

**Zuzana Beňušková**

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia

zbenuskova@ukf.sk

ORCID: 0000-0002-3727-5812

# What Is Visible and What Is Invisible during the Carnival at Rajecká Dolina (Rajecká Valley), or *Sekala & Niskala* in Slovakia\*

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**ABSTRACT:** Fred B. Eiseman Jr.'s publication which discusses "the visible and invisible" meanings of traditional culture on the Indonesian island of Bali inspired the content of this study. I have asked the following research question: How can an inscription in the national list of intangible cultural heritage influence Carnival (*Fašiangy*) traditions at Rajecká Dolina (Rajecká Valley)? The description of Carnival customs in the Municipality of Rajecká Lesná illustrates that a part of them is intended for the public and another part for a closer group of participants – municipality inhabitants who understand ritual behaviour and humorous comments and remember what they have experienced together. The third part remains visible only to Carnival revellers and their friends. In the system registration of elements of cultural heritage on the UNESCO list it is very important that balanced focus should be given to understanding the singularity and the degree of effectiveness of each element stemming from folk traditions, which fulfil important tasks mainly at the regional level.

**KEYWORDS:** carnival, visible/invisible ritual; local community; symbol; tourism, Slovakia

The content of my study has been inspired by Fred B. Eiseman's publication entitled *Bali: Sekala & Niskala. Essays on Religion, Ritual, and Art* (Eiseman 2009) which discusses the "visible (*sekala*) and invisible (*niskala*)" meanings

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in traditional culture on the Indonesian island of Bali. Tourism arrived at the island as early as the first half of the 20th century and began influencing local culture. The native inhabitants showed the visitors their colorful world of rituals, dance, and drama. However, what has remained invisible to foreigners are cultural patterns, norms, and meanings that form the fundamentals of these attractive external manifestations.

Since the latter half of the 20th century, the complex of traditional regional culture has experienced significant disruption even in the economically developed world. Some of its elements, which have acquired new functions mainly in the field of folklorism, tourism, and in the formation of local culture and local identity, generally referred to as cultural heritage, have proven to be vital. They have gradually, particularly in the 21st century, become part of the institutional systems that are expected to ensure their protection and safeguarding. This concerns not only UNESCO conventions, but also the European Union's protection system in the form of geographical indications and designations of origin for products that have their specific producers. At the regional level, the "regional product" has been in place in some Slovak regions for several years, supported by the LEADER European rural development programme.

Ethnologists are increasingly involved at this institutional level, and we thus actively contribute to the handling of the living cultural heritage. This results in responsibility and a critical approach that considers both the possible positive and negative development of cultural elements, be it those included in the lists of living cultural heritage or those obtaining various certificates. They can also be viewed as more important or more valuable compared to the elements that are not yet included in the lists, or which do not have a certificate. It is, therefore, important to know what happens to the elements inscribed in the national and world lists of living cultural heritage. The elements are highlighted also in the forms used for the inscription in the list, and it is these parts with which the communities sometimes need professional help. Elements that carry substantial social significance for the community are coming to the fore in a more pronounced manner than artisanal skills. Chief among these are traditional festivities, which involve the participation of the entirety of the local society. In the case of festivities, the course of which can suddenly be influenced by foreign visitors, the possible development is harder to predict, compared to craft products or folklore expressions. Today, it is understood that safeguarding not only the elements of traditional culture, but also their bearers is essential. It is increasingly evident that this pertains not only to them, but to all those affected by the given phenomenon. The removal of two festivals from UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2019 and 2022, respectively, offers a noteworthy insight. These festivals featured figurines and masked characters. In both cases, the reason for their removal was the demeaning of members of other ethnicities or races. The first of the delisted festivals (2019) was associated with carnival celebrations. Although European carnivals draw on the context of Renaissance culture to depict a world turned upside down

(Bachtin 1975), a world that permits such forms of ridicule, those who are the object of mockery perceive the creation of a humorous atmosphere quite differently. In the Council for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, the incident from 2022 was met with ambiguity. According to some, it was not racism but, rather, a lack of comprehension of the permissible humor of carnivals. According to others, it represented insensitivity towards formerly colonized and subjugated ethnicities in the African continent. These examples have been and will continue to be subjects of scholarly analysis.

While the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage continues to expand, an unresolved debate exists regarding how this intangible heritage should be safeguarded and nurtured. The emergence of numerous questions has led to the viewpoint that the concept of intangible cultural heritage is contentious, and the boundaries of acceptable change to it remain unclear. This discussion highlights the complexity surrounding the subject (Akagawa, Smith 2019; Blake 2020).

To date, only two elements of a festive nature have been inscribed in the Slovak national list of intangible cultural heritage, both tied to mining traditions<sup>1</sup>. Not even the world list of intangible cultural heritage contains any element from Slovakia related to festivities, and it is all the more important to consider what can happen to such elements. The theoretical and methodological background of this study has been based on retrospective analyses of the impacts of the inscription of The Ride of the Kings in Vlčnov<sup>2</sup> in the UNESCO List (2011), carried out by Czech ethnochoreologist Daniela Stavělová (2013, 2015).

I have asked the following research question: How can an inscription in the national list of intangible cultural heritage influence the Carnival (*Fašiangy*) traditions at Rajecká Dolina? This question arose from my field research during which I drew the attention of the mayor of the Municipality of Rajecká Lesná to the possibility of such an inscription in the national list. It is generally known that the inscription must come from the community that is the bearer of the element to be inscribed. However, experience shows that people in the regions have relatively little information about this opportunity and would be happy to receive help from experts. The discussion on the possible inscription has logically resulted in reflections on the potential positive and negative sides of the inscription.

Rajecká Dolina is situated south of the City of Žilina, with its northern part (no. 1 in Tab. 1.) being gradually transformed into Žilina's suburb, as is also reflected in the nature of the Carnival and the reduction of its duration to the

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1 This refers to the Salamander of Banská Štiavnica (parade, municipal feast accompanied by the national celebration of the Miners', Metallurgists', Geologists', and Oilmen's Day as the identification symbol of mining in the town and its surroundings, inscription in 2013) and the Ausschuss traditions of the miners of Špania Dolina (traditional ritual practices maintained by miners' fraternities, inscription in 2011). See online RZNKD.

2 See online Zápis Jízdy králů na seznam.

Carnival Saturday. In the middle of the valley, there is the town of Rajec, and to the north of it – the spa town Rajecké Teplice. These towns brought new elements to the Carnival customs, and thus Carnival can be seen as performative art in which groups of Carnival revellers from the surrounding villages act as artists<sup>3</sup>. The middle-south part of the region (no. 2 in Tab. 1.), consists of four municipalities. These include Rajecká Lesná, which is the subject of this study. The southernmost municipality of the region, Čičmany (no. 3 in Tab. 1.), located in the mountains, is one of the most important tourist attractions of rural culture in Slovakia. The Carnival here is different from the other municipalities of Rajecká Dolina – a zoomorphic mask called *Turoň* is used here, and the carnival parade has the form of performative art for tourists.

Subregion	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Thursday
1 North				
2 Middle				
3 South				
Towns				

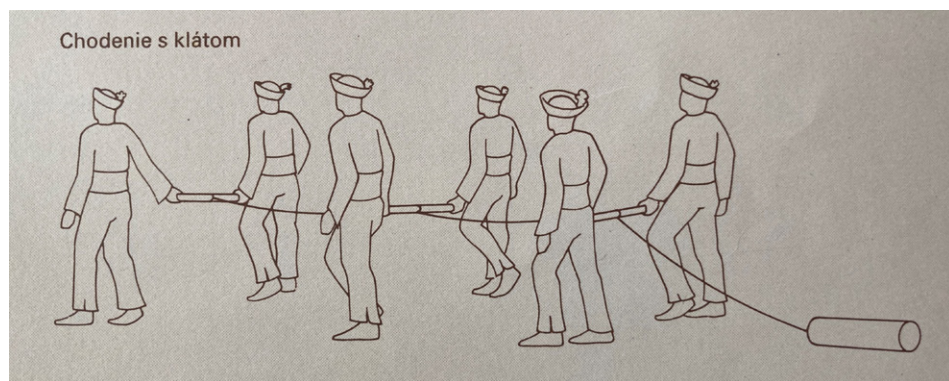
**Tab. 1.** The space and time scheme of the carnival at the Rajecká Dolina region. Photo: Zuzana Beňušková 2022

3 Performative art can be any situation involving the following four basic elements: time, space, an artist’s body, and a relationship between the artist and the audience (Dreher 2001).

### Carnival at Rajecká Lesná

At the end of the Shrovetide, traditional rounds and parties are organised in Rajecká Lesná from Sunday to Tuesday every year. The event is prepared by the youth. On Tuesday evening, a double bass is “buried” as the symbol of the end of the Carnival season. Shrovetide celebrations are very popular in the municipality and are passed down from generation to generation.

The analysed Carnival model of the municipality of Rajecká Lesná has survived in various forms also in the nearby villages of Ďurčiná, Šuja, and Fačkov (Lužica 1998; Munková 1991; Zmrhalová 2018). Its speciality is young men harnessed like horses who go dragging a log along the ground. They walk or run in this way around the village and visit houses. This custom was called walking with a “log”, a “ball” or “horses” (Fig. 1). In these villages, young men line up in pairs, creating a kind of tandem; each pair grabs a stick tied to a rope (chain) that runs between the pairs. A stick of around a meter in length stick – a log – is attached at the end of the rope behind the tandem, and is dragged along the ground. The whole tandem is driven by the “master” (*gazda*) – a young leader who is an important figure of the Carnival. Each of these villages has a different number of young men in the tandem: five pairs in Rajecká Lesná, four pairs in Fačkov, three pairs in Ďurčiná, and only one in Šuja. A similar custom cannot be found elsewhere in Slovakia. Apart from the tandem, each of these four municipalities has some other unique customs.



**Fig. 1.** The drawing of walking with a “log” by Arne Mann for *Etnografický atlas Slovenska* (1990)

A log is used as a prop by the Carnival revellers in several Slovak regions; outside of Rajecká Lesná, however, the log is smaller, it is carried in hands, and is wound around the girls that the young men dance with, expecting a reward for the dance. Likewise, the young men in Rajecká Lesná together with the entire tandem try to wrap ropes around people who can ransom themselves only by giving gifts – in kind or money – to be freed.

The structure of the whole Carnival week is quite fragmented. We shall attempt to describe it using the factors of time, space, activities; social roles;



clothing and meals. The event thus becomes part of the collective memory of the municipality, though new forms of recording events emerge here as well.

### Time, Space, and Activities

The end of the Carnival season is perceived differently by uninterested inhabitants/visitors of the village and by active Carnival revellers. For the former group, the Carnival lasts from Sunday to Tuesday. For the latter group, which is involved in the preparation of the event for a longer period of time, everything ends only on the Saturday after the closing of the Carnival. Even though the Carnival officially ends on workdays (Monday, and Tuesday), the atmosphere in Rajecká Lesná is very lively. The locals take a leave from work on these days, return from more distant workplaces, and the village is visited by its natives. We can often hear the opinion that the Carnival is like Christmas<sup>4</sup>.

The end of the Carnival begins on Sunday. However, the preparations must be completed in the evening of the day before. For Carnival revellers, the event thus starts with a Saturday party for young people on the eve of the last three Carnival days. On Sunday morning, they go to the cemetery to pay tribute to the memory of their deceased friends and, subsequently, they attend a Sunday mass, standing in a semi-circle in front of the altar. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, instead of at the altar, people were kneeling in front of the church entrance (Fig. 2). The revellers give presents to the priest in the form of various pastries and cheeses.



**Fig. 2.** Local community kneeling in a semi-circle in front of the church during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022. Photo: Zuzana Beňušková

4 It is similar in the municipalities of Fačkov and Ďurčiná.

This pertains to songs perceived as local, featuring themes of banditry, shepherding, and romance. Young men learn them from New Year's day onward during communal gatherings. Multiple stanzas are sung to a single melody. These songs are performed during the most representative moments of the carnival festivities and also during processions, alongside other songs. Amid spontaneous singing within the context of carnival merriment, songs from various regions of Slovakia, universally recognized and originating from different time periods, resound in Rajecká Lesná. The audience, focused on the entertainment value, does not recognize the diversity of the songs' origin; what matters is that they form a shared vocal repertoire, enabling communal experience of the occasion. Next, the revelers go together with the parish priest to the side of the church where priests are buried; there, they sing reverently with their hats off over the grave of the dean-canon who contributed to the development of the parish and installation of the Slovak nativity scene. Afterwards, they return to the culture centre, get some refreshments and, together with the girls, they finalise the preparations for public entertainment in the square. The municipal Carnival event begins in the square in front of the municipal office at 4.00 o'clock in the afternoon, with live music, refreshments offered in stands, and serving filled doughnuts (*šišky*) and bread to participants and spectators. People dance in couples on the concrete floor and, often, two or three couples join together and spin "in a wheel". Men bring their female partners to the dancing floor by holding them under their arms and taking them away again after dancing. This pertains both to younger and older women whom the young men dance with; this courteous gesture is linked to assisting partners to avoid slipping during the snowy and icy period of carnival festivities. When buses turn around on the square, or cars pass along the adjacent road, the young men stop the drivers and try to get a financial contribution from them. The outdoor entertainment is followed by an evening dance party for the broader public in the local culture centre, with a combination of folk and modern music.

On Monday, boys walk around the village in the morning, accompanied by music. They start their rounds at local facilities – in the shop, parish, elementary school, and kindergarten. Subsequently, they visit the houses whose residents stay at home and where the revellers assume to be received well. They are awaited by many with trays full of sausages, cakes, and toasts placed on fence walls or waste bins. The Carnival revellers dance with the locals, accompanied by a music band and a documentation team. The evening is again full of entertainment attended by the youth.

On Tuesday, a noisy "horse" tandem walks around the village, with bells ringing and whip cracking (Fig. 3). Boys start running and the tandem crosses the stream. These moments are the most attractive part of the documentary records. The participants have lunch at the house of the master's mother. They have to rest in the afternoon, as the Carnival week, full of both daily and late-evening activities is physically demanding. At that time, the village is walked by people collecting presents in kind, called *vajčiari* (egg collectors – derived from the word *vajcia*/eggs): two couples, each with a girl and a boy.



**Fig. 3.** Horses with a log, driven by the master holding a whip – running around the village on Tuesday, 2022. Photo: Zuzana Beňušková

All actors of the rounds keenly enjoy the Monday and Tuesday events – not only the performers, but also the audience that attends them. The stops at the houses resemble a folk theatre.

The evening Carnival party is accompanied by the midnight burial of a double bass. This is also oriented towards entertaining children. The funeral procession is made up of Carnival revellers and their girlfriends, with young men reciting short poems and recollecting the humorous moments that happened to them throughout the calendar year, and also during the Carnival. This genre of humor is understood mainly by the actors themselves.

On the morning of Ash Wednesday, a mass takes place with the participation of the Carnival revellers<sup>5</sup>. After the mass, they prepare scrambled eggs made of the eggs collected by egg collectors during their rounds.

Thursday and Saturday are the days of get-togethers in cottages (there is a lot of them around Rajecká Lesná), and, on Friday, the participants go for a joint trip to the Calvary (Tab. 2).

<sup>5</sup> The Municipality of Rajecká Lesná is a site of pilgrimages with the largest mobile carved nativity scene in Europe. The local pilgrimage temple was declared a Basilica Minor in 2002.



Saturday	Preparations at the culture centre Children's entertainment Entertainment
Sunday	Cemetery Church Square Dance party
Monday	Rounds by Carnival revellers accompanied by music and dancing Public facilities: shop, kindergarten, school, parish Dance party
Tuesday	Horse running Public facilities: shop, kindergarten, school, parish Village streets Rounds by egg collectors Children's entertainment Dance party Burying the double bass
Wednesday	Mass and Carnival revellers having scrambled eggs together
Thursday	Revellers' meeting in a cottage
Friday	Trip to the Calvary
Saturday	"Aftermath"

**Tab. 2.** The sequence of activities performed by the local community each day of the carnival week

### **Social Structure and the Roles of Carnival Revellers**

Carnival revellers are single young men and girls. Exceptionally, when there are too few single boys, married men can also become members of the group. An important role is played by the leader of the men, called *gazda* (master). He is elected right at the beginning of the Carnival and is in charge of the preparation and of a dignified course of the Carnival; he takes care of the preparation of the revellers during joint rehearsals and the financing of the activities, and represents the whole young men's group. He can be the master for a maximum of three years, after which a change takes place. The time periods are identified according to the names of the masters, since, from time to time, new elements are introduced to the customs during the "terms of office" of particular masters, such as "when XY was the master...", or "during the times of XY, it was/we did...". Being a master denotes an important status in the local community, just like being a Carnival reveller, which is a position held by young men for several years. For single boys, membership in the group of Carnival revellers is a test of maturity. They must master ritual behaviour, sing a lot, run, drink alcohol moderately, and also have fun until late at night. The Carnival revellers of Rajecká Lesná are gentle, respectful, and not vulgar, unlike the ones from the neighbouring municipality. However, not all teenagers from Rajecká Lesná wish to become Carnival revellers. Boys leave for schools outside the municipality, lose touch with the boys and girls from the municipality, and are no longer interested in traditional activities.

The municipal office communicates with the revellers through their master – not only during the Carnival, but also when the youth group needs to be involved in other activities in the village, such as ritual events (St. John's Bonfire) or auxiliary works. The master manages the activities during the last days of the Carnival and has the most prominent role during the rounds of the "horse" tandem on Shrove Tuesday. While walking through the village, the "horses" run intensively at times. The young men have a bell behind their waist, making a jingling sound heard throughout the village as they run. This run as well as the Carnival songs and dances are rehearsed by the young men from the beginning of January until the Carnival period in the hall of the culture centre. During the "horse" rounds, the entire tandem can run away from an inattentive master. They usually run to a pub, where the owner has to pay for everything the horses consume, especially alcohol. The "horses" also have an entertaining function – similar to Carnival masks in other villages. The master's mother also has an active role, preparing lunch for the revellers on Shrove Tuesday, the day they run with the horses.

Egg collectors form a part of the revellers' group. During Shrove Tuesday, when the young men run with their horses, they visit the houses in the upper and lower parts of the village singing, enter the dwellings and get food there. The relationship between egg collectors and "horses" was traditionally defined in such a way that the former had to avoid meeting the latter, because the "horses" could steal all the food the egg collectors had been given.

Carnival revellers are partly linked to the folklore group "Frivaldzanka". However, there is a difference between the Carnival groups and folklore groups of Rajecká Dolina. They perform together on some occasions, but they are not the same groupings, as Carnival revellers are limited by their age. The municipality helps both groups with costumes and props. Musicians who accompany the revellers during their rounds, women – cooks who help them prepare treats, and commissioned documentalists – filmmakers and photographers recording the whole event – are also indirectly part of the revellers' group (ThrowBack Graphics 2023).

After visiting the church, the Carnival revellers are accompanied by the priest in the church area.

All the activities described here target the local community; therefore, the participating audience constitutes an important component of the Carnival. The core group is made up of local residents, their relatives and friends who come to the village for the Carnival, take part in entertainment in the culture centre and in the square, residents offering treats to the revellers during their rounds with music and dance, parishioners participating in solemn masses, as well as the teachers and children at schools. When kids from the kindergarten come to look at the "horses", the young men make them sit on wooden sticks serving as handles so that they can be a part of the event for a while. The municipal office and the culture centre seated in one building serve as a backstage.

## Clothing

Rajecká Lesná is the only municipality of Rajecká Dolina, and perhaps in Slovakia, where there are no masks during Carnival: instead, there are revellers dressed in folk costumes. Since folk costumes are not worn commonly, they fulfil the function of masks (Slivka 1990: 26) and distinguish the Carnival revellers from the rest of the public. The traditional clothes and their specific components are partly the property of the young men and partly provided by the municipal office. Thanks to this help, Carnival customs contribute to the preservation of traditional clothing in the municipality and promote the maintenance of traditional production. In addition to the Carnival, an identical group of young men is also dressed in folk costumes on Easter Monday, while pouring water on girls and women and whipping them with willow rods. The basic parts of the clothing include cloth trousers – the master is dressed in white and the others – in black trousers, an embroidered shirt in two variants – red or blue, a belt, and a hat with decoration made of artificial flowers and ribbons. The hats are provided to the young men by the municipal office, which also bought them large leather belts from regional producers (the belts had previously been borrowed in Čičmany). On Sunday and Monday, the men wear colorful folded scarves behind their belts. On Tuesday, they exchange them for bells on their belts. Shirts are sewn and embroidered by local women. They use the red embroidery variant from Sunday until Tuesday afternoon. The blue embroidery variant is for mourning purposes – it is used on Tuesday evening during the burial of the double bass and on Ash Wednesday during the mass. The other props include grey wooden sables, a whip, a yoke composed of strings with wooden handles, a log at the end of the main rope, as well as other long ropes held by the “master” in his hands when driving the tandem. In addition to young men visiting households on Tuesday, two couples, the so-called “egg collectors”, walk around the village. They are made up of a girl and a boy dressed in folk costumes, the girl in a fur coat with a basket, and the boy with a tabard across his shoulders and a skewer in his hand, respectively. Their task is to collect food from people for the final party, with bacon and eggs as the basis.

The girls – friends and partners of the young men that help them get dressed, decorate the spaces in the culture centre and prepare refreshments – are also dressed in folk costumes. They do not take part in the rounds. During the Carnival, children also like to dress up in folk costumes; boys like to put decorated hats on their heads and borrow sables from the revellers.

## Meals

Carnival meals can be divided into homemade, public, and carnival meals. Doughnuts are mostly made at home; the audience outside in the square is offered doughnuts and bread with lard and onion. Moreover, a kitchen is available for parties next to the culture hall, and the revellers are offered sausages

and spirits during the rounds. Even if pigs are no longer kept in the house yards, people buy sausages outside the village. The reason for offering fatty meals is not to fill the men's stomachs before the approaching fast, but, rather, a way to keep them sober. Alcohol consumption is overseen by the master, who is responsible for the behavior of the young men.

At their joint lunch, the master is usually served a vegetable cutlet decorated with ketchup, which symbolises a vagina. This custom was introduced by female cooks with a sense of humor, who used to cook for young men during Carnivals. The revellers' final meetings after Ash Wednesday are connected with the consumption of the food they obtained during the rounds. The meals consist principally of eggs fried on bacon and alcohol.

### **Memories and Documentation**

Carnivals form an important part of the collective memory of the municipality inhabitants. Those who take an active part in them retain the feeling of participating in a valuable custom. Their memories are connected with various humorous stories about who invented what, what happened to whom, how to dress up in cloth trousers so that they do not chafe, as well as how boys get them wet and ruined by crossing the creek. They remember the differences compared to the current course of the Carnival events, including the subtler forms of dance or string music in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The whole event is documented by a cameraman and a photographer who accompany the young men everywhere. Their task after the Carnival is over is to produce a short action document. In 2023, it was replaced by a valuable, more than an hour-long document featuring every day of the Carnival events (ThrowBack Graphics 2023). The films available on the internet have a representational character. Other recordings are intended for home viewing. The young men warn that there are also parts inappropriate for public viewing by someone uninvolved.

In ethnological literature as well as in film productions, the Carnivals of Rajecká Lesná are overshadowed by the Carnival customs in the neighbouring village of Fačkov, where, in addition to a horse tandem, the participants also have two special masks, and the tandem is decorated with a tree with ribbons. On Saturday, the Carnival revellers from Fačkov are invited as performers to the public Carnival event in the town of Rajec.

### **Conclusion**

The description of the Carnival customs in the Municipality of Rajecká Lesná illustrates that a part of them is intended for the public and another part for a smaller group of participants – municipality inhabitants who understand ritual behaviour and the context for some humorous comments, as well as remember what they have experienced together. The third part remains visible only to the Carnival revellers and their friends.

Visible activities: Revellers' attendance of masses and rituals in the parish grounds, dancing and entertainment on the square, stopping cars, evening parties in the culture centre, and rounds along public facilities. Film making.

Activities designed for a smaller circle: double bass burial, offering treats to revellers at the culture centre, rounds around the village on Shrove Monday and Tuesday, joking with some inhabitants. Cooperation with the municipal office. Visiting the calvary.

Invisible activities: Leave from work, the election of the master, division of tasks for young men and girls, carnival preparation, dance and singing rehearsals in the hall, arrangement of props, dressing up in folk costumes, decoration of the culture centre, preparation of refreshments, arrangement of music and documentalists, visit to the cemetery, get-together in the cottage, recollections.

The inscription of the Carnival in Rajecká Dolina in the national list of the intangible cultural heritage of Slovakia is an option to be considered despite the diversity of its features in the different villages. It is only a matter of time before someone comes up with such an initiative. The representatives of Rajecká Lesná have not yet considered the inscription, though this idea caught the interest of the mayor during our research interview (he passed away in 2023). It is the responsibility of ethnologists to draw attention to the possible impacts of such an entry. Based on experience from other countries, we see the following opportunities and threats related to the inscription in the list (Tab. 3).

Opportunities	Threats
Consolidation of the rural community, identity building.	"Foreign" interest can influence the course of events and the current forms of the customs, strengthening of visible elements.
Responsibility for preserving the custom and the safeguarding of its form that is considered authentic. Preservation of traditional songs, dances, folk costumes, meals, and skills.	The participants may become presenters (emphasis on outward display), as happened in Čičmany and the small towns of Rajecká Dolina.
Some of the activities intended for the inner circle may become visible.	The locals can be pushed out by visitors.
People in Slovakia and in Rajecká Lesná will learn more about the Carnival; local education, and awareness raising.	Adaptation of the local cultural values to the needs and tastes of visitors, and the risk of replacing the local features of live culture with more universal ones (as has already happened with songs and music).
Promotion of the region, highlighting its identity and strengthening local residents' identification with it.	Comparison with others and the risk of conflict between carnival groups from different municipalities when representing the region.
Economic effects for local residents involved in the event.	Unification as a consequence of commodification.

**Tab. 3.** Opportunities and threats related to the inscription in the UNESCO list



The UNESCO system for inscribing elements of cultural heritage holds a primarily cultural-political character. It mobilizes the executive authorities to protect living cultural traditions. A prerequisite for inscription is the recognition of affiliation (ownership) to living elements of cultural heritage by specific communities or collectives, which is also a condition for their sustainability. When examining traditional folk culture as a holistic phenomenon, it is essential to consider the processes that influence the focus on selected elements for the purpose of their highlighting and safeguarding. The potential repercussions of inscriptions and the promotion of chosen elements need to be anticipated and monitored.

While the national list of living cultural heritage expands each year, this does not imply that the complexity of traditional folk culture can be reduced to a singular recording system. The development of rural tourism should contribute to the revitalization of rural areas, emphasizing sustainability, the future predominance of economic development, and the need to preserve identity (Conti, Cravero-Igarza 2010). Hence, there is a necessity to strike a balance between dimensions constituting economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It is crucial to focus sensibly on understanding the uniqueness and level of effectiveness of each element rooted in folk traditions, which plays significant roles primarily at the regional level.

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