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Municipality Day(s): a new tradition in the calendar of municipal festivals¹

Dzień/dni miejscowości: nowa tradycja w kalendarzu świąt lokalnych

The current problems in Slovakia concerning the application potential in ethnology are addressed by research that explains regional and local development processes. There is increased inter-disciplinary cooperation in this field between ethnology (social anthropology), sociology, and social geography. Ethnologists contribute with their knowledge of the local environment, using their experience in qualitative research, which allows them to clarify the social and cultural specificities at the level of rural municipalities, as well as smaller towns or town districts.

For municipalities, the size and the social structure of their population represent an important basis for the creation of quality social capital, which is able, along with other forms of capital,² to significantly influence the quality of life in municipalities. Czech social geographers note that the process of increasing the importance of soft local factors of the quality of life to the detriment of hard ones has begun

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² We use the concept of capitals by Pierre Bourdieu, which has been further elaborated by Slovak sociologists Peter Gajdoš and Ján Pašiak (2008). They refer to several forms of capitals (human, social, and cultural) with an umbrella term societal capital, attributing to it also economic, political, spiritual, and intellectual capital.

(Rumpel, Slach, Koutsky 2008). The soft factors of the quality of life mean, among other things, categories such as image of the municipality; quality of the leisure, cultural, and sports infrastructure; the *genius loci* – the spirit of the place; the social climate or atmosphere; career and self-development opportunities; the existence and quality of a social capital manifested at the level of trust, communication, and cooperation; and the ability to share information and create networks of mutual social and economic relations based on trust between actors. Interpersonal relations as well as the cultural and social atmosphere and events are an important aspect of individual satisfaction with life, which relates to possibilities of cultural and social life in a residential municipality.

After 1990, the organisation of the public administration in Slovakia changed as a result of the decentralisation of state power. These changes kick-started local and regional development. However, the actual competence and political decentralisation only occurred after 2000, when several key competences were transferred from the state to territorial self-governments and when regional development began to be formed on a more systematic basis. The local public administration is built on the civic principle, with voluntary associations playing an important role by articulating the values and interests of individual social groups within the municipality and by their involvement in the formation of public life in municipalities.

An important function within the overall way of life of current rural as well as urban communities is carried out by cultural-social events and festivals organised at the place of residence of the actors and potential participants. Their exploration brings information serving as a code to exploring the way of life of the studied communities and their collective values. We assume that the members of the decision-making sphere in a municipality (in this case, the municipality management, local councillors, members of municipal committees, etc.) have power that enables them to introduce in social practice what symbolises the value orientation of the municipality and its inhabitants. The organisation and promotion of ceremonial events – festivities – are the result of the realisation of certain ideas and objectives of the municipality management (Jágerová 2020). During more than thirty years of the democratic development of civic society, some festivities, which were formed during the socialist era, disappeared (holidays and celebrations of politically important anniversaries) and were replaced by new events with various origins and backgrounds, as well as various forms of realisation or functions. After the first decade marked by the transformation of all fields of life of society, the cultural calendar of individual rural and urban municipalities began stabilising around 2000. Today, many of the annual events are twenty and more years old and can be considered traditional events from the point of view of classically understood transfer of traditions from generation to generation (Horváthová 1986).

One of those which do not follow traditional cultural patterns, but which has acquired the reputation of a traditional event is the Municipality Day (Deň obce) festival.

If it lasts for more than one day, it is called Municipality Days (Dni obce), or directly XY Day or Municipal Festivity – as we shall show through examples from our research. This study aims to analyse the potential and functions of this type of festival for local development.

The study is methodologically based on the theory of regional identity by A. Paasi; the theoretical and methodological studies on festivities by W. Cudny, K. Popelková, K. Košťalová, and M. Jágerová; and on the theory of capitals by P. Bourdieu and Slovak sociologists P. Gajdoš and J. Pašiak. It builds on the field research conducted under several projects focused on the study of the relationship between festivals and regional development in 2016–2021,³ the study of internet sources on the forms of Municipality Days in Slovakia, as well as alternative versions of this holiday in selected countries.⁴

The municipality day is a festival type of festivity focusing on a concrete locality and its inhabitants. It is designed for the local community, local citizens, or visitors who have close ties to it (natives and other former inhabitants of the locality). It is a regularly recurring event and part of the municipal calendar of events. In villages, it takes one or two days, while in towns and cities it can be exceptionally even longer.

The Municipality Day is not a Slovak specialty, but it can also be found in the neighbouring countries. It is a popular festivity in Ukraine, where Municipality Days originated during the socialist era as new festivities to replace traditional religious ones. It is a mixture of traditional ceremonies, the legacy of Soviet rituals, and modern trends. The event is initiated and supported by local authorities and cultural institutions. It is designated as *Den sela* or *Den derevni*. What is interesting is that it is possible to find on the internet model speeches suitable for this event, which is an apparent legacy of the formation of civic ceremonies in the Soviet Union (Beňušková 2021). The same pattern can also be found in Russia (Liskevich, Masharipova 2016). The event is usually celebrated on August 2, when Russians set tables, prepare humorous performances, invite musicians, and dance all night. They also revive old rural traditions in the form of competitions. Municipality Days also exist in Austria, where they are often oriented outwards – to promote the municipality or the region. They are also organised by sub-regional associations, such as the Days of Open Villages with the aim to attract tourists. Municipality Days are organised in the United Kingdom or the USA, as well; it is in fact a global festivity with a local function. Its significance lies in the civic principle standing above other social segments of the locality – religious, ethnic, professional, age- or gender-related, etc. With increased importance of civic

3 Projects: Ethnological aspects of traditional calendar custom culture in present-day rural society (2014–2016), UKF Nitra, Socio-cultural capital of successful villages as a source of sustainable development of the Slovak countryside (2017–2021), Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology SAS, Bratislava.

4 Given the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the organisation of mass events, we consider here the state of the studied type of festivity before 2019.

society, the position of this festivity is also strengthened in the calendar events of territorial communities.

W. Cudny offers several classifications of festivities; by using them, we would come to the conclusion that the Municipality Days is hybrid in nature. It can, but does not necessarily have, to relate to the municipality's cultural heritage. It depends on whether the traditions bring together the municipality residents or divide them or even exclude them (e.g. in suburbs or ethnically mixed municipalities). It is neither a religious festival nor a local festival based on peasant culture and linked to the celebration of the end of common works, though they can feature these elements. In rural environments, it replaces or complements the *hody* (annual traditional celebration) or harvest festivals. In urban environments, it can follow up on the *hody* festival when it comes to the date, however, its form rather reminds of their profane part and is not tied to religion. The Municipality Day can also comprise relatively independent partial events (e.g. the Municipality Day in Vlachovo includes the Crafts Market of Vlachovo and the Festival of Folk Singing and Dance, whereas each of the sub-festivals has its own year when it is held). It is a recently created festival defined by the place – both by a village and a town, and it takes place mostly in the open air and therefore during warmer months of the year. It has neither commercial nor tourist promotion objectives and is more oriented towards the inside of the municipal community. It is organised by local elites for people, though local communities and associations are also their co-creators. It can therefore be said that it is a festival of the people for the people. It is a public event involving elements of entertainment. The central theme of the festival is the municipality and its community. It is a social event that contributes to interpersonal relations and an in-depth integration of the community, as well as to the building of social identity and social capital (Cudny 2016: 19). The festival is a source for the integration of fragmented local communities and comprises the element of bringing people together. It contributes to the formation of the local identity, and only then to the identity (image) of the locality (Paasi 2009). Sometimes, guests from partner municipalities are also invited to the event, in particular when the Municipality Days relates to a historical event that is important to the village. The invited guests add to the event the character of solemnity.

The scenario of the Municipality Days has local variants within which basic recurring elements can be identified. It usually consists of the official opening of the festival with speeches by the representatives of the authorities and other important guests, rewarding distinguished citizens and countrymen, a cultural programme with performances by the municipality inhabitants, competitions and events for the inhabitants of entertaining and relaxation nature, and accompanying events. Some municipalities also organise parades to remind citizens of the exceptional character of the day. Special attention is paid to voluntary organisations commemorating their anniversaries or local residents celebrating their round birthday. The final phase

of the festival is related to the “information fixation” of the event in the regional media (e.g. website of the municipality, local newspaper, or the sharing of pictures in groups on social networks). The event is thus “saved in the history of the locality” (Liskevič, Mašaripova 2016).

The accompanying programme usually recalls the history of the locality by means of exhibitions, the presentation of publications about the municipality, and the first mention of the municipality and other historic milestones are also remembered on that day. Municipalities present various new products of the municipality (DVD, printed calendar), or open new public spaces around the dates of the festival. Through exhibitions, villages show the skills of local inhabitants, the activities of school facilities, etc. The event also includes entertaining workshops and quizzes. In some villages, a ceremonial holy mass is also held on the eve of the festival or during the morning hours.

The celebrations often include a small market of local craft products, gastronomic stands, amusements for children – merry-go-rounds, bouncy castles, or fireworks. As K. Popelková notes, in the current way of life, “phenomena related to relaxation, commerce, and consumption are a common part of spending holidays. However, people’s need to recurrently recall important moments or events has not disappeared and also includes elements of traditions in their most diverse forms, functions, and levels. People are annoyed and not comfortable with many of the wide range of holiday practices, while they love their other aspects and are not willing to give them up, or seek new, unique ones” (Popelková 2019).



Fig. 1. The goulash cooking competition in the Village Tekovské Lužany (2002).
Photo by Z. Beňušková.

Villages organise the Municipality Day celebrations from their own municipal resources, sponsorship by local entrepreneurs, as well as support grant schemes promoting local culture by higher administrative units (regions). A certain part of the spent finance return from the lease of municipal premises to small entrepreneurs.

The main organiser of the event is the municipal office. Around 800 Slovak municipalities have an institution focused on organising civic festivities and ceremonies, called Assembly for Civic Affairs. These institutions were established during the socialist era from the 1950s; in the 1990s, they were either cancelled or they overwent transformation, and currently ensure the organisation of various types of ceremonies and festivities, including Municipality Days. On this day, they also organise in some villages the popular ceremony of receiving a child into the local community – the ceremonial welcoming of children to life (Beňušková 2021).

Voluntary organisations active in the municipality are also involved in the organisation of these celebrations; for their members, the event is an opportunity to present the results of their activities and to obtain new members and sympathisers. They are usually firemen, folklore, music and theatre groups, local pensioners' organisations, the Red Cross, and hunters. In order to ensure that every visitor finds something interesting in the programme of the Municipality Day, several stages are set up for various simultaneous activities.

In more closed rural localities, the Municipality Day is the holiday of those who were born, grew up, and live in the municipality. In such villages, local traditions are used as a manifestation of integrity.

Municipality Days are particularly important in suburbs into which many young families move thanks to intensive construction. For new-settlers, Municipality Days are an opportunity to come out of their private space, meet new neighbours, and integrate in the local population. It is also an opportunity for local social organisations to obtain new members, while for the municipality management it is an opportunity to highlight its achievements and acquire participants to municipal development activities. Even though the preparation of this top event of the municipality requires much time and energy by organisers, as well as a financial contribution by the municipality, the impacts of this festival on culture and the community comply with the calculation of the effects and benefits, as noted by W.Cudny in connection with festivals:

- develops social identity and social capital, including by celebrating values that are important to the given community and skills acquired during the festival;
- it is a social event based on an uncommon experience; it is generated by social needs; the participants are the community and its (local, regional) members;
- it is a cultural event which is embedded in culture and which shapes and presents it; it is a place and time for celebrating and consuming culture (Cudny 2016).

We have selected three examples of Municipality Days from our field research: The Municipal Festivity of Tekovské Lužany representing a multi-cultural village with a stabilised population since the second half of the 20th century, the Petržalka Days representing a city district, and the Day of the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov, representing a suburb.

Municipal Festivity of Tekovské Lužany (Obecné slávnosti Tekovské Lužany)

Tekovské Lužany is a village in Levice District, about 200km eastwards from Bratislava, with approximately 2,800 inhabitants of Slovak, Hungarian, and Roma nationality.⁵ The development continuity of the municipality was disrupted in 1947 by the “exchange” of a part of the inhabitants between Hungary and Slovakia with the political objective of unifying the ethnicity of the countries. Even though it is a multi-cultural municipality, most inhabitants are natives, with partly Hungarian roots. The representatives of the partner municipalities from Hungary and Romania are regularly invited to the Municipality Days. The Hungarian partner municipalities (Bátaszég and Kondoros) related to the history of the village, the migrations during the post-war population exchange. The Roma community consists of old-settlers and a numerous group of immigrant Roma. It is a bilingual municipality, the programme is conducted both in Hungarian and Slovak, depending on the ethnic background of the performers. The municipal festival takes place during the weekend around August 20, which is celebrated as St. Stephen’s Day according to Hungarian traditions. The local Roman Catholic church is consecrated to this saint, and the festivity is thus held on the occasion of the *hody* festival. However, the share of the Roman Catholic population is only 40%, as a result of which the *hody* festival is not perceived as a festivity of the entire municipality. The village must thus cope with the decline of its population due to the lack of job opportunities; what the locals also consider a problem is the immigrant Roma who settled in empty houses in the centre of the municipality with the help of real estate agencies.

The scenario of the festivity has been stable for years, with minor variations.

5 “65.8% of inhabitants claim the Slovak nationality, 28.9% claim to be Hungarians. According to the current Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013, the share of ethnic Roma in the municipality represents 10.8%. As for denomination, the majority of the inhabitants currently claim to be members of the Roman Catholic Church – 42.2%, while this share remains relatively stable. The share of inhabitants claiming to be members of Protestant Churches is over 20%. Compared to other municipalities, the share of non-religious people is significantly above average – up to 25%.” Source: Economic and Social Development Programme of the Municipality of Tekovské Lužany for the Years 2015–2020, p. 17–18.

OBEČNÉ SLÁVNOSTI
TEKOVSKÉ LUŽANY
23. – 25. AUGUST 2019

<p>Piatok 23. augusta 2019</p> <p>17:00 Futbalový turnaj (T. Lužany, Kondorol, Bátorsek) – štadión</p> <p>19:00 Divadelné predstavenie – ľudový dom</p> <p>Sobota 24. augusta 2019</p> <p>7:00 Rybárske preteký pre deti – Prekár</p> <p>10:00 Remeselnícke dielne – ľudový dom</p> <p>11:00 Súťaž vo varení gastronomických špeciálie a ochutnávka pagáčov (park)</p> <p>13:00 Kultúrny program v parku: Spevokol Dáňa, maďarčety, Lenka, Folklorný súbor Fehédele z Bátorseku</p>		<p>Universal Dance Group Filakovo, POP STARS REVIVAL (ABBA, BONEY M, BEE GEES)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tvorivé dielne - Aquazorbíng - Vyhliadková jazda vlačíkom - Prázdnenie rozprávkových postavičiek <p>20:00 Hodový mlá 2019</p> <p>Nedeľa 25. augusta 2019</p> <p>Bohoslužby a svätá omša</p> <p>12:30 kladenie vencov k pamätníku padlých vo svetových vojnách</p>
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Fig. 2. Municipal Festivity of Tekovské Lužany. Obtained from <https://www.tekovskeluzany.sk/volny-cas/aktualne-oznamy/obecne-slavnosti-566sk.html>.

On the eve of the festivity, the municipality representatives officially welcome the guests at the Municipal Office. Saturday is the main day of the festivity, beginning with events for children: children’s fishing competition at the local pond, interactive theatre performance for children in Hungarian and Slovak at the folk house – the municipal museum, craft workshops, as well as an exhibition of folk costumes. Football tournaments between partner municipalities took place at the local football playground. At eleven o’clock, the individual teams begin preparing gastronomic specialties in the park. In the ceremonial hall, the mayor awards the Honorary Citizen of the Municipality prize.

At one o’clock, people begin gathering in the park with the stage, where the main part of the cultural programme is concentrated. In the gastronomic zone, the individual teams (Red Cross, hunters, table tennis club, other volunteers, and host municipalities) prepare specialties, compete in brandy tasting, the municipal office employees prepare traditional pancakes, and the local producers sell home-made bio-products. There are also demonstrations of craft work, refreshment and souvenir stands in the surroundings, as well as merry-go-rounds, a bouncy castle, a pool for Aquazorbíng, and a sightseeing train as an amusement for all.

The official opening of the festivity is followed by the presentation of performers on the stage and in front of it. The cultural programme is attended literally by the whole village. During breaks, children are entertained by fairy-tale characters,

and the winners of the competitions are awarded prizes. In 2019, the major part of the cultural programme consisted of performances by local inhabitants and host municipalities, while external artists ensured music and the night party (usually called *Hody Mix*). The programme included performances by the local female choir, majorettes, and a dance group from Tekovské Lužany, while the folklore dimension was represented by a group from the partner Hungarian municipality of Bátaszég. The performances were complemented by music.

On Sunday, masses and the laying of wreaths to the Memorial commemorating soldiers fallen in the world wars are held. During the Municipal Festivity, attention is also paid to anniversaries; in 2017, for instance, the festival was dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the friendship agreement with the municipality of Bátaszék, and a monograph about the municipality was officially presented on the 860th anniversary of the mention of the municipality.

A 30-minute-long audio-visual reportage from the municipal festival in 2019 can be found on the municipality's webpage (in Slovak) <https://www.tvluzany.sk/>.

The municipal festival in Tekovské Lužany reflects the history of the village through the presence of its partner municipalities. The large number of interactive events create a friendly atmosphere through which the municipality confirms that Tekovské Lužany is a good place for life.



Fig. 3. On Sunday, masses and the laying of wreaths to the Memorial commemorating soldiers fallen in the world wars are held (2002). Photo by Z. Beňušková.

Day of the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov (Deň obce Hviezdoslavov)

In some strongly expanding suburbs in Bratislava's surroundings, the Municipality Day does not emphasise at all the history and cultural heritage of the vilage. The activities are addressed to young families. One such example is the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov at a 24km distance from Bratislava, which was multi-ethnic during the first half of the 20th century.⁶ In the course of 100 years, the population increased from 180 to over 2,400. It is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Slovakia. Since traditional patterns of festivities for a heterogeneous population are non-existent, the municipality management seeks optimal forms of how to organise them, including the Municipality Day. A notice on the municipality's website illustrates the atmosphere of the creation of the event:



Fig. 4. Day of the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov. Obtained from <https://www.hviezdoslavov.sk/novinka/6663/den-obce-sa-blizi-pozname-prve-mena-a-vieme-motto-roka-2019>.

The Day of the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov 2019 is fast approaching. This time, it will be a little bit different than all other previous ones. It will be more musical, more artistic, and with more discussions. It will be spectacular. It will be different. Just like Hviezdoslavov has grown over the past years, the celebration of its Day must grow as well. It must get mature. There must come a day when rattling carriages are replaced by a valuable idea, an artistic experience or a lot of pleasant meetings, workshops,

6 In 1938, out of 69 families living in the municipality, 21 were Slovak, 18 Moravian, 15 Czech, 14 Hungarian, and one German family. Source: <https://www.hviezdoslavov.sk/2614/historia-obce> The municipality was established by merging the former agricultural settlements and is named after a prominent 19th-century Slovak poet.

and discussions. We want to prepare for you the best event of this year, the most beautiful *hody* festival, the most varied offer of concerts and performers...

Because the citizens of Hviezdoslavovo deserve it.

In this municipality, which became in the course of a short time a place of residence for many people from all over Slovakia who found a job in Bratislava, cannot count with the fact that the Municipality Day would be attended by people in order to meet their neighbours, friends from youth or natives; the whole programme is therefore based on cultural, social, and educational activities and its aim is to allow people to get to know each other and to show interest in the events and development of their municipality: so that they perceive the municipality as their home in which they can spend their free time, which needs to be cared of (ecology), and which is interested in everyone who wishes to be actively involved in its development.

In 2019, all performers in the cultural programmes were external artists. The children from the kindergarten were the only ones performing from among the local citizens. The inhabitants had the opportunity to be actively involved in the community instalment of the huge sign "Hviezdoslavov", in the competition for the best home-made cake and pastry, in sports activities, and could have beer from the local brewery. One of the several workshops discussed the topic "Where are you heading to, Hviezdoslavov?". The dynamic perception of the Municipality Day in the next years was slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Petržalka Days (Dni Petržalky)

Petržalka is the largest city district of Bratislava with around 100,000 inhabitants that moved to the capital city from all over Slovakia. The Petržalka Days have taken place since 1998. Their aim is to create the feeling of home on the right bank of the Danube, where a prefab housing estate was built since the 1970s. Even today, many of its citizens go to the city centre or other Bratislava city districts to enjoy cultural and social life. The aim of the Petržalka Days is to present the possibilities for spending free time also in Petržalka.

It was originally a week-long event; at present, the activities under the title Petržalka Days last for almost two months. The around five-week-long festival period culminates in the final weekend of June when most of the cultural events within the multi-genre festival take place.

From the end of April until June, various competitions or activities under the Petržalka Day title are held – cultural, sport, educational, and charitable – which can be evaluated or presented during the multi-genre festival. It is, for instance, the call for nominations for the Children's Act of the Year, the Personality of Petržalka, or the Junior Personality of Petržalka competitions. The local library announces the journalist competition Life through Our Eyes – Journalists of the Third Millennium,

the International Children's Day is celebrated, as well as various sport tournaments culminating during the last day of the festival take place. The activities get most intense during the weekend. These include, for instance, the Petržalka Drop of Blood, the traditional book exchange, or the presentation of non-governmental organisations. The inhabitants can apply for the Petržalka Marathon which takes place in the local swimming pool or to outdoor sport competitions at a popular lake. The elderly can join a pétanque competition or a special dance party. Another popular event for children is the competition of mixed-breed dog on the Danube bank.

The festival takes place at several places. The *Senior Stage* part of the programme is presented on the small stage, which also serves for performances for children. The winners of the amateur bands contest and other artistic contests perform on the *Children's Stage*. Elementary and secondary schools also present their activities – for example, through the competition of school magazines.

Even though this city district does not provide space for the accentuation of traditional culture, many of its inhabitants come from the countryside. Popular programmes, such as the Evenings of Authentic Folklore, have been popular for many years in Petržalka, and one of them is tied to the Petržalka Days. The history of Petržalka is not omitted either. One of the recalled events is the laying of the foundation stone of this city district construction, which objectively exists. Photo exhibitions or presentations of books about Petržalka are organised, too.

The main gala programme takes place at the hippodrome of Petržalka, where a stage is set up. The programme is accompanied by a goulash cooking competition,



Fig. 5. The invitation on Petržalka Days 2021. Obtained from <https://www.kzp.sk/podujatie/dni-petrzalky>.



Fig. 6. Logo of Petržalka Days 2017. Obtained from <https://www.petrzalka.sk/dni-petrzalky-2017/>.

there is a folk traditions and crafts zone, as well as merry-go-rounds and various amusements for children. The Petržalka Days culminate with a gala programme with performances by professional artists, and the five-week-long festival ends with fireworks.

The Petržalka Days are evaluated by the municipal office each year; the successful parts of the programme continue in the next year, while the less successful ones are replaced by new ideas. The history of the Petržalka Days has its own website (<https://www.petrzalka.sk/dni-petrzalky-clanky/>).

The attendance of the event is always high. Just like in rural localities, the areas of interest of the different local communities are interlinked and overbridged also in this large city district, which has a synergy effect. Municipality Days can be compared to a local team-building. Competitions and their evaluation, as well as the awarding of nominated personalities point out the quality of the human and social capital.

Conclusion

The Municipality Day is still one of those live phenomena which create the preconditions for constructing collective identity tied to a group of people who share a joint space, traditions, common values, common ideas, and hopes oriented on the future. Mutual ties are activated based on the principle of kinship, neighbourhood, friendship; there is face-to-face communication as well as new forms of communication, feedback, social control, mutual assistance, and participation, or accepted standards of behaviour. People's willingness to be actively involved in public life and municipal development is also of big importance (Košťalová 2017). This contributes to the development and fostering of interpersonal relationships within the municipality through contacts, which are created and strengthened during the preparation and in the course of the event, and relates to the acquired information and skills that can be further reflected in the development activities of the municipality.

The main actors are the municipal leadership and the municipal council, working closely with the leaders of the institutionalized local communities. By bridging and connecting these two entities (Putnam 2000), it has the potential to increase the synergic effect on the development of the local community. For the municipal council, it is again

an opportunity to draw attention to the achievements and to strengthen the position of current members. *Village Day* was not mentioned in Slovakia by any campaign led “from above,” but spontaneously and in a short period of time, it became one of the leading periodically recurring events of rural and urban communities. It is an expression of the strengthening of their autonomy. It is expected and thus not to be overlooked. Local communities and leaders want to be visible in this respect, hence increasing their social position. It has become an alternative to religious and folk traditions, yet at the same time it does not completely exclude them from its content. It is formative; it draws attention to the viable productive elements of the life within the local community that have the potential to make the community’s territory a sought-after place to live.

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Summary

An important function within the overall way of life of current rural as well as urban communities is carried out by cultural-social events and festivals organised at the place of residence of the actors and potential participants. One of those which do not follow traditional cultural patterns, but which has acquired the reputation of a traditional event is the Municipality Day (Deň obce) festival. The study is based on field research and on internet sources approaching the course of the Village Day in Slovakia, as well as alternative versions of this holiday in selected countries. We have selected three examples of Municipality Days: The Municipal Festivity of Tekovské Lužany representing a multi-cultural village with a stabilised population since the second half of the 20th century, the Petržalka Days representing a city district, and the Day of the Municipality of Hviezdoslavov, representing a suburb. Municipality Days is a global festivity with a local function. Its significance lies in the civic principle standing above other social segments of the locality – religious, ethnic, professional, age- or gender-related, etc. With increased importance of civic society, the position of this festivity is also strengthened in the calendar events of territorial communities.

Keywords: Municipality Day, Slovakia, festivity, local identity

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Streszczenie

Wydarzenia społeczno-kulturalne i festiwale, organizowane w miejscu zamieszkania ich uczestników i potencjalnych widzów, pełnią ważną funkcję w życiu współczesnych społeczności zarówno wiejskich, jak miejskich. Jednym z wydarzeń, które mają opinię tradycyjnych, choć nie przystają do tradycyjnych wzorców kulturowych, jest święto miejscowości (Deň obce) – Dzień Miasta lub Dzień Wioski. Materiału do niniejszej analizy dostarczyły badania terenowe oraz materiały internetowe dotyczące obchodów dnia kilku miejscowości na Słowacji oraz podobnych obchodów w wybranych krajach. Jako przykłady posłużyły obchody w trzech miejscowościach: Święto Wioski w Tekovskich Lužanach, wielokulturowej wsi o populacji stabilnej od drugiej połowy XX w., Dni Petržalki – dzielnicy miasta, oraz Dnia Hviezdoslavova, który jest przedmieściem. Tego rodzaju obchody są globalnym świętem o lokalnej funkcji. Ich szczególne znaczenie wynika z faktu, że dominuje w nich element obywatelski, który w ich przypadku ma większe znaczenie niż inne segmenty społeczne miejscowości: religijne, etniczne, zawodowe, związane z wiekiem czy płcią mieszkańców. Wraz ze wzrostem znaczenia społeczeństwa obywatelskiego rośnie też status takich obchodów w kalendarzu wydarzeń organizowanych w społecznościach terytorialnych.

Słowa kluczowe: Dzień Miasta, Dzień Wioski, Słowacja, obchody, tożsamość lokalna

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