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On the Transmission of Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage – the Example of the Carnival Rituals in a Rural Environment*

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ABSTRACT: The carnival (*fašiangy*) is a long-established and still occurring cultural phenomenon in Slovak society. It resonates not only in our society as a whole, but also at local level as a significant period of the calendar ritual cycle. The contribution presents the problem of the transmission of selected carnival phenomena in the municipality of Borský Mikuláš (the Senica District) in the south-west of Slovakia. Dealing with current ways of transferring the traditional model of the carnival door-to-door sabre procession and maintaining its continuity, as well as current ways of studying carnival rituals and necessary skills, the text draws attention to new ways of using and dealing with these phenomena of intangible cultural heritage in the current rural society.

KEYWORDS: carnival, door-to-door procession, sabre dance, transmission, Borský Mikuláš

The existence of carnival has been documented in Slovak society for centuries, and not just in the rural environment. The carnival (*fašiangy*) activates residents of different age, interest and occupation groups, as well as members of certain institutions and associations. It is an important ritual period, in particular its final part, during which elements of local traditional culture belonging to the area of intangible cultural heritage are transmitted and reproduced.

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Transmission means the transfer of a set of elements of material, spiritual and artistic culture from generation to generation (Ratica 1995: 264). It takes place when the next generation receives the generational heritage of the older generation (Kačirek 2016). Hall (1989) pointed out that cultural transmission between two or more people is carried out by means of communication which respect and preserve a particular structure. Anthropological research then aims to understand all the mechanisms involved in cultural transmission in all three areas of the communication scheme – communication, transfer, codes and context (O'Reilly 2012).

In the past, the basic environment for the transmission of culture was the family and the local community. In today's cultures, this process involves, first of all, impersonal, institutionalised forms of intergenerational transmission, often highly differentiated and specialised (Ratica 1995: 264). If we think about the inhabitants of any locality, we have to reflect on them as a diverse, differentiated community, consisting of certain gender, age, occupation or interest-oriented groups, institutions and other smaller groups, having specific objectives, strategies for functioning and meeting their own needs. At the same time, they can make a significant contribution to the transfer of elements of traditional culture (societies, institutions, civic associations, municipal authorities, activists, volunteers).

In a sense, transmission can be considered a stabilising factor, as it ensures continuity and the transfer of tradition, while also opening up possibilities for innovation of several components of the process. Cultural phenomena are handed over to new generations through transfer, subsequent selection and interiorisation, which is also a strengthening factor in the functioning of any phenomena in society.

In my contribution, I focus on the issue of the transmission of ritual behaviour during the carnival in the municipality of Borský Mikuláš (the Senica District), located in Záhorie, a region in the south-west of Slovakia¹. The subject of my research is a door-to-door procession associated with the performance of a particular “chain stick dance”²; in this locality, it is danced with sabres and it constitutes one of the dominant elements of the local carnival tradition. This door-to-door procession dance is called “sabres” (in the Slovak language *šable*), or “under sabres” (*pod šable*) by the inhabitants of the municipality, according to the lyrics of the accompanying song. The process of its demonstration is referred to as “jumping with sabres” (*skákať šable*) and the dancers are called “the sabers” (*šablári*). The carnival rituals, including this dance, have always taken place in the village on the last carnival Monday and on Shrove Tuesday, and this continues up to the present day.

1 The municipality was established in 1975 by combining the two separate localities of Borský Mikuláš and Borský Peter. According to the census, by January 1, 2021 there were 3,953 inhabitants, mostly Roman Catholic, of Slovak nationality.

2 I am using S. Dúžek's typology (1989). This was addressed in a detailed study on the Carnival Folk Dances in Slovakia.



Fig. 1. “Bacon men” (*suaňinári*) drinking alcohol during the door-to-door procession and posing for the researcher. Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 2023. Photo: Margita Jágerová

Both in the past and today, the main group of people involved are single men – recruits. For several decades, however, we have been observing other age-determined groups among the door-to-door procession participants here, including children’s groups³, in addition to young people, and, since the 1980s, even married men. Each age group operates on its own, consisting of a leader – *richtár*⁴, 9 – 11 sabers⁵, two or three, sometimes even more “bacon men” (*suaňinári*) and one cashier.

This model of functionaries, their competences, and internal hierarchy has long been practised in an unchanged form and is a basic principle of the door-

3 The evidence for the involvement of children’s groups in the carnival festivals from this location is almost a century old.

4 *Richtár* is an archaic term for an elected official of a municipality, or a city. In traditional communities, young single men also had their own *richtár* (young leader). This was an elected representative responsible for the youth in the municipality, reporting directly to the municipality’s Mayor.

5 My research is based on a photographic study of this village in the last half of century. According to the sabers, in order for the dance to be performed properly with all the parts and motifs, an odd number and at least five sabers are required, but there were always more in the group. *Richtár* (young leader) and the cashiers do not dance, they do not carry the sabres necessary to participate in the dance. *Richtár* delivers the individual instructions, signals the change of motifs, the beginning and end of the dance, the departure from the place to the next place. The cashier carries a money box, which he shakes to the rhythm of the dance. The upper limit for the number of members of the group varies, for example in 2023 one of the groups of single door-to-door procession participants had up to 17 members.

to-door procession groups. E. Horváthová (1982) referred to the often surprising stability and permanence of the various components of tradition, including the phenomenon analyzed. Borský Mikuláš is the only location in the entire region of Záhorie where this type of dance has been preserved to the present day, although the research materials from the 1940s prove its existence in several surrounding municipalities, as well as in other counties of the southwestern Slovakia and possibly in more remote areas.

As part of the contribution, I present the context and circumstances in which this phenomenon operates, the mechanisms by which the traditional elements are practised, but also the occasions when it occurs. This approach follows the carriers of the phenomenon, looking for answers to questions about how this cultural phenomenon was and still is transmitted, as well as which factors are involved in its transfer and its subsequent persistence. I want to establish which local community groups and individuals play a decisive role in the transmission process. The material also provides a partial retrospective view of how this phenomenon has functioned in the particular community over several decades, how it has transformed and what its current state is.

This contribution is based on ethnological research conducted during several days in November 2022 and in February 2023. During the research, I carried out interviews⁶ with locals, and observed the participants during carnival days (from Sunday to Tuesday). Additional information was obtained through several online interviews after completing the research in the selected village. During my research I conducted 21 interviews with the locals, mostly with activists who were involved in the carnival activities. They were mostly former and current members of the “saber” groups (children, young men, adults), the members of their families, as well as people involved in the preparation of children’s groups of “the sabers”, members of the local cultural association, village authorities and employees of the local municipal office, as well as members of music groups.

The Process of Transmission of the Dance until the End of the 20th Century

The continuity of any phenomenon in time and space is predicated on its transmission, whose nature can change. In the course of my research, I have observed a number of ways of passing on the knowledge concerning the “sabre” dance. The former participants of the door-to-door processions – the oldest inhabitants of the village – learned songs and dances as young boys by spontaneous observation of the processions, which were usually accompanied by a number of kids. If a children’s group was formed, they used to meet several times and, if necessary, practiced dancing and singing under the supervision of an older family member (the older brother of the door-to-door procession participant, father or another relative). They rehearsed in the meadow, in the

6 Field research results are stored in the author’s private archive, together with the photo and video documentation.

yard, in the barn, and, later on, in the football field, as they were often young footballers who agreed to take part in the door-to-door procession. They created a group of “sabers” by involving other peers. Subsequently, the boys were coordinated as a group on their own. The other groups proceeded similarly – meeting a few weeks before the carnival, negotiating the number of members, obtaining clothing and props, but above all, ensuring the musical accompaniment. If necessary, they practiced dancing and singing.

Several older men, but also schoolchildren, confirmed that their role models for becoming sabers were mainly their older brothers or other male relatives who used to be sabers in the past, so that in many families this phenomenon has been continually passed from generation to generation. For decades, the transmission process has been a masculine matter, with the older men passing this phenomenon on to the younger ones. “When I was a child, every one of the sabers was a hero to us. Behind the sabers, a bunch of kids used to walk by, when we were given a broad-brimmed saber’s hat to hold, we were the happiest persons”⁷.

As early as in the second half of the 20th century, not only groups of single men, but also groups of children went out to dance in the surrounding villages, which was perceived as training before doing the door-to-door procession in their own community; it was also a form of gaining income, since they collected money for the dance. At that time, the sabers no longer functioned in the surrounding villages. However, in some localities, another type of a carnival door-to-door dance was performed. This is the so called “Turkish dance” (*tanec Turkov*) – a particular carnival dance, but of a different type from the one analyzed, which remains widespread until this day in some municipalities of the Záhorie region.

The first institutional intervention in performing the dance was its staged performance at the International Folklore Festival in Strážnica (the Czech Republic) in 1973. The group of young sabers, invited by J. Tomeš⁸, participated in the stage dancing programme of the festival. Another factor that influenced the exercising and subsequent performing of the dance consisted in the development of an artistic ensemble in the village. As early as 1978, a school dance-singing club was created within the local community, and the local sabers took part in the Myjava folklore festivals in 1979, followed by other events, especially in the Záhorie region. They also participated in the most important Slovak folklore festival in Východná.

Since the second half of the 1970s, a major institutional intervention for children occurred in the local schools. Starting at that time, two groups of children – younger and older schoolchildren – were registered as part of the carnival procession. During this period, women teachers at the local nursery school prepared a group of preschoolers to conduct a door-to-door procession.

7 A man born in 1967, Borský Mikuláš.

8 Josef Tomeš (1936–1978), a Moravian ethnographer and folklorist.

From that time on, although the preschoolers did not appear as a separate group in the village, the children continued to learn the dance at the local nursery school. In the 1980s, school teams tended to form themselves separately, but since the 1990s, new groups of children were prepared by local women teachers. From the late 1970s onwards, women teachers became the main group involved in preparing the youngest door-to-door procession participants. Accordingly, they started to participate in the process of transmission of the phenomenon under discussion, which, until then, had been exclusively a masculine matter.

Since 1999, the village's primary school has had a children's folklore ensemble, which, under the supervision of the woman leading the ensemble, has also dealt with the carnival rituals, including the sabre dance, and has also taken part in scenic folklore competitions with this programme. The above mentioned dance has long been as an important part of the children's ensemble repertoire; additionally, thanks to the ensemble's leader, the boys in the ensemble formed a separate door-to-door group for a while. For several decades now, the school has been an institution that fully supports the carnival course of events and tolerates the absences of sabers and musicians during the carnival; moreover, groups of door-to-door procession participants are invited to perform the dance at the school on carnival Mondays and Tuesdays. At the time of their visit, the school interrupts classes and prepares refreshments for the various groups. In contrast, the formation and organisation of the groups of single men, and later of married participants of the dance, continued spontaneously, without institutional interference.

Current Forms of Transmission of the Observed Phenomenon

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the most significant factor influencing the process under discussion has been the Village Cultural Society SLZA (Obecný kultúrny spolok SLZA), registered as a civic association in January 2004. According to the founder of the association, the main reason for its creation was to "raise the carnival to a higher level". In the last decade, children's groups were created by members of this association, and an activist who is not its member. These middle-aged men are the very ones to play an important role in the process of transmission of the carnival customs in the case of children's groups. They have been active participants of the carnival since childhood, both as "sabers" and as accompanying musicians. After a certain amount of time, the association began to oversee the operation of the abovementioned children's folklore ensemble and also created an ensemble consisting of young people and adults.

Since 2008, a new part of the entire carnival ritual has been the so-called "Maxicircle" (*Maxikolo*). It was introduced by the members of the abovementioned association and it takes place on the Sunday afternoon. The main purpose of establishing this format is the collective presentation of all groups of the door-to-door procession participants in one place. This is a special event



Fig. 2. Groups of sabers dancing in the “Maxicircle”. Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 2023. Photo: Margita Jágerová

where all the active carnival groups dance with the sabres at the same time. First, they join in a big circle in order for all the groups to perform a dance together in this “maxishape”, then the members re-arrange themselves into separate groups and dance the sabre dance again, this time with their own group. This is a very attractive event, which has prolonged the carnival period in the village by one day. Every year, it attracts many viewers, both locals and non-residents. The schoolchildren have the opportunity to interact with the older door-to-door procession participants right there, to dance with them, but also to observe them.

The participation in the “Maxicircle”, but especially in the Monday and Tuesday door-to-door processions, requires a mastery of dance motifs, of the whole process of dance, lyrics and melodies of individual songs (songs accompanying dances or used when the group moves from house to house), couples dances (especially waltzes), used when dancing with women and girls. Certain physical characteristics of the participants and endurance are indispensable.⁹ Under the supervision of the adults mentioned, the children receive regular training every week since January, either at school or at the local cultural house run by the municipality. Both the municipality authorities, and the school management are cooperating institutions involved in maintaining and supporting the carnival celebration in the village.

⁹ According to the data from the older participants of the carnival procession, during the carnival time they walk even 30 kilometres a day around the village (depending on their age, agreement and will, but especially endurance), perform more than 100 sabre dances a day, and also dance with women and girls. Children take a shorter procession and dance less.

The transmission of the observed phenomenon takes place at several levels – apart from the dance and singing skills, it is a part of an entire set of standards, rules of behaviour, as well as customary communication with the residents of the households visited by the door-to-door procession participants. According to a respondent involved in the preparation of children's groups for a long time no additional information related to the overall context of the carnival festivities is passed on to children during the dance and singing exercises as such. These children are partially familiar with the carnival from the family environment, or they learn about it directly during the door-to-door processions.

The transmission process also concerns individual functions, resulting in a hierarchy. It is important to know the competences of individual functionaries. Those involved need to learn and understand the gestures and signs used by the leader of the group, to respect his instructions, to follow his decisions, all of which ensures the smooth course of the round. The door-to-door procession participants also learn in advance how to master a system of agreed rules, signs and gestures that tells them what to dance¹⁰ and how to dance. The leader (*richtár*) always has to lead the departure, with the sabers marching away in two rows towards the next house, often singing local folk songs. The young men, as well as the married men, accompany the dance, chanting and screaming to the rhythm of the song; this, of course, is also imitated by children.

The way in which the visit is conducted, the communication with the locals, but also the ritual of giving collective thanks also belong to the transmitted elements of the tradition – after dancing, the group receives a financial reward, and in several places refreshments, after which, cued by the leader's command, all group members chant "thank you very much!" while leaving. The abovementioned adults preparing children for their performance are the decisive factors in the process of approaching the aforementioned phenomena. As one of them stated, children are instructed as follows: "In order to do what our ancestors were supposed to do, that's what we teach them, they even wanted to invent things, like, they wanted to walk backwards, try to modify some dance motifs..., so we instructed them to stick to tradition"¹¹. One of the long-established standards is that children and married men are only allowed to carry wooden sabres, as the right to use metal sabres is reserved only for single men who are the main group involved in the carnival rituals.

The Creation of Children's Groups and the Current Course of the Procession

The members of the aforementioned association were approached by parents in 2017 to help them form a new group of children. Subsequently, with the participation of the parents of other age-related boys, a new children's group was formed after a break of several years. These were schoolchildren of 7 to

10 In every house, the group asks if the householders wish them to perform the "sabres" or a "dance": the latter means the procession participants dancing with girls and women.

11 A man born in 1978, Borský Mikuláš.



Fig. 3. The youngest schoolboy sabers dancing the sabre dance in the street during the carnival procession. Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 2023. Photo: Margita Jágerová

8 years old, whose group continues to function to this day. The group takes part in the door-to-door processions every year, with the exception of 2021, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As these boys will soon finish the local school, the activists initiated the formation of a new children's group of boys of 8 to 9 years old in 2023. The search for potential members of the group was made possible by the headmaster of the local school, who contacted the boys' parents via means of electronic communication to see if they would be interested in forming a new group. This initiative resulted in the formation of a group of 14 sabers. They also helped to secure props, clothing, and necessary musical accompaniment.

The children's door-to-door processions currently take place under adult supervision, which is a relatively new phenomenon. There are accompanying musicians, two diatonic button accordion players, members of the local cultural association, and especially, the other adult men preparing the group who walk with the children throughout the village, monitor their behaviour and, in a number of cases, warn them of what they can and cannot do. They direct children in particular situations, while also passing on important standards of social and customary behaviour. During the door-to-door procession, they draw attention to such issues as the cautious approach to different parts of local traditional costume, the fact that children are not allowed to throw their hats decorated with traditional feathers, which need to be put down before the dance, on the ground. The adults provide instructions, telling the children



Fig. 4. The older schoolboy sabers dancing the sabre dance in the street during the carnival procession. Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 2023. Photo: Margita Jágerová

that the landlord must be raised above their heads and beaten with a *ferula* (the traditional ritual wooden insignia of group leader) on his backside, because, according to traditional norms, the landlord should not be at home during the carnival, but, rather, in a tavern. If he is found at home, he is punished with a public beating for which, according to traditional norms, he must loudly give his thanks. In addition, the children are alerted to any errors in their dancing or singing; if they do not sing, they are told to sing, or, if they change the motifs of the dance arbitrarily, by adding new elements, different whoops, the accompanying adults stress the need to “follow tradition”. They thus fulfill the function of “guardians of tradition” in the performance of the dance, but also in the whole course of the door-to-door procession: “I taught them everything the way I did when I was young”¹².

However, in contrast to the past, dancers do not enter the houses or courtyards; instead, dancing and hospitality take place in front of the house, in the street. The presence of adults alongside children is also necessary in order to ensure the smooth and safe running of the door-to-door processions, since traffic through the municipality continues uninterrupted, not only as regards cars, but also lorries and trucks. Adults direct the transport and, if necessary, stop it completely for a period of time so that children can perform their dance safely; as it is the carnival time, stopping transport in this case is “normal” and everybody understands it.

¹² A man born in 1978, Borský Mikuláš.

Learning by direct observation now only occurs partially. It is now quite rare for children to follow the door-to-door procession around during the day, as they are at school since morning, and their afternoons are usually filled with extracurricular activities. Children can see the use of the sabres within the framework of the “Maxicircle”, and then on Monday or Tuesday in the school environment, when groups of door-to-door procession participants come by to perform their dances.

The participation of children in the carnival rituals and systematic learning about them at a young age results in constructing a long-term relationship with this element of the local intangible cultural heritage and ensures its continuity. As early as in the 1980s, Rychlíková stated that anyone who went on the rounds as a child (at about 9 – 13 years old) would then go on as a recruit or even as a married man. On the contrary, those who did not attend door-to-door processions as children would not even be interested in active participation at an older age (Rychlíková 1988: 195). From interviews with older schoolchildren, it can be concluded that being a saber is still a source of motivation and prestige for children today. When schoolchildren were asked why they had been jumping sabres for seven years, I would get the following kinds of answers: because we like it, we are interested in it, it is fun. Several children highlighted the fun moments during the procession as an incentive, but they also mentioned the crew, and relationships they built with each other. They like the local traditional costume, which is usually owned by each of them



Fig. 5. A marching group of the oldest sabers during the door-to-door procession, including the small son of one of the members. Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia, 2023. Photo: Margita Jágerová

personally, as well as the necessary props. In a way, the absence at school to which they are entitled as sabers is also an incentive, as is the money donated by householders. I have also seen cases where a particular boy was not able to join the group because there were already enough children there. Young boys deal with this situation by appearing at least in the Sunday's "Maxicircle" with their fathers and dancing with a group of adults or taking part in a door-to-door procession with them.

The process of preparation also takes place in groups of single door-to-door procession participants, as well as in the married men groups. As a rule, members of these groups have a long-standing mastery of the dance, as well as a singing repertoire. Nevertheless, they start already meeting in December or January, most often in local taverns. They find out whether there are enough members, if not, they discuss who else to contact in order for the group to be complete. They address the problems of clothing, organisation, but, above all, the issue of ensuring adequate and timely music, refreshment and meals during the round.

Conclusion

As Ratica (1993: 393) states, value systems are among the essential constitutive elements of any human culture that directly motivate, influence and, at the same time, differentiate the behaviour and survival of large population groups. In this sense, the carnival period and the rituals associated with it can also be considered a significant cultural value of the local rural community, which is one of the important phenomena forming its local identity. For the given community, carnival rituals represent an important phenomenon, a long-term part of the festive custom cycle, of which the community members are appropriately proud, aware of its uniqueness. Another factor contributing to the high rating of this phenomenon is the fact that, according to the respondents' knowledge, other active performances of this type of carnival dance occur closest to the Czech Republic in Moravia (the Strání municipality), and they are not aware of their existence in the surrounding area¹³. In the surrounding municipalities, if there takes place a door-to-door procession dance, it is a different type of dance, the so-called "Turkish dance", or only the accompanying parade of the masked characters. The local knowledge of the uniqueness of "their" tradition also contributes significantly to the high appreciation of this phenomenon in the locality itself, as well as to the effort to maintain and support its continuity as much as possible.

13 According to my own findings, the sabre dances were continuously performed over the last century – data documented in the municipality of Chtelnica (District of Piešťany), which is about 50 kilometres from the discussed municipality. The "chain stick dance" is still danced during the carnival in the municipalities of Malá Lehota (Žarnovica District) and Jedľové Kostol'any (Zlaté Moravce District), but also in Čičmany (Žilina District), where it was performed for a long time as a spontaneous part of the carnival procession; right now, it is only danced by the members of local folklore ensemble.

Since I have also carried out research in the surrounding municipalities, I can conclude from the statements made by a number of outside respondents that they consider the course of the carnival rituals in Borský Mikuláš to be sophisticated, not comparable to the state of the carnival festivities in their own municipality. They praised the overall organisation, the use of elements of traditional culture (dress¹⁴, the dance itself, the props, songs, etc.), as well as the uniqueness of the “Maxicircle” crowd dance and the total number of people involved. In 2023, 112 participants from nine groups took part in the door-to-door processions in the municipality. Thanks to the possibilities of documentation and the production of a number of film recordings, carnival festivities in Borský Mikuláš can be seen on the Internet, in a very attractive form of short edits and video clips, thereby greatly promoting the phenomenon, while, at the same time, strengthening the awareness of its existence and the way of celebrating in the wider area.

The value aspects of the observed phenomenon are reflected in how it is approached by the local population. They see it as prestigious, but also having outside representational functions, beyond their own location, and this has been going on since the 1970s: “It’s a big representation for us, no one has the sabres like our village”¹⁵. The representative function of the carnival rituals is confirmed not only by the statements of a number of respondents, or the performance of the dance at various events outside the municipality, but also by the fact that when the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, visited this village in 2020, she was given a gift – *ferula*, the local traditional carnival insignia. It was handed down by a children group’s leader dressed in the traditional saber clothes.

The transmission of this phenomenon takes place not only in terms of the transmission of dance, musical skills, material and visual creation, but also in terms of customary and ethical standards, and the continuity of gender roles. The carnival rituals remain exclusively a masculine matter here, although for some time women have been an important factor in transmission of this tradition in school institutions. Nowadays, women are entrusted only with the task of taking care of the clothing and dressing the members of the door-to-door processions, or providing hospitality: “Women should take care of traditional costumes and make sure that her man or son is nice, clean, fed”¹⁶.

What is also important is the socio-normative dimension, which is implemented in terms of the regulation of behaviour, the acceptance of standards, the hierarchy of allocated functions, overlapping with an important socialisation function.

14 In the surrounding localities such as Šaštín-Stráže, Štefanov, Dojč and others, there are widespread carnival door-to-door processions with the so-called “dance of Turks”, which do not use local traditional dress.

15 A man born in 1975, Borský Mikuláš.

16 A man born in 1967, Borský Mikuláš.

The cultural phenomenon examined also fulfils other functions. In addition to the function of transmitting elements of cultural heritage, knowledge and skills, as well as local traditional clothing, the aspect of social integration and social identification is also very important. As a result of the continuity of this tradition, not only is the formation of groups initiated, but also a network of relationships between group members is built, often lasting for longer periods. The door-to-door procession participants, especially single and older men, often keep in touch with each other throughout the year, creating their own occasions, celebrations, meetings where they also take part with their partners, families, filling them not only with hospitality, but also with sport or other leisure activities. It is also on these occasions that the sabers jump and dance, for example, in front of the church for the wedding of a member of their group, during birthday celebrations, wedding banquets or dances, if enough of those who know and control the dance meet.

The carnival as a whole, but especially the door-to-door procession and the dance are an important medium and means of communication between the door-to-door procession participants and the inhabitants of the municipality, and by participating in the festivities, they get to know not only their own municipality, but especially its inhabitants. The municipality inhabitants visit and observe such elements of the carnival as the Sunday "Maxicircle", the carnival village pig slaughter, the ceremonial Sunday holy mass in churches (in which the procession participants take part), ceremonial arrangements, as well as the dancing in front of the churches, the dancing and the other rituals. The carnival festivities represent an important platform for mobilising the population, both those who provide the activities needed for the the carnival rituals to run, and those who meet for the sake of the carnival in the public place.

The research has shown that individual participants and implementers, as well as several institutions, are trying to build on local traditions, doing their best to keep certain cultural phenomena within their own local community alive in their traditional form, despite significant socio-political breakthroughs and changes in the way of life of society. Some mechanisms have been created here to ensure the continuity of the observed phenomena, making them attractive to the contemporary participants and viewers, as well as motivating the latter to maintain the elements of tradition.

The cultural community as well as the individual participants have a key role to play in passing the tradition and in introducing significant innovation. A strong supporting factor can be found in the authorities of the municipality or a school. The transfer, promotion and dissemination of the often very archaic cultural phenomena are also supported by current technologies, making it possible for contemporary participants to revisit the carnival events, learn about them and disseminate them, as well as to present them to a wide audience. Through them, participants network and communicate operationally; these technologies are also an important means of spreading representation and awareness of different cultural phenomena, as well as promoting them beyond the site itself.

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