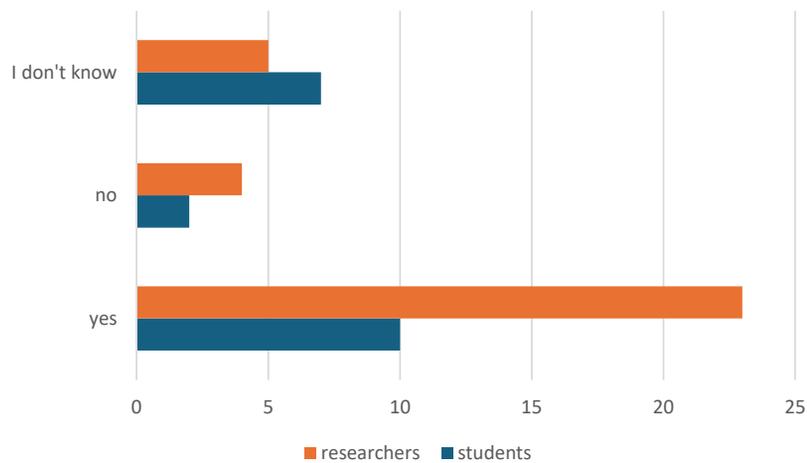


Fig. 7. Distribution of answers to the question: "In your opinion, can organ/organ music festivals influence local and/or regional development?"

Note: author's work

certainly an event worth recommending to tourists and other people visiting these places.

Well-prepared and well-publicised organ concerts/festivals can attract new visitors (impulse for the development of tourism and accompanying infrastructure) on the one hand and, on the other, the participation of local people can result in the development of the need to enjoy "high culture"

which, consequently, can stimulate new additional interests that can influence the development of the area.

Each festival contributes something; it strengthens the venue and the institution.

If we are talking about concerts held in churches, then the venue itself fits perfectly (as a monument) in the

promotion of local works of culture, while respecting natural resources – drawing tourists away from other places, e.g. those with valuable nature. Besides, concerts can be organised in churches in localities regarded as peripheral, marginalised due to the lack of other tourist attractions.

Thematic centres of tourism, specialising in music and organs, can develop. Ideally, it should be linked with someone important for music (e.g., a composer or virtuoso instrumentalist), or someone important for the instrument.

Organ concerts (and the instruments themselves) can be of great significance for the shaping of local identity, which translates to development and, more indirectly, also to the way guests are received (i.e., tourism).

Attending an organ music festival (...) is usually an opportunity to visit other interesting heritage sites in the locality in a responsible way, related to spending money where you stay.

The impact of organ/organ music festival on space is viewed as rather moderate (Fig. 8). Among other observations, the respondents noted that:

Buildings (most often churches) with historic organs are most frequently well-known tourist sites, and the festivals and concerts organised there are a showpiece and a permanent symbol identifying the place, e.g. the Oliwa Cathedral is most often associated with the

organ and the concerts held there (Leżajsk is a similar case).

New spatial infrastructure is not required; everything is contained within the existing venues.

It can be heard only in the close vicinity. If it takes place inside the building, there is no effect on the landscape.

The impact is limited and rather short-lasting (...). On the other hand, it can be significant if we publicise the venue, and it gains popularity among those interested in such musical experiences; then tourist infrastructure such as parking areas and accommodation will have to develop.

Festivals and concerts usually take place in the enclosed space of churches; hence, they have an effect primarily on their interior. Only an increase in the number of tourists and festival-goers can affect a broader space, e.g. the space of the village, which is related to the pressure of tourism.

It usually takes place at indoor venues; hence, the only impact on the space is the presence of outdoor advertising and the possible concentration of people or traffic in parking areas.

In my opinion, organ music takes us, the audience, into a slightly different world, the space doesn't change

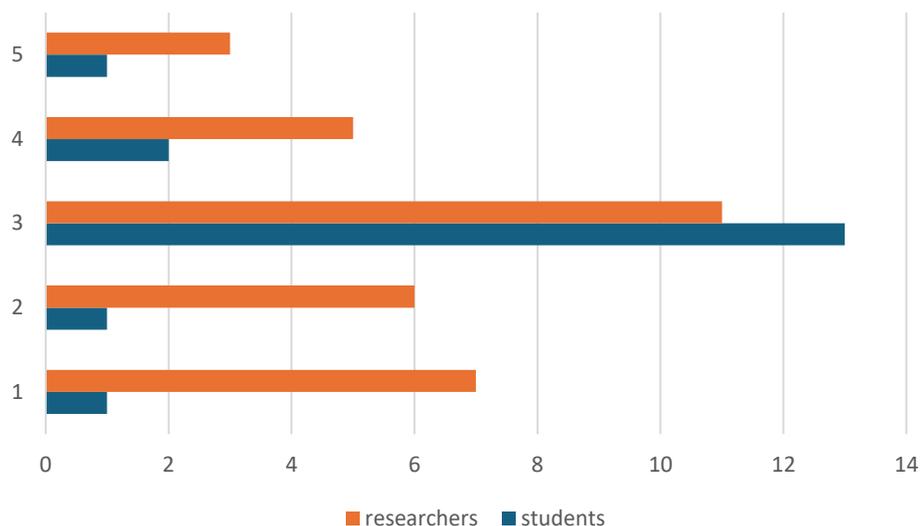


Fig. 8. Distribution of answers to the question: "To what extent does the organ festival/organ music festival impact on the space?"

(on a scale of 1–5, 1 – very little impact, 5 – very much impact)

Note: author's work

physically, it's my perception of the space that changes. Organ music has a somewhat transcendent character to me, it does not lend itself to categorisation.

4.2. Organisers of organ festivals

Among the organ festivals studied, most festivals are organised in historic churches (22), including those inscribed on the UNESCO list and the list of historical monuments (Note 3). Music is mainly performed on antique organs (15); the oldest one is the organ in Olkusz built between 1611 and 1631. These instruments vary in size and style.

The oldest among the festivals under study has been held since 1958 (Gdańsk-Oliwa), and the youngest since 2023 (Elbląg). A vast majority of these festivals began in the 21st century. They are organised primarily by foundations and societies (11), as well as parishes (6), cultural centres (5) and local or regional associations (3). Most organ festivals are held once a year (23) and last between 2 days and several months. Only three festivals take place a few times a year. Admission to most festivals (24) is free; it is paid only in the case of 7.4% of festivals. The festivals take place mostly in the summer (June–September), with the most popular month being August, with 12 events. No festivals are held in the winter (December–March). An individual festival edition is attended by audiences of between 80 and 5,000 people. Organ recitals predominate during the festivals (26). Chamber

and orchestra concerts also quite numerous (19), while choir concerts account for 22.2%. Educational events and special concerts for children rarely take place. Most festivals (22) have dedicated websites.

Local communities are quite often involved in the organisation of festivals (13). This involvement takes the form of distribution of posters, assistance with organisation, local promotion and account-keeping, catering for participants, and sponsorship, among other forms. In the opinion of most organisers, festivals have an impact on local development: the impact is mostly rated 4 and 5 on the scale from 1 (very low impact) to 5 (very high impact) (Fig. 9). The impact on regional development is weaker (rated 3) (Fig. 9). The justifications offered included the involvement of the local community, parishes and sponsors in the organisation, the inclusion of the event in the district/municipal development strategy, and the interest of a group of regular listeners (from the same locality as well as the region) who attend almost every concert.

Assessing the impact on space proved to be a very difficult task for some organisers (as the question was not well understood). Varying degrees of impact were indicated; most of the organisers assessed the impact at 4 (Fig. 10). The justifications for this assessment included:

The festival has impact on the development of tourism in the city, as evidenced by the high attendance, which translates to the development of the hotel and catering network.

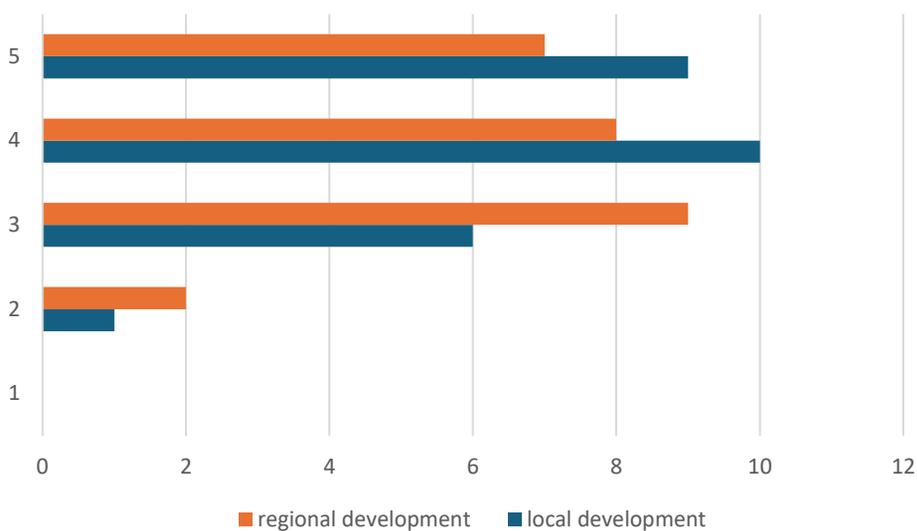


Fig. 9. Distribution of answers to the question: "To what extent does the festival influence local development and regional development?"

Note: author's work

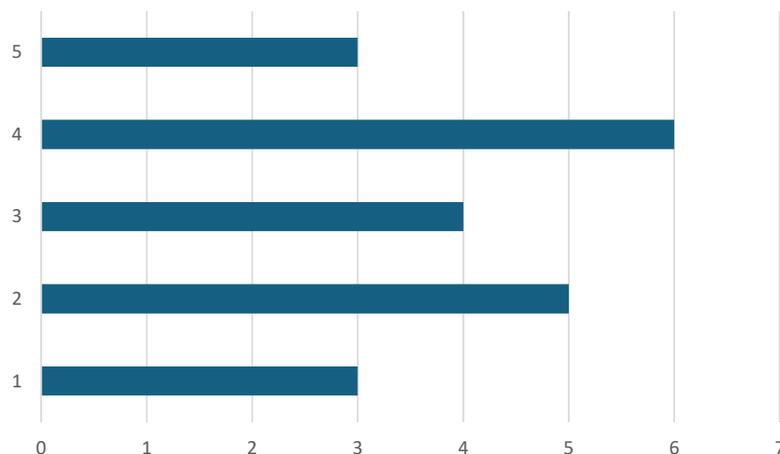


Fig. 10. Distribution of answers to the question: "To what extent does the festival affect the space?"

Note: author's work

They (the inhabitants) are familiar with the festival and even if they do not attend the concerts, they know about (the festival). Thus, it exists in the public awareness.

Although it has a regular audience, you cannot say that the festival has a broad impact. This, however, has to do with the character of classical music which can be appreciated by select audiences with a specific sensitivity. This is not an art form with a massive appeal anywhere.

It is difficult to determine its impact on space, but I think that when posters appear all over the city, and billboards by the cathedral advertise the concerts, there is some kind of impact indeed.

The music played in a religious venue can be heard outside.

According to a majority of the organisers (13), cultural heritage is interpreted during the festival, e.g. through the artists' own interpretation of the music performed, the content presented by the announcer (information about the composers, the music pieces, the instrument, the venue), the selection of the programme (music by local composers, adapting the repertoire style to the instruments), and enrichment of the concert with poetry associated with the city or region, and presentations about local history.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation of festivals was noted by most of the organisers; only eight did not recognise any impact. Most of the responses indicated that: the festival did not take place (5 responses); the event or parts of it were moved to the Internet – the concerts were broadcast online (5); the number of concerts was reduced (4); or the festival was postponed from spring to autumn (2). Furthermore, the respondents observed that: the audience members had to fill out questionnaires about their health and wear face masks; a limited number of people were admitted (e.g., free admission tickets were distributed); no posters were printed; and the festival was limited to organ concerts (no chamber concerts). In the case of one festival, it was stressed that the pandemic had undermined the funding of the festival (several of its editions). It was also noted that the number of listeners decreased significantly in 2021, but then increased rapidly, reaching an unprecedented record high in 2023.

5. Discussion

The survey examined organ festivals in Poland as an example of music (classical music) festivals. Despite their prevalence, a comprehensive analysis of how they function has not been conducted so far. In light of the research on the Polish music market conducted in 2016–2018, despite the high media attention enjoyed by music festivals and the existence of specialised websites and studies with information

on music festivals, it proved difficult to obtain complete data on this section of the music market; there is no single entity comprehensively publishing relevant data (Sokołowski et al., 2019). The situation is similar in the case of the organ festivals under study.

According to the *Yearbook of Polish Culture* (2022), only 5% of rural residents attended classical music concerts in 2019, 5.4% in cities of fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, 11.2% in cities of 100,000–199,000, 17.3% in cities of 200,000–499,000, and 14.3% in cities of more than 500,000 inhabitants. In terms of access to culture, provincial capitals fared best, with participation in culture increasing as the population increases. The best explanation for the less frequent participation of residents of rural areas and small towns is the limited cultural offer in their place of residence and the high cost of travelling to larger towns. In addition, the lack of audience preparation for the reception of musical acts and the low interest in this genre of music are pointed out. Audiences are reluctant to confront the unknown, though at the same time, when they in fact do, they appreciate such music and seek further opportunities to listen to it. It is therefore emphasised that it is important to talk to local people and find out their preferences and also their attitudes to the music presented. Also important are the unquantifiable elements of the events, the generating of interest, inspiring meetings and conversations between the artists and the audience, and the unique atmosphere.

Studies of Krakow's music festivals have shown a positive reception of festivals by participants and a significant social and economic impact of these events on Krakow. The audience profile of the various festivals varies, as does their artistic programme. There are festivals that are more appreciated by older (Misteria Paschalia), middle-aged (Sacrum Profanum) and younger (Wianki, Film Music Festival) people. Motivations for choosing a festival include liking the type of music and atmosphere of the event (Misteria Paschalia, Film Music Festival), the opportunity to go out with friends or family and see their favourite artist live (Wianki), and the opportunity to encounter new artists and music genres (Sacrum Profanum). Nearly 30% of the total number of attendees at the festivals surveyed are visitors, a significant proportion of whom come to the city specifically for the occasion.

Organ music concerts/festivals have a low attendance (Stefek, 2018). However, 68% of respondents – out of 500 people participating in the organ music audience survey – declare their interest in this musical genre. The programme of a concert is

the decisive factor for choosing to participate in it. Other important factors include: the name of the performer (ideal audience) and the setting of the concert (potential audience). A description of the pieces performed is not a significant factor (Stefek, 2018). Is the content/interpretation presented at concerts significant?

W. Różak, in an interview in 2019, stressed that the organ festival “educates the audience in terms of cultural reception skills” and is not classed as a “mass event”, that it is important to have a conscious approach to what we listen to and what resounds in the sacred space, and that the promotion of high culture (including organ culture) is a very worthwhile investment, mainly in social terms, stating, “If a certain stage of formation for the reception of the arts is neglected, the whole cultural output can disappear.” He further concluded that a commercial approach with organ festivals is impossible, and that, therefore, support from state, social and ecclesiastical institutions and systematic “organic work” aimed at, among other things, educating the public is necessary. This, he explains, will be the answer to the pressure of mass culture, which is promoted on the radio and television and can always count on sponsors. He further argues that organ music encourages contemplation and prayer, especially when combined with other art, and that the atmosphere of churches is particularly conducive to the reception of this music, which, together with the interior, creates a space for an extraordinary experience of harmony. Similarly, J. Gembalski claims, emphasising that the organ, through its multilayered nature, leads to a state of communing with integrated beauty, affecting the whole personality of the recipient. “Even when they are silent, they offer the listener several areas of fascination and do not leave them in a situation of aesthetic chaos. They evoke contemporary, positive emotional states in their audiences, lifting them with their sound, richness of form and content into areas of spiritual rapture or mystical ecstasy” (Gembalski, 1997).

The spiritual dimension of organ music concerts was also highlighted by students and researchers who responded to the invitation to complete the survey. It was emphasised that they are not mass events, they require concentration, tranquillity, reflection. They provide a unique spiritual experience in unique places, allow one to visit in a more conscious way and to slow down the pace of life. Organ music transports audiences into a slightly different world, the space physically does not change, but the perception of space is altered. At the same time, it was pointed out that attending an organ music festival requires a great deal of knowledge and cultur-

al competence. While emotions are important in the reception of music, an interpretation of the heritage is also needed as a tool for education for sustainability. Interpretation can be presented both in the form of verbal commentary and the way the musical work is performed by the artist. In the latter case, as noted by Laukvik (1990), not only the musical training and experience but also the personality of the performer should be made present. In order to understand historical performance practices, it is necessary to know and be aware of what the works were, under what circumstances (historical, cultural, social) they were created, how they were interpreted at the time and on what instruments. Knowledge of the organ on which the composer played, or at least the typical “registrations” (the different tones or voices that the organ produces), should help to make sense of the early music and thus create the conditions for original interpretations to emerge. However, the individual sensitivity and personal expression of the contemporary performer is also important (Laukvik, 1990).

The present survey faced some research limitations. The participants of the survey consisted of students and research and teaching staff as well as festival organisers. In the case of the questionnaire prepared for the organisers, responses were obtained from only 27 festivals. Despite repeated attempts, no responses were obtained from the organisers of 23 festivals. In the case of the questionnaire prepared for the potential organ festival/concert audiences, few young people were interested in completing it. This is consistent with the findings of the report *Muzyczne wybory młodzieży* (Musical choices of young people) (2021), according to which classical music (including organ music) is not appealing to young people, with only 4% of teenagers citing it as the most popular, and only 9% saying they listen to it; it is most often indicated by respondents in the older age group (15–17 years). However, music is a significant part of teenagers' lives because it provides an opportunity to develop emotions and build identity. The cultural content is not as important to them as the social networks created during such events (Kinnunen et al., 2020). Organ music festivals do not offer the same opportunities as large-scale festivals with regard to bonding, integration and fun, which makes them less popular. Classical music (including organ music) is most often listened to by women, persons aged 65 and over, residents of large cities, and people with a university education (Sokołowski et al., 2019). Therefore, classical music needs a targeted message to modernise its image and increase its acceptance among younger generations (Kaczmarek, 2023).

The survey was conducted after the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the questions that organ festival organisers were asked referred to the pandemic. The responses are consistent with the findings of earlier research, according to which the COVID-19 pandemic changed the approach to organising organ festivals (Bernat, 2022b). As one of the experts emphasised, although the number of music events was considerably higher in Poland than in Western Europe, participant numbers declined significantly. To some extent, online concerts replaced live events, but in most cases, online broadcasts did not yield satisfactory results. Another expert observed that the discontinuation of organ music festivals and concerts resulted in less care being taken of instruments in some venues. When the events moved online, the organisers felt more obliged to better prepare the instruments (Bernat, 2022b). In countries where more restrictive measures were introduced, attendance at organ concerts was several times lower, which had a clear impact on organ culture in those places. Therefore, there is also a special challenge of trying to restore the functional structure of music life based on organ music and organ building to its pre-pandemic state.

Lorincz et al. (2023) observed that the pandemic led to an increased participation of local/domestic performers in festivals, which was well received by the audience. In addition, the audience appreciated the organisers' efforts to ensure that the events could take place despite adverse circumstances. Festival organisers became more aware of the challenges, more open to sustainable solutions, and more flexible in risk management. In the future, online broadcasting will play an even greater role than it has so far. It is also a good way to reach young people, for whom digital technology and social media are an important part of their life. Medium- and small-scale events are expected to develop in particular. Local events focused on an individual and with the participation of local performers will also be important. This trend will strengthen the social cornerstone of sustainable development. Festivals help build a sense of community and can contribute to the general sense of happiness and satisfaction with life. However, the education of participants as well as the presentation and inclusion of local culture are crucial (Lorincz et al., 2022). Therefore, according to Tilden's (2019) concept, heritage interpretation has great potential both in enhancing the quality of the participants' experience and in influencing heritage conservation. It should take a holistic view and sensitise people to beauty, the source of which is not only the material heritage object (in-

cluding the organ instrument), but also music and other art products.

Organ festivals are examples of events that can be models of cultural sustainability. However, it is important to plan them with and for local communities, not just for tourists. An interpretive and adaptive approach to change is also necessary. There are numerous factors that encourage practices that support sustainable cultural development. These include the development of public participation, cross-sector partnerships (e.g., in regeneration projects, public-private partnerships), the promotion of cultural diversity and inclusiveness, the development of the creative economy, education and knowledge transfer (including intergenerational dialogue), the use of modern technologies, and the sustainability of the tourism sector (including cultural tourism). The above-mentioned factors can be adapted to other activities by adapting to their specificities and local conditions, providing adequate financial resources and infrastructure, and promoting the exchange of experiences and intercultural dialogue. Integrating these factors into sustainable development practices will achieve long-term benefits.

6. Conclusions and final remarks

Although organ (and organ music) festivals are commonly organised in Poland, their number has not been estimated yet. Nonetheless, they form a significant part of cultural life and have an impact on many different dimensions. The aim of the paper was not to create a database of such events; it was rather to identify their role in heritage interpretation and sustainable development.

The survey was conducted with the use of questionnaires in which respondents were asked about the impact of the festival on the space, local development, and the local community, among other things. Two perspectives were taken into account: that of the participants (potential and actual) and that of the organisers.

The survey demonstrated the important role played by organ festivals in sustainable development and heritage interpretation. Both the participants and the organisers recognise the impact of organ festivals on space (mainly small or medium in the case of organisers) and on local development (mainly large or very large in the case of organisers) and regional development (mainly medium). According to most of the respondents, organ festivals can be an attraction in sustainable tourism. Heritage interpretation plays an important role in these festivals.

Local communities are quite often involved in the organisation of festivals.

The existence of numerous organ festivals indicates the need for exposure to organ music, thereby increasing the sensitivity of audiences and their awareness of the cultural heritage of the organ. Festivals accessible to the public can lead not only to bringing forgotten or neglected historic organs back to concert condition or building new concert-grade instruments, but also to increasing the sensitivity of audiences to beauty and making them interested in their cultural heritage (i.e., instrument, venue, music). This requires a proper interpretation of the heritage (not only the music but also the instrument) and an emphasis on the relationship of organ culture with sustainable development or sustainable tourism. The music is important, but also its context – the place (space), the word.

To have an impact on local development, the festival should have a cumulative impact (extended over a few days, not stretched over longer periods) and offer additional attractions (e.g. film screenings, meetings with artists). Concerts held every week or at greater intervals, as practised thus far, do not have such an impact; on the other hand, they can be more sustainable. It is also necessary to prepare a festival offer not only for senior citizens but also for other social groups, particularly teenagers and young people (e.g., organ cinema festivals). It is also important to establish cooperation with travel agencies and to ensure the involvement of volunteers and regional associations in the organisation of events.

Assessing the impact of organ festivals on the sustainability and interpretation of heritage requires the consideration of several key criteria: community engagement (impact on social ties and strengthening of local identity, accessibility), heritage protection and promotion (including adaptation/revitalization of historic venues, protection and promotion of diversity, authenticity and integrity and preservation of historic instruments, promotion of traditional organ playing styles and historic repertoire), education and holistic, immersive interpretation (e.g., using live broadcasting, unique aesthetic and spiritual experiences), impact on space and local development (including development of cultural or sustainable tourism, promotion of local artists, organ-building craftsmen, minimising negative environmental impacts, sustainable funding). These stem from the concept of cultural sustainability. However, further research is needed on the impact of interpretation on behaviour, attitudes, experiences and knowledge in the context of sustainable development.

The present survey is part of a larger research project. The next step will be to analyse organ fes-

tivals in the context of the identity of the place and landscape, and to examine the relationship of the events with the society's religiousness and musical education and the involvement of the creative class. It is also planned to examine the role of Church structures (parish, deanery, diocese) and the impact of festivals on land use. Case studies will be carried out for the Lublin Province, a peripheral region of Poland and the European Union, characterised by the smallest degree of urbanisation nationwide, clearly negative demographic processes and, at the same time, relatively high indicators of religiousness. It is also this region, specifically the town of Kazimierz Dolny, that is home to what is considered the oldest (or one of the oldest) organ instruments in Poland; organ festivals have been organised here for over 50 years. Furthermore, new events centred around historic or new instruments are being created. Seven of them were the subject of the present study.

Notes

1. The exact number of historic organs in Poland is not known, but the estimated number is about 10,000. Inventory cards exist for 5,138 instruments, while entries in the register of historic monuments have not been assessed yet. The task of documenting historic organs in Poland was undertaken by the team for historic organs established in 2023 at the National Heritage Institute. <https://nid.pl/2023/12/12/nowy-zespol-w-narodowym-instytucie-dziedzictwa/>
2. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/koncertyorganowe/>
3. A historical monument is one of the five forms of cultural heritage subject to protection listed in the Polish Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and care of historical monuments. The term is used to describe an immovable monument of particular importance to culture. A historical monument is established by an ordinance of the President of the Republic of Poland at the request of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. There are currently 129 items on the list of historical monuments (www.nid.pl).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the anonymous survey participants and organisers of organ festivals who took part in the survey.

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