

# CHANGES IN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SLOVAKIA

## THE CASE THE *FUJARA*

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*This study examines changes in the expanding environment and functions of the instrument known as the fujara, the first element of intangible cultural heritage added to the Representative List of Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage. The text looks at Slovak legislation on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage as well as at terminology, which, from the point of view of national protection of cultural heritage and research, is being increasingly unified. The change in the natural environment has also changed the functions of playing the fujara and passing on the fujara tradition. From the point of view of changes in the distribution of culture from the rural to urban environment, the authors paid attention to new ways of learning to play the fujara as well as the ratio of vertical, horizontal, and indirect modes of transmission.*  
Keywords: fujara tradition, rural area, urban area, sustainability, transformation, inventory, Representative List of Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage, Slovakia

*Cilj raziskave je pokazati na okolje in funkcije fujare (ljudska pastirska piščal) – prvega elementa nesnovne kulturne dediščine, ki je vpisan na Reprezentativni seznam nesnovne kulturne dediščine (NKD) na Slovaškem. Članek je pozoren na slovaško zakonodajo o varovanju NKD in na terminologijo, ki z vidikov državne zaščite kulturne dediščine in znanosti postaja vse bolj poenotena. Spremembe v naravnem okolju so prav tako vplivale na funkcije fujare in igranja nanjo. Glede na spremembe in razširjanje kulture iz podeželskega v mestno okolje sta avtorja pozorna na nove načine učenja igranja na fujaro in na deleže vertikalnih, horizontalnih in posrednih načinov prenašanja.*

*Ključne besede: dediščina fujare, podeželje, mesto, trajnost, transformacija, inventar, Reprezentativni seznam Slovaške nesnovne kulturne dediščine, Slovaška*

## INTRODUCTION

Culture, as understood in its distributional sense, is characterized by an adaptive process. Its typical characteristic is adaptation to changes, which are natural and gradual. Within the concepts of preserving heritage, its transmission, and social promotion of its sustainability, it is ideally presumed that heritage content in communities is vital and alive, and thus sustainable and able to adapt to changes. In the concept of living heritage, the distribution of culture is understood within the criterion that the phenomena of culture are either continually passed on in connection with the past, or they are revitalized in the current context. The inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Slovakia is ongoing.<sup>1</sup> In general, inventorying intangible cultural heritage is seen as an important act of national fostering of culture in Slovakia. Inventorying cultural heritage is recommended as a strategic approach

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<sup>1</sup> International projects: *ETNOFOLK 3CE296P4* Central Europe Program project. *Preservation and Enhancement of Folk Culture Heritage in Central Europe*, Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) on *Cultural Heritage and Global Change: A New Challenge for Europe* JHEP no. 277606; national research project VEGA 1/0655/15 *Cultural Heritage as a Phenomenon of Identity*.

to fostering culture as an essential tool for understanding how the phenomena of intangible cultural heritage are stabilized, transferred, and distributed.

This article is based on the authors' research, conducted as part of several projects. These projects were carried out in rural and urban environments. This study examines changes in the expanding environment, the bearers of the tradition, and the functions of the *fujara*. This musical instrument was the first element of intangible cultural heritage added to the Representative List of Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage and the List of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and today it is part of UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The authors recorded current *fujara* players discussing the state of the *fujara* tradition in Slovakia. The research focuses on the representation of older and newer cultural features, and on personal attitudes of individual generations of *fujara* players, who expressed their views on the sustainability of the tradition. They feel that the increase in the number of *fujara* players—a clear phenomenon in recent decades—is an indicator of change. This traditional musical instrument of shepherds from central Slovakia has spread outside of its natural environment: mountain settlements in central Slovakia. The authors assumed that the change in the instrument's natural environment and traditional players has led to changes in the functions of playing it as well. From the viewpoint of cultural transmission (Henrich, Gil-White, 2001), they also examined the generational view of the spread of the *fujara* tradition.

## THE DISTRIBUTIVE MODEL OF CULTURE AND LIVING HERITAGE

The preservation of traditional culture in rural and urban environments in Slovakia takes the shape of varying degrees of collective sharing of values, interpersonal and intergenerational relationships, and communication links. In both environments investigated, relatively closed cultural environments were created, which could still be recognized in the 1950s. In this period, their members selected, passed on, and accepted cultural content mainly through contact, which took the form of recipients engaged in mutual communication. In the second half of the twentieth century, globalizing changes—and for many local cultures also culturally leveling changes—gradually started to be accepted, resulting from the ability of individuals to adapt their meanings. Strong local traditions allowed the preservation of multiple elements of intangible cultural heritage. This development is informative regarding universal processes of transmitting the content of local culture through individual generations. Building on the distributive model of culture (Doubek, Levínska, Bittnerová, 2013), the authors presume that during favorable periods certain generations stabilized elements of local rural and urban culture, whereas in other ones they shaped and innovated it. Thus, cultural configurations were created, within which older and newer features were preserved. Gradually, coherent frameworks allowing mutual local, regional, or ethnic identification and integrity were also created.

During periods of major changes such as migration or displacement, processes of cultural assimilation and acculturation prevail. They are the first step of a community in coping with ongoing cultural changes and in absorbing them. These processes are continuous; they do not stop but instead continue until another type of assimilation occurs (Ngo, 2008). Anthropological and ethnological interest in studying intangible cultural heritage in local communities lies first and foremost in the premise that it is not an ethnography of a common aggregation of features and behavior. The aim of field researchers is to diachronically and synchronically understand developmental changes in accordance with a distributive understanding of culture. The content of intangible cultural heritage, which indicates its stability to the authors, is stored in human memory for long periods of time, symbolically expressed in communication, and ritually expressed in behavior. It is latently preserved in the form of ideas, and manifestly in communication. The preservation of the content of intangible cultural heritage, as opposed to material artifacts, is more complex (Rodseth, 1998; Smith, Akagawa, 2009).

#### TRADITIONAL CULTURE AS LIVING HERITAGE

The definitions of the terms *intangible cultural heritage*, *traditional culture*, and *folklore* vary considerably among anthropologists, ethnologists, and folklorists. This situation can mainly be characterized by the lack of a uniform theoretical and methodological basis, postmodern tendencies of deconstruction, and, recently, the fragmentation of the term *heritage*.<sup>2</sup> In terms of intangible cultural heritage, the increasingly used term *living heritage* now has the antonym *built heritage*. The categorization of heritage content is hindered by its very nature; that is, the mutual overlapping of its content. Among other things, these can be associated with heritage: historical and artistic heritage, natural heritage, and cultural heritage—folk art, folklore, traditions, and language (Prentice, 1993). From the point of view of the authors, more important than further theoretical contextualization of intangible cultural heritage contents is the observation of the following criteria in the field: the direct link between newer and older intangible cultural heritage content and rural and urban communities, and developmental changes in functions and forms as well as preferred manners of transmission. In ethnography, content accepted by three participant generations of a local community is considered an indicative criterion of living heritage.

Among the lines of argument forming part of heritage studies, from which the authors take inspiration, is the Critical Heritage Studies initiative.<sup>3</sup> It emphasizes an interdisciplinary

<sup>2</sup> Attention has been drawn to cultural heritage since approximately the 1970s together with the development of UNESCO documents. Here one can find multiple classifications, above all the older classification into movable and immovable heritage, and the newer classification into tangible and intangible heritage.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.criticalheritagestudies.org/>.

approach to heritage research, which aims to completely rebuild the ways in which heritage is selected, preserved, and presented. Discussions of a very wide geographical area were responsible for the establishment of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies in 2012 as well as a manifesto whose unconcealed aim is to trigger a new and extensive discussion on the concept and safeguarding of living cultural heritage. In the past, concepts of cultural heritage were created first and foremost by the traditions of archaeology, history, architecture, and art history. The goal of the manifesto is to spark constructive criticism to build a new agenda of understanding heritage from the perspective of multiple disciplines and multiple (geographical) traditions of research, and to do so before it is swept away by a criticism of everything existing, which has been done in research on cultural heritage. Criticism mainly leads to a static perception of the subject matter of cultural heritage in the opposition of two main approaches: the antagonistically extreme heritage belief and heritage atheism. Naturally, there are many other intellectual approaches, which can bring new findings into heritage research. One such approaches is heritage agnosticism: “heritage is a socially ascribed and therefore constructed category no doubt, but placing things and practices in it is usually based on factual claims about their provenance, age, continuity and authenticity” (Brumann, 2014: 180).

A critical approach to heritage research raises a question also asked by the authors of this study: What functions are fulfilled by preserving heritage across historic periods until the present? Its application should tell us a lot more about the present than the past. The aim of critical approaches is to understand the different ways in which heritage is created and vitalized across various cultures and periods: how actors (recipients) are involved in this process, and what the role of individuals and groups is in this process. Relevant questions include who perceives and evaluates heritage and how, and why some of its elements—objects, places, knowledge, or practices—are considered more valuable than others. The most frequently used term is not *cultural heritage*, but simply *heritage* itself. This term is understood as a symbiosis of cultural and natural heritage, which, just like tangible and intangible cultural heritage, is inseparable from the point of view of long-term field research.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SLOVAKIA

In Slovakia, cultural heritage is legally anchored and defined in the Declaration of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Safeguarding Cultural Heritage as irreplaceable wealth of the country and its citizens, as proof of the development of the country and society, philosophy, religion, science, technology, and art, as historical and cultural development, and as a record of the educational level of the Slovak people, other peoples, national minorities, ethnic groups, and individuals that live or have lived in Slovakia.<sup>4</sup> In Slovak

<sup>4</sup> See <http://old.culture.gov.sk/kulturne-dedicstvo/ochrana-pamiatok/vsledky/deklaracia-o-ochrane-pamiatok>.

research and ethnology in particular, the term *cultural heritage* overlaps with *traditional culture*. Both of these terms have their own nuances. Traditional culture is considered the basis for a wider interdisciplinary understanding of the creation of cultural heritage. The term is derived from central European characteristics of culture. Their common feature is tradition as a collection of norms, values, and ideas passed on from generation to generation. The act of passing on traditions and generational transmission are thus understood as the most natural transfer of culture, which explains researchers' further interest in it. Traditional phenomena are a natural part of every community's culture; they exist in either a latent or manifest form (Luther, 2015). The latent form of preservation of cultural heritage is not time limited, and the manifest form manifests itself in a specific communication output. Both of them allow for the return of forms of traditional phenomena as well as variability in them.

Traditional culture is preserved thanks to values it encompasses, and it is still in the process of developing a) in natural forms as an undistinguished part of everyday life (cultural tradition); b) in deliberate bias toward traditional phenomena as opposed to modern ones (traditionalism); and c) in deliberate or institutionalized preservation, reviving, interpretative performance, artistic adaptation, commercial use, and so on, or "folklorism" (Luther, 2012).

The common overlap of the terms *cultural heritage* and *traditional culture* is their link to the liveness of a cultural phenomenon. They are not frozen in the past, as is often reflected in Slovak popular media (romanticizing a nostalgic view of heritage). Instead, they are still alive and developing even today, but they also definitely belong to the future. Experiences of mankind passed on through traditions are a source of new solutions, inspiration, and innovation, which ensures the further development of society. The roles of contemporaries rest in their understanding, preservation, and transmission of their content and values. These roles are active: they require contact interaction with a broader community and interest in one's own history and contexts. Cultural heritage is an active process of exploring, testing, perceiving, experiencing, understanding, and transmitting. Heritage awareness and understanding of the meaning of a certain cultural object or phenomenon play a role during identification of what is heritage and what is not (Bitušíková, 2015).

In Slovakia, the term *intangible heritage* has been used in accordance with the definition of international experts at UNESCO in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.<sup>5</sup> Cultural expressions defined in this way are the object of research and constitute a database for addition to the Slovak representative list.

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<sup>5</sup> Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf>.

## LEGISLATION ON SAFEGUARDING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SLOVAKIA

In carrying out its national and international obligations and with due respect for human rights, Slovakia systematically takes measures to protect and develop cultural heritage. As a UNESCO member state, it is committed to implementing UNESCO recommendations and has adopted the following documents: the Recommendation on Safeguarding Traditional Culture and Folklore, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the Convention on Protecting and Promoting the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Hamar, 2007).<sup>6</sup> In the Slovak declaration, terminology was redefined and rights and obligations pertaining to institutional and personal cultivation of cultural heritage were amended. At the national level, cultural heritage falls within the responsibilities of several ministries: the Ministry of Culture, and in part the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport, and the Ministry of the Environment.

At the Slovak Ministry of Culture, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is administered by the Cultural Heritage Department through a separate intangible cultural heritage section. An important achievement in safeguarding traditional culture was the establishment of an advisory body—the Culture Council for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage—which produced the document *Concept for Cultivating Traditional Folk Culture*, adopted in 2007, and, in 2015, the *Concept for Cultivating Traditional Folk Culture until 2020*. These documents state the responsibilities and roles of intangible cultural heritage stakeholders in identifying traditional folk culture, systemically documenting it, preserving it, and propagating it among future generations, as well as the ways of making it available and presenting it to the public. Another part of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and traditional folk culture was the creation of the Representative List of Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices in Slovakia, which help create analogous international lists.<sup>7</sup>

### THE INVENTORY OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF SLOVAK INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

One of the main aims of the *Concept for Cultivating Traditional Folk Culture* was to create a method of identifying and inventorying traditional folk culture and putting it into practice. The creation of an information system for acquiring, processing, and storing

<sup>6</sup> These documents were published in their Slovak translation in the following book: Hamar, J. (ed.). 2007. *Traditional and Folk Culture in UNESCO Documents*.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.culture.gov.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/kulturne-dedicstvo/nehmotne-kulturne-dedicstvo-kulturno-osvetova-cinnost/>.

information, which is intended to provide an overview of the presence and state of living or preserved artefacts and phenomena of traditional culture in all regions of Slovakia, served as a methodological tool. Individual municipalities of Slovakia were designated as the basic units. In cooperation with an expert group mainly consisting of professionals in ethnology, a guide document was written (Questionnaire for Studying, Processing, Archiving, and Presenting Traditional Folk Culture of Municipalities), which serves as a manual for cultivating traditional folk culture through municipalities. This document is the starting point for creating an archiving and presentation system for the safe storage and dissemination of information. It consists of six booklets covering the use of guides, location and settlement, social and spiritual culture, material culture, visual artistic culture, and artistic culture (Benža et al., 2010).

Slovakia has been drawing up the Representative List of Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2010. This list is an inventory of important elements and practices of Slovak intangible cultural heritage. It shows recognition for exceptional elements, practices, and representations—including knowledge, skills, tools, objects, artifacts, and places necessary for their existence—which are recognized by societies and individuals and persist in accordance with universally accepted principles of human rights, equality, support, and mutual respect among cultural communities. These elements are in accordance with their environment and historical conditions of the communities, and they provide them with a feeling of continuity and identity, thus supporting cultural diversity and creativity.

The main aims of the representative list are the following: a) to raise public awareness and recognition of the importance of Slovak intangible cultural heritage and emphasize the need for safeguarding and revitalizing it; b) to record, evaluate, and make available to the general public important elements related to Slovak intangible cultural heritage; c) to support the participation of bearers of the tradition and local actors in preserving important elements of Slovak intangible cultural heritage; d) to encourage individuals, groups, institutions, and organizations to contribute to the administration, preservation, safeguarding, and promotion of this heritage; and e) to socially appreciate additions to the representative list and encourage material support for the preservation and revitalization of listed elements.<sup>10</sup>

Through the system of anonymous assessments and secret ballots, the expert committee had approved thirty-two elements by December, 2021.<sup>8</sup> These elements are of various natures. Some are locally urban (the Radvaň Fair), rural (ornaments in Čičmany), or regional (the Goral culture). In general, their spread in communities is known and accepted. Their listing is binding for the locations, regions, and people in the sense of protection, popularization, and also preservation of their originality. Sustainability, in the sense of ensuring the intergenerational transmission of values contained in the element, is another non-negligible component. The creation of the Slovak representative list constitutes the

<sup>8</sup> For the actual elements of Slovak intangible cultural heritage on the Slovak representative list, see <https://www.ludovakultura.sk/zoznamy-nkd-slovenska/reprezentativny-zoznam-nehmotneho-kulturneho-dedictva-slovenska/prvky-zapisane-v-reprezentativnom-zozname-nkd-slovenska/>.

basic stage for submitting nomination proposals for adding elements to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in which there are currently seven Slovak elements: the fujara<sup>9</sup> and its music (2008), the music of Terchová (2013), bagpipe culture (2015), puppetry in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (2016), multipart singing of the Upper Hron region (2017), indigo blue fabric dyeing (2018), and wire craft (2019).

## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ELEMENT: THE FUJARA

The fujara is a cylindrical overtone pipe approximately 180 cm long with three fingerholes. It consists of two tubes: the main tube is connected to a shorter one through which the airflow is channeled to the edge of the large bass flute (Garaj, 2006). The tones change with the intensity of blowing; that is, overblowing into aliquot tones and by using the three finger holes. The fujara is characterized by the Mixolydian or Hypoionian mode, and the range of the instrument is up to three octaves. From the point of view of repertoire and interpretation, mainly slow, nostalgic, and emotional shepherds' or highwaymen's songs



Figure 1. An older fujara player (in the 1980s) in his natural (rural) environment. Vertical (generational) transmission of fujara playing (photo by Štefan Repčok).

are played on the fujara. Fujara players usually begin with a typical introduction ornament called the *rozfuk*, based on a falling row of tones from the highest toward the lowest (Elschek, 1979; Lubej, 1995). An extraordinarily important part of fujara interpretation is singing. The fujara is not found in all of Slovakia, but only in the very limited mountain territory of the central Slovak regions of Podpoľanie, the Upper Hron area (*Horehronie*), Gemer, and Hont (Garaj, 2006).

In the last period, the fujara attracted the interest of Slovak musicologists not only as a musical instrument but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon (Garaj, 2006, 2007, 2021; Elschek, 2009). The emergence of the fujara is linked with the context of shepherds' culture, which formed while central Slovakia was colonized from the fourteenth to eighteenth century. Shepherds' musical culture in

<sup>9</sup> The fujara became the first element of Slovakia's traditional music culture proclaimed a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity in 2005 and automatically incorporated into the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (Garaj, 2021: 14).



Slovakia is characterized by its high degree of individualism, intimacy, and pride, which is also reflected in fujara playing. This article does not look at the fujara through the eyes of ethnomusicologists or ethnoorganologists, but mainly in a wider context. The reflections are based on mutual relations and ties between people, country, and culture.

*[A]mong the many musical instruments that can be found in our country, the fujara, as a truly exceptional instrument, stands out and is perceived as the symbol of Slovak folklore. People see the fujara as the symbol of the hill people's soul; it is a testament to their harsh life and it brings peace to the environment they live in. Listening to the tones of the fujara, they can reminisce, soothe the soul, fight off sadness, and express their sorrows through its melancholy voice. People from central Slovakia in particular still perceive the fujara as something that is theirs—something that belongs to their environment. (A 40-year-old fujara player)*

## REVITALIZATION OF THE FUJARA

The processes of manufacturing and decorating the fujara were fixed orally, just like playing the instrument itself. There were no rules, only knowledge and criteria passed on through intergenerational contact communication. This is one of the reasons why changes occur. The increased research interest in, popularization of, and interest in owning fujaras in the past fifty years in Slovakia was influenced by several factors such as field research by ethnographers or the presentation of the fujara at folklore festivals. Bernard Garaj, a leading Slovak ethnomusicologist, states:

One of the significant changes that the fujara has undergone over the last half century is the change in its role in traditional folk culture. On the one hand, the connectivity with the pastoral tradition and the intimate character of the interpretation associated with it have disappeared. On the other hand, weakening of this connection allowed fujara players to be visible on the ground in a new wide range of events or performance. What unites these opportunities is that the instrument was extracted from its natural functional context and transferred to a fundamentally different environment. This happened despite unquestionable efforts to know the traditional fujara song repertoire, to preserve the stylistic interpretation, and to subscribe to the musical legacy of old fujara players. (Garaj, 2021: 20)

The significant and newest of these factors was adding the fujara to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Concurrently, interest communities

and support organizations started to appear, particularly in Podpoľanie,<sup>10</sup> a region where the fujara is traditionally found, and annual gatherings of fujara players started to be held, not only in areas where the fujara's was traditionally played, but also elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

The fujara has also become a favored motif of exhibitions. A series of exhibitions in 2006 in Paris under the aegis of UNESCO is among the most important. This exhibition was held not only in Slovakia, but also in other European cities. The growing activity of fujara players of this period is also shown by the organization of many gatherings that have become regular events.<sup>12</sup>

### THE MAN AND PLACE CONTEXT IN REVITALIZATION

The environment and place where the fujara is made and where its music is presented is a culture-setting agent. These aspects are considered the basic anthropological criteria of cultural sustainability. Historic rural environments in Slovakia created more stable contexts for the transmission of culture than urban ones. Throughout the long-term sharing of a single place, environmental cognition was formed among recipients—selectively organized perceptions that are secondarily manifested in culture (Altman, 1973). A well-known fujara player in the first half of the twentieth century said that *“If someone blindfolded me and handed me a fujara, I would immediately know whether it was made with love or not.”*

Contexts of landscape figure (shape), location, and the frequency of inevitable interaction with the environment in which the fujara players spent their daily lives were of crucial significance in the development of the fujara tradition. The presentation of fujara playing enhances the feeling of unity and solidarity and, in a local community, it is secondarily expressed in other symbolic resemblances and collective action.

It is necessary to maintain a certain degree of reticence about the current assessment of the state of territorial identification with the tradition of the fujara tradition. This opinion is based on discussions about the widespread and very free use of the term *identity* (Brubaker, Cooper, 2000). Such free use is blurring both its “harder” and “softer” semantic nuances. The special territorial character in areas with the fujara had varying degrees of importance in different historic periods and also more coherent empirical coverage. Today, one should speak of territorial identification in relation to local identity. It is a category of practice, which can be empirically supported by field ethnography. Here, a special place belongs to expressions of inherited experience appraising cultural quality, which, in a way, is the fujara players' manner of world perception (Danglová, 2006). Older fujara players express disillusionment with the changes in the fujara's usage in their accounts of the spread of the

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<sup>10</sup> Locations: Zvolen, Hriňová, Korytárky, and Očová.

<sup>11</sup> Locations: Bratislava, Rajecké Teplice, and Čičmany.

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see Garaj, 2021.

fujara to areas other than the original mountain ones. This relates to the authors' findings that the fujara tradition is no longer an identifying symbol of hill sheep-breeding.

Playing the fujara has gradually created a new cultural circle, and its spread is no longer associated with a geographical territory. The cultural and territorial identity linked with playing the fujara have stopped overlapping and, in relation to the fujara tradition, one can no longer speak of its local special character or identity, whether local or regional (Nikischer, 2013). The individual world of fujara players has been replaced by the world of the fujara player community, often with no direct link to the main unifying cultural element: the environment.

*Few people realize how much the fujara has changed in the past sixty years. Its tone color is different. Old fujara players wanted their fujara to rasp just like an old man's voice. Old fujara players played the instrument for their own pleasure. Today, there are no such fujara players; most of them play in groups and travel abroad, so that people will talk about them, so that they are successful, and, last but not least, economically prosperous. (A 50-year-old fujara player)*

*There are basically no fujara players, I mean those I used to listen to in my young days, playing in front of shepherds' huts and in pastures. The path of tradition has become overgrown with the passing away of those honest veterans, shepherds, who carried this peaceful expression in their souls, without ever feeling the need to show off and run around on stages. I think those fujara players can only be found in the cemeteries. (A 60-year-old fujara player, representing the local fujara tradition)*

Fujara players, often virtually gathered together in groups, create their own concepts of the world, expressed, among other things, through their own "vernacular theories." The creation of these concepts is based on the presumption that when they speak of "their" world and "their" environment, they use new, specific knowledge, other shared meanings, and "their" actual assessment. It is a form of new human theorizing, a mixture of current empirical knowledge and newly created habitual behavior, and also the employment of rumors and prejudice (Bushman, 2000). As a 60-year-old fujara player stated, "*when I started, it was difficult to learn anything about the fujara because the people that had devoted themselves to it were slowly leaving this world. I did manage to meet a few manufacturers, the true manufacturers, and fujara players that were trying to pass it on.*"

Another important phenomenon that is disappearing is the link to local tradition. The technical and instrument restrictions that resulted from the environment of secluded sheep shelters encouraged creativity and inventiveness. With the change of the place of manufacture, the manner of manufacture, compositional principles, and decoration techniques also changed. Now, the fujara tradition extends beyond its natural environment.

## URBAN FUJARA PLAYERS AND THEIR RURAL SENTIMENT

The greatest change observed in field ethnographies is the social status of both fujara manufacturers and players. Today, they often have a secondary or higher education, and their number in Slovakia has never been this high. It is estimated that there are about two hundred fujara manufacturers and performing fujara players.

The Slovak fujara was added to the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity list partly due to the fact that an instrument of such construction and length creates respect. Its design, beautiful, fascinating, and original sound, and songs represent a remarkable artefact of our cultural heritage. The fact that the same attributes of the instrument can interest and fascinate people living in the modern world is equally important. (Garaj, 2007: 108)

Today, the spread of the fujara is seen as having stabilized around its natural centers. The similarity to traditional centers of manufacture can also be seen in the urban environment. Fujara players from the natural environment perceive its expansion very sensitively.

*The fujara is stabilized in its natural environment. Today, however, there is enormous interest in this instrument among people from an environment that is not natural for the fujara—urban people. I see this as a major shift in the fujara world, and I cannot even guess how it will progress. (A 50-year-old fujara player)*

The spread of the fujara among urban people is seen as a major development in the “fujara world.” Changes can be seen among the bearers of the fujara tradition depending on the fujara players. In the traditional society of fujara players, the instrument is described as designed exclusively for men, or even as an intimate musical instrument of men. Men can express their emotions and state of mind through it. It is a guide to the present intimacy and melancholy of the man, and an important element of his psychology. Today, women also participate in the fujara society; however, there are mixed feelings about this increasingly frequent phenomenon. In a society focused on traditions, mostly formed by older fujara players, female fujara players are often rejected. A more liberal viewpoint on this issue can be witnessed among the younger generation. Female fujara players participate in competitions, festivals, celebrations, and other events. The escape into penetrant and ever stronger fashion trends seen in musical instruments is attracting increasingly more people. The largest representation of urban fujara players is in the younger generation: “young people search for the lost past that has become an integral part of the present, and for new social and individual morals. They find these in the fujara” (Elschek, 2009: 139).

The current development of the fujara stems from a range of social movements and their activities. The development of the fujara and its culture is a natural dialogue between



Figure 2. Young urban fujara players. Horizontal transmission of fujara playing (photo by Ivan Murin).

modern man and the emotional and rational world of the past and its values, which is not controlled by ideology, politics, the state, or any other official environment. The horizontal transmission of the fujara tradition is favored against the vertical one in which the passing on happens from the older generation to the younger one. This generation finds new opportunities to learn how to play the fujara. These include festivals, exhibitions, competitions, creative workshops, and fujara schools, thanks to which the fujara is becoming more visible and gaining a wider social response. People interested in the fujara form civil society associations,<sup>13</sup> the goal of which is to gather information about the fujara, make recordings, and create new platforms for the discussion and exchange of views among people interested in this musical instrument.

Behind the establishment of these civil society associations lies a specific and mostly informal activity of groups that wanted to draw attention to the addition of the fujara to the list. Some activities when this addition was made almost had the nature of large-scale events. This might have increased the confidence and trust of the society in its abilities, but it also represented a heavy organizational burden. From the point of view of the generational transmission of culture, those are the most effective means of transmission. The entire local society participates in organizing some of the events. This helps mobilize its activities and revive cultural memory.

The musical application of the fujara has also changed. It is used within world music, fused with the music of other ethnicities, instruments, and movements of modern popular music (Garaj, 2007, 2021), as well as in classical music. The fujara has gained the attention of composers thanks to its acoustic qualities, specific tone color, playing technique, and repertoire. Today the fujara is compared to the Australian didgeridoo based on similarities between their tone ranges, their characteristic and unmistakable sound, their size and appearance, and so on. People always look for parallels between these two instruments, despite their obvious differences.

*I personally lean toward the traditional style of fujara playing. I wish for all new enthusiasts of this instrument to find the true meaning and substance of fujara playing or singing. To find the depth and the meaning behind this instrument. The development of fujara playing is ongoing, and new movements and understanding of fujara playing are emerging. But if someone grabs a fujara, they need to know where it originated and existed. [. . .] There are different movements and manners of performance or even manufacturing, but everyone should approach this instrument with respect. (A 40-year-old fujara player)*

<sup>13</sup> For example, the Fujara Players' Association and The Soul of the Fujara. See <http://www.fujara.sk>; <http://www.dusafujary.sk>.

The fujara as a musical instrument has evolved toward a higher quality of manufacture, decoration, and new aesthetics. The manufacturing quality that only skillful masters could achieve in the past is now common among increasingly more makers. The fujara, its natural sound, and the beauty of its wood are contrasted with the artificially produced and commercial elements entering the market. The fujara often becomes a decorative element or a protocol gift.<sup>14</sup>

## FINDINGS

The findings of ethnographic field studies confirm the dominance of the fujara spreading through an indirect, non-generational transfer, through the media, social activities, or social networks. The knowledge and values of playing the fujara have become part of the knowledge of the individual “property” of the fujara player, who is now much less affected by the contexts of the fujara’s natural environment. Technical communication, such as the distribution of archived recordings, transcripts, manufacturing techniques, and song-books, is directly connected to the growth of indirect forms of the cultural transmission of the spread of the fujara. First, it relates to a specific generational technical competence of communicating through media. Second, it is connected to the amount of time that the generation can assign to it. The time that the older generation of fujara players spent in connection with the local society has been replaced in the current generation by the time assigned for performance and technological elaboration.

Vertical and horizontal transmission are still applied. They stabilize the traditional forms of fujara playing and the technology of its manufacture. Changes are particularly visible in the processes and methods of learning. Learning during presentation opportunities is now preferred, instead of learning by observing older fujara players. The relation of the vertical and horizontal modes versus the indirect modes of transmission shows that the fujara tradition is being stabilized through vertical and horizontal transmission, whereas dynamic changes are mainly transmitted indirectly. The uniform representation of all three modes (vertical, horizontal, and indirect) is the criterion that justifies saying that the fujara tradition in Slovakia is a living heritage.

The interviews with respondents reveal an interest in contact opportunities for meetings of several generations of fujara players. In the rural environment, there are increased efforts among the traditional generation of fujara players to disseminate its knowledge among people interested in it, especially those from the local area. It is possible to pass on local knowledge directly, hands-on, by observation and imitation. Intergenerational contact makes it only sporadically possible to create such stimuli, through activities such as seasonal events, festivals, or reminiscences of the traditional rural way of life.

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<sup>14</sup> The Slovak state protocol custom is for government officials present important foreign guests with a fujara.

The greatest loss that the subjects of the study associate with the disappearance of playing the fujara in the rural shepherds' areas is the loss of values and social norms, which the local community built on the traditional culture of the agricultural year. External influences, the change of lifestyle, and also the displacement of values of the traditional societies has caused a gradual depopulation or demise of shepherd culture in Slovakia.<sup>15</sup> However, the current attempt to stabilize fujara playing among the original bearers (shepherds) cannot be properly applied because of the extinction of the oldest generation of shepherds.

Technological innovation of the instrument and the abandonment of the traditional interpretation has become a visible trend.

*After the addition to the list, the fujara rapidly expanded into the world, which raised Slovakia's profile in certain circles. The fujara needs to be understood. You need to respect its history and the people that presented beauty through songs and interpretation. Experimentation is prevailing over the preservation of the traditional playing style, which is ruining the instrument. (A 50-year-old fujara player)*

From the anthropological point of view, the small everyday activities of families, neighborhoods, or other local communities are of the greatest importance for maintaining the fujara tradition in its natural locations. However, these opportunities are threatened by the departure of the younger generation from the area, which results in the loss of vitality of rural societies.

*There are many fujara players in villages that play for themselves, that do not want to perform on stage, and they strongly stand behind the opinion that the fujara is an intimate instrument and, as such, belongs to an intimate environment. (A 40-year-old fujara player)*

The knowledge from inventorying the spread of the fujara and fujara playing is related to performance preferences by older and younger generations of fujara players. The structured interview list consisted of 130 fujara players (54%) out of 200 suggested by experts. It is a representative sampling of old and young generations of all fujara players. In terms of age, the largest group consisted of respondents eighteen to fifty years old (69.5%), and it may be presumed that new signs of the "fujara tradition" will be adopted among these. There was a slight predominance of new fujara players, which can be explained by the fujara registration effect (38%) with permanent residency in urban areas (55%).

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<sup>15</sup> The last attempts at stabilizing these societies are connected with the revival of the Saint Demetrius's Day (*Na Mitra*) autumn sheep drive down from the hills, and the Saint George's Day (*Na Ďura*) spring sheep drive up into the hills.



## RESULTS

*Older and younger generations of fujara players.* Fujara players prefer various events in which the cultural memory strengthens across generations. The differences in the fujara tradition can be justified not only by the different cultural profiles of individuals (the bearer's ecology), but also by their preference for either the continuity of the fujara tradition or its innovation. A 50-year-old fujara player stated “*I learned to play the fujara from one of the most prominent fujara players [Martin Sanitrár, born 1911]. I learned to play through imitation, which meant that I used to copy my role model at one point. However, I no longer play like Martin Sanitrár.*”

The functions of playing the fujara vary across generations. The older generation inclines more toward the traditional styles and forms of the fujara tradition. In the local delimitation of the current fujara tradition, the urban environment offers more formal opportunities for learning to play the fujara, and for nurturing and transmitting it. Fujara players from rural societies have fewer such opportunities and therefore initiate more events where they can meet. The most effective method of spread is propagation through large-scale events (i.e., festivals) that are attended by a large audience (of fujara players).

*Representation of old and new features.* Contact and communication are a more frequent and effective way of spreading the older features of fujara playing. This corresponds to the knowledge that traditional fujara interpretation creates a holistic, symbolic system, which cannot be reduced. New features (imports) are mostly spread through technical communication (social networks, media, and CDs), which constitute virtual environments for being inspired to innovate when playing and manufacturing the fujara.

*The folklore memory of fujara players.* In this study, folklore memory is understood as the expression of the possibility of remembering the widest possible range of repertoire components (music, singing, dance, etc.), local events, tales, techniques, procedures, and other contexts. Our findings show that the current opportunities where the repertoire is implemented do not allow fujara players to use all the content of their folklore memory. This often leads to a displacement of the contexts of tradition, especially among fujara players from the urban environment. Thus, in the society of fujara players, presenting older and rediscovered content of folklore memory is considered prestigious. The younger generation mainly tends to present what is appropriate for scenic and commercial presentation.

*Discovering and preserving traditions.* The fujara and the technology of its manufacture are formally supported and stabilized in written form, just like other forms of culture (Assman, 2001). Transmission through contact varies in its intensity. The changing of the substance of folklore is natural and always occurs in connection with present knowledge (Leščák, 2006). First, more complex knowledge is transmitted, followed by the transmission of less complex knowledge. Anthropologists refer to this as the floating gap (Vansina, 2009). The structures of complicated holistic information fall apart under the influence of a cycle of floating gaps. These gaps are filled with new knowledge, which innovate and

make the cultural phenomena varied. Research has recorded attempts for revitalization as well as attempts to expand and distribute the fujara tradition to new locations. A 60-year-old fujara player states that

*Slovakia experienced a ‘boom’ in the fujara tradition in 2005, when the instrument was added to the representative list. Then interest in it rose, and even craftsmen that had not been connected to the fujara in any way, but saw that it was selling well in Slovakia, started making it. They saw it as a good image.*

The fujara “boom” is mentioned a lot. It has mostly impacted the urban environment. The authors explain it through the fact that its function as a solo musical instrument with an intimate character has changed to a prestigious one. It is also connected to another finding: namely, that the fujara tradition in Slovakia is no longer an identifying feature of mountain shepherds, but of the wider society.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The subject matter of the research and the main topic of this study was the fujara as an intangible cultural heritage element on the representative list. The general goal of the study was to collect as much information as possible on the distribution of the fujara tradition in Slovakia. It pointed out changes pertaining to current environments of fujara expansion, recipients of the fujara tradition, and the functions of the fujara. The following findings are gleaned from the information gathered. The uniform representation of all three modes of transmission (vertical, horizontal, and indirect) in studying intangible cultural heritage is an indicator of the vitality of the cultural phenomenon. The fujara tradition is stabilized through vertical and horizontal transmission, and dynamic changes are mainly transmitted indirectly. The functions of fujara playing vary across generations. The number of recipients of the fujara tradition rose after its addition to the lists. Today, fujara players mostly come from the urban environment. The older generation inclines more toward traditional styles and forms of the fujara tradition, in contrast to the younger generation. New features (imports) are mostly spread through technical communication (social networks, media, and CDs), which constitute virtual environments for being inspired to innovate when playing and manufacturing the fujara. The old features of fujara playing spread more effectively through contact communication. Active fujara players realize the need to support natural modes of cultural transmission through creating new impulses for its preservation. They create a range of new activities and events with the ambition to further develop the fujara tradition in environments other than the cultural circles of the natural expansion of the fujara. In both the rural and urban environments, current opportunities do not allow for the application of all the knowledge and techniques of fujara players that are contained in

their folklore memory. The younger generation tends to mainly present what is appropriate for scenic and commercial presentation. The Slovak tradition of fujara playing exhibits recursive floating gaps, which affect it by leveling, innovating, and making varied some of the holistic knowledge. The research recorded attempts at revitalization as well as new attempts to spread the fujara tradition into the urban environment.

A topic of an anthropologically justified discussion could be evaluating overlaps between the cultures of the urban and rural worlds. Another resonating topic is the effective safeguarding and promotion measures of intangible cultural heritage toward the preservation of its living forms. Multiple municipalities and microregions of Slovakia have joined these methods of promoting and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage with the help of funding. How the continuity of this phenomenon will stabilize once the support finishes is disputable. The risks of sustainability lie, for example, in the unpredictable effects of tourism and commercialization, which can cause secondary leveling of even relatively fragile but still preserved manifestations of the local style continuity of fujara playing.

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## SPREMEMBE V NESNOVNI DEDIŠČINI NA SLOVAŠKEM: PRIMER FUJARA

*Predmet in glavna tema raziskave je fujara (lesena pastirska piščal) kot element nesnovne kulturne dediščine (NKD), vpisan na Reprezentativni seznam. Splošni cilj je bil zbrati kar največ znanja o razširjenosti piskanja nanjo na Slovaškem. V razpravi avtorja opozarjata na spremembe v sedanjem okolju razširjanja fujare, sprejemalcih fujare in njenih funkcijah. Na tej podlagi orišeta svoja spoznanja. Poenotena predstavitev vseh treh načinov posredovanja (vertikalno, horizontalno, posredno) v raziskovanju NKD je kazalnik vitalnosti kulturnega*

*fenomena. Tradicionalno piskanje na fujaro utrjuje se vertikalno in horizontalno posredovanje, dinamične spremembe so večinoma posredovane posredno. Fujara ima med različnimi generacijami različne funkcije. Po vpisu na seznam je število piskačev naraslo in ti so zdaj večinoma iz mestnega okolja. Starejša generacija je v primerjavi z mlajšo bolj naklonjena tradicionalnim slogom in načinom piskanja. Nove značilnosti (uvožene) se širijo večinoma s tehnično komunikacijo (družbena omrežja, mediji), ki je virtualno okolje za navdih vnašanja novosti v igranje in izdelovanje fujare. Stare značilnosti se širijo učinkoviteje prek stikov. Aktivni piskači čutijo potrebo po podpori naravnim načinom kulturnega posredovanja in ustvarjanju novih spodbud za njihovo ohranitev. Nastaja niz novih aktivnosti in dogodkov, da bi razvili igranje na fujaro v okolju, ki presega kulturna prizorišča naravnega razširjanja fujare. Tako na podeželju kakor v mestu ni možnosti za uporabo vsega znanja in tehnik piskačev, ohranjenih v njihovem folklor-nem spominu. Mlajši so nagnjeni k scensko in komercialno primernim predstavitvam. Slovaška tradicija igranja na fujaro kaže rekurzivno plavajoče premore, ki nastajajo z uravnavanjem, prenavljanjem in večjo raznovrstnostjo celovitega znanja. V raziskavi so bili odkriti poskusi oživljanja in razširjanja fujare v mestnem okolju.*

*Tema antropološko upravičene razprave bi lahko bilo ovrednotenje prekrivanja kultur mestnih in podeželskih svetov. Druga odmevna tema so učinkovito varovanje in merila promocije NKD v smeri ohranjanja njenih živih oblik. Številne občine in mikroregije na Slovaškem so se z denarno podporo pridružile tem metodam promocije in varovanja NKD. Sporno je, kako se bo kontinuiteta fenomena stabilizirala, ko podpore ne bo več. Tveganja trajnosti so, na primer, v nenapovedljivosti učinkov turizma in komercializacije, ki lahko povzročijo sekundarno poenotenje razmeroma krhkih, a še ohranjenih manifestacij kontinuitete lokalnega sloga igranja na fujaro.*

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