

Social Capital and Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Theoretical Concepts of Departure and the Potential of Further Research

DANIEL DRÁPALA



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Doc. PhDr. Daniel Drápala, Ph.D., Department of European Ethnology of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University, Arna Nováka 1, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: drapala@phil.muni.cz

This study discusses the use of the social capital concept in relation to the elements of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and their safeguarding. The author proceeds from theoretical concepts which were employed by some researchers outside ethnological research (P. Bourdieu, Y. F. Fukuyama, R. D. Putnam and others) in the last decades. He highlights one of the basic principles of social capital, which consists of sharing the real and the potential sources, knowledge, and information, which an individual or a group of persons acquire through more or less institutionalized relations. Based on the experience from the national environment (Czech Republic) and an international organization (UNESCO) he contemplates to which extent it is possible to apply the theoretical foundations of social capital on the ICH, where the principle of sharing of and mutual respect to cultural elements is one of the basic theses. The discussion about the social capital concept in social sciences has until now shown how wide the spectrum of possible perspectives is. There is not the only possible determinant interpretation and field. The chosen theme, the methodology, and the discipline's tradition contribute to different territorial and conceptual adaptations of social capital, which, however, also generates a potential of using this concept in the form of transdisciplinary research. This can be used, in the future, for the study of intangible cultural heritage.

Key words: intangible cultural heritage, social capital, bearers, communities, UNESCO

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Social capital ranks high among the issues that have been at the heart of debates across a number of academic disciplines for several decades. This cross-disciplinary concept is not currently confined to discussion within the social sciences; it is also frequently addressed by geographers, political scientists and the representatives of the economic and environmental sciences (Paldam, 2000; Adam, Rončević, 2003).

The attractiveness of this concept to sciences with diverse theoretical anchoring, methodology and theme focus often generates a wide spectrum of interpretations (Paldam, 2000), stemming from the different modes of discourse employed by the individual scientific disciplines. The potential of social capital, despite any ambiguity of its definition, in the context of the study of social contacts and networks, should thus not be ignored by the current ethnological research. When seeking a suitable thematic field within ethnology to which the concept of social capital could be applied, the issue of intangible cultural heritage should be considered, as defined by the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003 Convention). In this article, the author sets out to convey his experience with the implementation of the key documents in the context of both the Czech Republic and UNESCO (as a member of an expert group of the Czech Ethnological Society, an accredited NGO involved in the evaluation of nominations for UNESCO lists) and to formulate some theoretical and methodological points of departure linking the concept of social capital with the issue of system protection of intangible cultural heritage. The care for selected elements of culture closely associated with the communities of their bearers includes a number of individual aspects (e.g. community studies; the process of networking; local, regional and ethical identities) which, within the debates centred upon social capital, are also regularly addressed by other scientific disciplines. While Pierre Bourdieu links social capital to the individual and his/her behaviour (Bourdieu, 1986), a collective approach to social capital appears more natural for the institutionalized care for intangible cultural heritage, as formulated by Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1995) and Robert David Putnam (Putnam, 2000). The human ability to cooperate in groups and organisations that maintain the vision of a common goal is considered one of the key aspects of this broader definition. The activation of sources which these networks have at their disposal is consequently targeted at the enhancement of the effectiveness of society's functioning. The enhancement of this effectiveness of action coordinated in this way must be based on genuine respect for factors such as trust and shared values and standards (Côté, 2001; Halpern, 2005).

FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Scientists dealing with the issue of social capital postulate in their works various typological views for their classification (Pileček, 2010, 67–69). As regards intangible cultural heritage, two of them appear particularly suitable: bridging social capital and linking social capital (Woolcock, 1998; Putnam, 2000). To the community of bearers and their lives, the model of bridging social capital can be applied. It is based on the reinforcement of the defensiveness of society against negative influences and contributes to the enhancement of social and cultural cohesion within a particular community; it is also an important stimulus for the healthy development of a community. Authentic elements of culture rooted in a network of social ties thus naturally play a vital part in the symbols of identity and representation of the community. They significantly contribute to the sense of belonging and confidence, and at a more general level lend shape to local and regional identity. Many nominations for UNESCO lists (Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, 2019) are thus intrinsically distinguished by the potential to lead towards the advancement of a community's integrity. This is particularly obvious with elements associated with societies existing as minorities or similarly disadvantaged. The weakening of the previously existing forms of social and economic ties, imbalance in the proportion

of the involved bearers in terms of age or gender, the interruption or loss of natural information channels and instruments for the sharing of knowledge bring about numerous negative impacts on the viability of phenomena. For this reason, the strengthening of the natural and historical functions of a particular element at the community level is an integral part of the safeguarding measures planned.

When an intense interest in an element exceeds the boundaries demarcating the immediate living space of the bearers ("consumers" among the local community), another type of social capital takes over, termed linking social capital. Two different environments characterized by differences in social and economic status enter a factual partnership (Woolcock, 2001). The link between the less formal community of bearers and the institutionalized and standardized component traces a vertical axis. However, both parties are able to communicate and are connected by a common goal and profit.

One of the basic principles of social capital is believed to be the sharing of real or potential sources, knowledge and information acquired by an individual or group through more-or-less institutionalized relations (Bourdieu, 1986: 241–258). This aspect can be observed in the context of intangible cultural heritage; first, in the narrow circle of a closed community of bearers, and second, in a more broadly-approached community whose members include, apart from the bearers of tradition, people and institutions existing and active outside it. In the area of customs and technological knowledge, the principle of sharing is vital for the communities of the bearers of tradition, primarily for the preservation of the continuity of development. Secondly, it also contributes to the enhancement of the awareness of identity and integrity of a particular group and thus to the stability of the social structure (Drápala, 2014: 8–9) which is reinforced, for example, with the use of various forms of limited access to essential information and knowledge (for both the community members and outsiders). Respect for principles typically formed over several generations and their acceptance by an individual (in some cases under the threat of sanctions) contribute to his or her full engagement in the life of a society. Depending on their current social status, they are later entitled to various forms of participation, from which they may draw more than only direct financial profit for themselves, their relatives and the whole community (rooted in the knowledge and practice of production technology), but also its symbolic forms (e.g. prosperity magic at annual ceremonies), as well as the strengthening of the positions of particular persons within the existing social networks – and thus actually the enhancement of their social capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 51).

The reciprocity enabling the flow of information and the effective use of the potential of social networks (Putnam, 1993b) does not necessarily generate trust in the long run, and the related profit of an individual or society, at the levels of bearers alone. Participation in an institutionalized system of safeguarding cultural elements works in many respects with similar principles, the only difference being their incorporation into a national network, or in the case of UNESCO in an advanced supra-national network of shared contacts, knowledge and practices. This broad social structure has attributes corresponding to the individual phases of building and developing a trusting relationship between the community and institutions (Coleman, 1988). The first phase is characterized by factors involving obligations and expectations. Both parties enter into a collaboration built on trust and mutual respect. They find accord in a common goal and the means for its successful achievement. Although the intersection of their coordinated activities is directed at a generally beneficial goal associated with a particular cultural element and its viability, the participating subjects may use the shared information platform and contact network in parallel for their own, purely individual needs, independent of the common collective

intention. Their scale has both a direct economic character and purely symbolic one, as the protagonists often consciously act in order to enhance their own status, their social and political capital or economic potential.

The first (contact) phase is followed by a period of building and stabilization of a budding social structure, which functions as a two-way channel modulating information and know-how. The bearers pass on to the institutions both their own and any shared historical experience with the existence of a particular element, become acquainted with the obligatory standards that have shaped the element and which, at the same time, define the framework for its existence. The building of mutual trust at this level of communication and cooperation should respect the rules of customary limited access to some internal information, valid and applied for generations, which are also characterized by various symbolic meanings for the community members (incl. taboos). On the basis of their own knowledge, or in collaboration with specialists, the bearers of tradition are able to identify the strong and weak points of the element and, in particular, the risk factors associated with its further existence. Institutions (at the level of state administration, self-government or variously-profiled NGOs) then help, for example, with the documentation of the element, the concept of its protection, presentation and media promotion. Basic to the factor in which experience with a particular phenomenon can effectively interact with the knowledge of selected mechanisms of protection and care for cultural heritage is the definition of a system of safeguarding measures. A recent example when the agreement of the involved parties has changed over time is Belgium's application to remove the Aalst Carnival from the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity which was entered in 2010. There was a dissonance between the general principles of UNESCO laying emphasis on the preservation of dignity, equality and mutual respect among people, and a centuries-old tradition of a Belgian town whose carnival parade involves extensive mocking of certain social groups (Decision, 2019).

The final phase (following the successful inclusion of an element on a regional, national or international list) lies in the definition of a system of standards shaping the environment in which the further existence of the element is presumed to lie (2003 Convention, Article 13). In practice, this normative component has the form of safeguarding measures integrating general declarations of interest in the support of intangible cultural heritage at the level of a location, region or state, with concrete instruments of care. The safeguarding measures should, in an ideal case, include a symbiotic set of legal, technical, administrative and financial measures which would be jointly observed by the bearers and, in particular, the state or administration embodying sufficient economic and political power. The summary of safeguarding measures unique to every element involves not only systematic education, documentation and research into the historical and current forms of any given element, but also the provision of institutional support and advisory bodies supervising the activities that promote its preservation and development. Consequently, support of the conveyance of knowledge and experience should not be ignored, especially if, for example, direct inter-generational or intra-generational transmission has been subject to interference. At this level, the role of social capital in its most fundamental application may be observed. The objective of the activities centred on the protection and safeguarding of cultural elements is not their conservation and rendering them "antique" at a certain determined point in time. For that matter, the value of every element and its potential for communication beyond its authentic environment is significantly enhanced in relation to active bearers who identify with it and consider it an inseparable part of their existence, traditions and the particularities of their cultural background. They and the element constitute a living



The joint international nomination of the Blueprint was submitted in 2018 by five countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Germany, and Hungary. Source: Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

organism existing on the basis of a set of standards, something that is also subordinated to natural development. The viability of an element is thus rooted in an active dialogue and the fulfilment of needs and expectations on the bearers – element axis.

SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE LISTS OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The symbolic value of the acknowledged protection and safeguarding of particular intangible elements is reflected at the regional, national and international level in the positive acceptance on the part of a broader community. This has been made obvious by the number of nominations in which one of the perennial arguments offered by the applicants is not only the direct rescue or protection of an element, but also the enhancement of its status and respect for it at local and national levels. In contrast to the intangible evidence of the culture of the elite social strata or monuments, the cultural value of which is not usually in doubt within a given community, the elements of intangible cultural heritage in many parts of the world have had to fight for due respect. In some regions, this is related, for example, to low social or socioeconomic status on the part of their bearers or their affinity with a particular ethnic, professional or religious community. The seeming “ordinariness”, or the perceived marginal character of an element with only a local or regional outreach, are no less vital. This situation does not necessarily concern only the economically less advanced countries. Similar tendencies were observed in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries in many places in Europe, where numerous customs, so-called superstitions and technical skills were consistently undervalued. In some cases there were even efforts designed to eliminate them as “unsuitable” elements or detrimental to the progressive development of a community,



The Burning of Judas (Vodění jidáše) in the eastern Bohemia region, an element inscribed on the List of Intangible Elements of Traditional Folk Culture of the Czech Republic in 2012. Source: Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

location or region, even a nation. The process of their acceptance as part of cultural and historical legacy of a nation was relatively lengthy and complicated (Křížová, Pavlicová, Válka, 2015). Nonetheless, in Central Europe the process reached a phase when previously condemned elements became part of national cultural heritage and effective tools in the presentation of its cultural diversity as early as the late 19th century. Even today, researchers experience situations in which bearers themselves underestimate the importance of some components of their inherited and shared cultural heritage. In many cases, the situation from the 19th and 20th centuries then repeats itself, when only the interests of players from beyond the bearers' society spurred the "renaissance" of a cultural element directed at the rehabilitation of its social functions (Drápala, 2019). Efforts towards incorporation into a regional, national or international list then become a potential catalyst for the whole process (Románková-Kuminková, 2017). Apart from searching for practical pathways that lead to protection of a particular element and its safeguarding, this can lead within a community to more concentrated reflections upon its cultural heritage, its historical, social and cultural roots and societal contribution. The awareness of the role of a community for the existence and future viability of an element serves to enhance the confidence of the bearers and makes them (at least in countries subscribing to democratic principles) respected partners for the state and administration (Pavlicová, Drápala, 2019).



In 2018, Tunisia submitted a successful nomination of the element Pottery Skills of the Women of Sejnane, which was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the same year. Source: UNESCO.

The positive outcomes of a successful nomination for a list (lists) can subsequently target further local and regional communities, the cultural heritage of which contain similar or identical elements. On the global scale in particular, this aspect becomes an important motivational factor as national and international lists are not built on the principle of exclusivity, where the listing of one element excludes the nomination of another, with similar features or correspondences. Energy dedicated to pointing out connections already existing across a space, or cultural or ethnic areas might lead to the representation of several similar elements of intangible culture, particularly in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. With the passing of the years, the group of festivities of a carnival character from the European and American continents (e.g. Brazil, Bolivia, the Czech Republic, France, Columbia, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Venezuela) has been expanded in other parts of the world, along with the production of carpets (e.g. Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Rumania) and pottery (e.g. Botswana, Mexico, Portugal, Tunisia). At a glance, it might seem that these ever-expanding nominations and listings associated with the production of carpets and pottery or carnival festivities are needless and parallel. However, the philosophy behind the UNESCO lists tends to manifest, through the listed elements, the creativity of the individual and the community, when similar points of departure may give rise, under different natural and cultural, religious, legal or communication conditions, to specific features, properties and interpretations of the meaning of a particular element, reflecting local and regional distinctiveness. Regardless of the contribution to the community of bearers and the state in which the element occurs, these listings of typologically identical elements may generate positive effects at the global level as well, and often shatter certain traditional stereotypes in the collective consciousness. For the knowledge of the diversity of the cultural heritage of humanity it is thus important

that carnival festivities are not viewed by the general public only in the form of the media-friendly carnival merrymaking in Rio de Janeiro or Venice but in the entire spectrum of their regional and local manifestations.

The absence of a multi-generational continuity of the passing of a particular element does not necessarily present an insurmountable hindrance to its listing. El Carnaval de El Callao, Venezuela, put on the Representative List in 2016 (Carnival of El Callao, 2016), is one such example. It found its form at the intersection of cultural stimuli from Europe, Africa and the Caribbean, when new settlers arrived in a gold-mining area. In the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, the festival evolved into its current form and is a prime example of the cultural syncretism of the South-American continent, as driving factors from diverse cultural areas and ethnic communities were transformed, in accordance with the needs and aesthetic feelings of community members, into a unique local carnival. The manifestation and blending of the individual elements of culture do not conflict; on the contrary, they are mutually enriching and inspiring. A similar situation can be noted with the inscription of resist block printing and indigo dyeing in Europe on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2019. The joint nomination of Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary involves a craft with its technological roots in Asia, but which was embraced in Europe and became an integral part of traditional culture in a number of Central European regions (Blaudruck / Modrotisk / Kékfestés / Modrotlač, resist block printing and indigo dyeing in Europe, 2018; Sítek, 2019).

In addition, the whole system of institutionalized safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage works actively with the attribute of reciprocity, observed in the context of the study of social capital by both J. S. Coleman and R. Putnam (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). A successful listing can secondarily contribute to the creation of supra-national networks of bearers or participating institutions focusing on particular types of elements and the subsequent sharing of best practice. This level of cooperation is important not only among the “club members”, i.e. the elements already listed, their bearers and institutional auspices, but also as a possible support and (positive or negative) inspiration for further prospective candidates. The effective use of knowledge interconnected in this way and tested practices of care, protection and presentation of intangible cultural heritage thus ultimately aims, at several levels, towards the creation of functional structures of social capital and its appropriate exploitation.

THE ECONOMIC FACTOR IN THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

A positive connection with economic development makes up an inseparable part of the approach to social capital, with emphasis on the potential for economic growth. The study of economic links in the field of ethnology and anthropology has a long tradition (Pargač, 2005; Lang, 2010; Wilk, Cliggett, 2011). The economic use and benefits for the existential needs of an individual and a community were the basic prerequisites for the development of traditional handicrafts and farming production, yet direct and indirect economic stimuli have also been identified in, for example, many annual customs and traditions. In the category of institutionalized protection and care for cultural heritage, however, ambivalent attitudes may be observed in relation to financial factors. The economic impacts of any support activity that favours elements of cultural heritage should not be overlooked, marginalized or pushed outside the system. Rather, we should ask what position this

economic aspect holds in the overall concept of safeguarding a particular cultural element and to what extent nominating subjects attribute to its importance and weight in association with other factors.

The philosophy of regional, national and international safeguarding instruments is always primarily aimed at a dignified and meaningful existence of elements rooted in the culture of ethnic, social, work-related or other communities. Purely economic reasons should thus not be the only motives supporting the nominations of cultural elements for cultural heritage lists. Naturally, these do have considerable economic potential based on the renown of the media-linked UNESCO “brand” – and in many countries also on nationally created tools of protection (in the Czech Republic, for example, the title Bearer of Folk Craft Tradition and the List of Intangible Elements of Traditional Folk Culture of the Czech Republic) (Šimša, 2008; Šimša, 2011; Šimša, 2016; Nemateriální statky, 2016). The credibility of lists also naturally entails indisputable economic profit significantly exceeding the symbolic level of the social acknowledgement of the selected cultural elements’ value. Any economic use, however, should take place bearing in mind the elements involved and their bearers, and should not take the form of purely financial enterprise. In particular cases, regions and countries, the outcome depends on the applied strategies and ways in which the functions of intangible cultural heritage are addressed (Węglarska, 2013). UNESCO, therefore, stresses that the bearers of cultural manifestations should not be deprived of the basic right to profit from the positive economic outcomes of the use of their cultural heritage (Románková 2014: 59). At the same time, the bearers should not become “hostages” to a state or regional administration, or other public or private organisation, and thus be reduced to “tools” for generating profits without regard to their intrinsic needs and attitudes. Nonetheless, even the bearers themselves are active in this respect as they naturally do not want to be deprived of any positive economic ramifications. In the nomination documents, this is expressed more or less openly as a secondary phenomenon with a positive effect brought about by concentrated care for, and presentation of, an element. This is why the ethical point of view is one of the important factors considered in the processing and evaluation of nominations. However, as illustrated by the activities of some less economically advanced countries, the ambition to be included in the prestigious UNESCO lists is, despite various incentives, typically and primarily motivated by economic factors, predominant over all the other viewpoints. In some states, these tendencies are even openly incorporated in nomination materials. In other cases (incl. economically developed countries) they are “tactfully” not mentioned; yet the content of safeguarding measures sometimes unveils to what extent the economic factor is latently involved. Reflections of those who nominate usually unfold in the following sequence: inscription on a list → inscription on a prestigious list → interest of the media and the tourist industry → economic benefits for the state, region, community. A positive economic stimulus for the region and the bearers’ community becomes a strong argument in economically underdeveloped areas, and is sadly only seldom offset by an adequate system of tools that might be applied in the protection of an element against its degradation to a mere tourist sensation.

In this context, the crucial role of safeguarding measures is apparent (Hamar, Voľanská, 2015), which is why the UNESCO administration (and by extension some states drawing up national lists of intangible cultural heritage as well) lays strong emphasis on the preparatory thinking and efficient execution underlying the concept of the protection of and care for cultural heritage elements. This is not some kind of formal requirement or a bureaucratic measure. The definition of tools supporting the further existence of elements and activities of the bearers of tradition at the local, regional and national level contains

numerous indications of how an element is to be approached in any given country. Caution is especially vital with nominations in which safeguarding measures do not comprise a well-considered and interlinked system of activities with defined competences and responsibilities for the participating subjects. In consequence, we observe a disparate cluster of individual and unrelated intentions lacking, for example, a much-needed synergy. Yet in the majority of cases it cannot be denied that even these can be positive for some areas and beneficial for an element and its bearers. The frequent fragmentation as regards form and content and the absence of compatibility between individual activities leads to a final result in which they do not have the effect anticipated from conceptually approached and strategically profiled material. The misunderstanding of the philosophy of safeguarding measures subsequently gives rise to pledges from certain candidate states and further participating institutions to support, in particular, the kind of popularization and promotion that is supposed to stimulate increased interest from visitors and tourists. In these cases we face a thin line between an adequate system of promotion and the support of deliberate commercialization on the part of states and municipalities. There are even cases when the members of a community reject impetuses for the processing of nominations for regional and national lists, for fear of negative consequences.

An example of a well-considered creation of tools of safeguarding measures may be observed with Pontian Greeks and their Momoeria festival, included on the UNESCO Representative List in 2016 (Momoeria, 2016). Even at the nomination stage, the applicant showed an effort to set limits that would prevent the commercialization of the event. The unwanted transformation into a tourist attraction could have a negative impact on the separation of the authentic celebration from its primary function for a community. Greece and the community of bearers took on the responsibilities stemming from this, following the successful listing of the element with UNESCO. Even though they could not shun popularization completely, the presentation of Momoeria outside the authentic environment and date involves sophisticated rules enabling the element to be handled with due consideration and, since it is viewed as beneficial, cautiously contributing to the popularization of the element. At the same time, there is a strict distinction between the authentic celebration of the festival and its presentation outside its traditional space and time.

CONCLUSION

Until now, the study of social capital has naturally been strongly dominated by the blending of sociological and economic research tools requiring the definition of adequate modes of measurement (Mohan, Mohan, 2002; Pileček, 2010: 69–73). Empirical research employing the Putnam index of social capital (Putnam, 2000) has been applied in the past to various regional studies and preliminary subjects (i.e. economic growth, local and regional development, civic and political participation, the functioning of government, migration and integration) (e.g. Raagmaa, 2002; Beugelsdijk, van Schaik, 2005; Janc, 2006; Havlíček, Chromý, Jančák, Marada, 2008; Nannestad, Svendsen, Svendsen, 2008; Kučerová, 2011; Zhang, Nan, 2019). Needless to say, this experience and the necessary data are not available for the field of intangible cultural heritage to an appropriate extent and quality. However, in the scientific community the interest in the observation of the mutual relationship between the protected and promoted cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) and tourism has grown in recent years, including the positive and negative impacts on the community that considers the particular elements of cultural heritage their own (Timothy, Boyd, 2006;

Hughes, Carlsen, 2010; Donlon, Donlon, Agrusa, 2010; Bitušíková, 2019; Soojung, Whitford, Arcodia, 2019).

The concept of institutionalized care for this area does not work primarily with the factor of a positive economic balance, as the profit might take on purely symbolic forms. For example, they enter the life of a community of bearers as integration elements, but often become tools of representation and prestige as well, in contact with the surrounding environment and the world outside. The intangible nature of the profit for a network of stakeholders, which largely consists of the sharing of information and factors of mutual support and reciprocity, thus appears an equally crucial aspect for the stability of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage, generating a number of positives. Having said that, we should not abandon in the future, in collaboration with economic disciplines, the conceptually approached study of not only social and cultural effects, but also the economic effects following the inclusion of elements on national and international lists of intangible cultural heritage. At the local and regional level in particular, we should observe and seek causal links between the implementation and employment of measures for protection, care and presentation of particular elements, the effectiveness of their impact and economic development (Putnam, 1993a; Putnam, 2000).

Discussion of the concept of social capital in the social sciences to date has shown how broad the spectrum of views is. There is no single guiding interpretation and field; the subject, the methodology and tradition of the branch contribute in many respects to various territorial and conceptual versions of social capital. As manifested by the issue of intangible cultural heritage, even these reflections can be, despite numerous particularities, suitably applied in the field of ethnology. The potential and topicality of this approach are also confirmed by academic discourse about the social potential of cultural heritage in the new millennia (Macdonald, 2019) and the opinions critically approaching the practice of recent years applied in the system of safeguarding cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible (Hutter, Rizzo, 1997; Kurin, 2004). Moreover, social capital may be viewed from this perspective as an imaginary bridge offering challenges and paths for the further direction of the study of intangible cultural heritage in the form of research approached in a trans-disciplinary fashion. Thanks to the diverse approaches taken by individual disciplines, this research has great potential to produce a much more comprehensive view on the subject of institutionalized care, not separated from its bearers, as well as on broader social, cultural and, last but not least, economic and political contexts of the safeguarding and care for intangible cultural heritage.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DANIEL DRÁPALA – studied ethnology and history at Masaryk University in Brno. In 1999–2007 he worked in the Wallachian Open air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, since 2007 he has been employed in the Department of European Ethnology at the Faculty of Arts of the Masaryk University. In 2008–2014 he was chairman of the most significant professional organisation of Czech ethnologists – Czech Ethnological Society. He specialises in the field of historical ethnology (traditional crafts, trade and social relationships; monographs *Venkovský obchod Moravy a Slezska. Socio-ekonomické sondy*, 2014 and *Portáši. Historie a tradice*, 2017 or *Traditional Folk Culture in Moravia: Time and Space*, 2014 with a team of authors), local and regional identity and ethno-cultural traditions (monograph *Moravské Záhoří*, 2014) and intangible cultural heritage (member of an expert group of the Czech Ethnological Society, an accredited NGO involved in the evaluation of nominations for UNESCO lists, Chairman of the National Council for Traditional Folk Culture).