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The Use of National Minority Culture in Tourism Development

Abstract

In our tourist travels, we seek experiences in locales distinct from our places of residence or work. Tourism developments strive to fulfil this desire by showcasing and making tangible some unique local characteristic, thus attracting visitors to a specific place. In resource-poor areas, one of the simplest and least investment-demanding ways to achieve this is by turning a unique element of local culture into an attraction and celebrating it. This does not require costly infrastructure development, but it can still attract tourists. Our study focuses on these local celebrations, which are most often referred to as festivals, feasts or competitions. In the first part of this paper, our goal is to draw attention to a specific group of local festivals, events that focus on the culture of national minorities. Along with examples from Hungary, we present in more detail two festivals: one in Southwest Hungary's *Feked* and the other in Southeast Hungary's *Deszék*. In the second part of the study, we categorise local festivals based on the cultural elements they highlight. According to my research, four basic categories can be determined. Festivals can be created to celebrate a well-identifiable local cultural or economic phenomenon. There are local celebrations aimed at preserving or reviving disappearing or vanished local cultural elements. There are festivals that emphasise newly invented traditions. Finally, events based on humour or randomness can also be the basis of a tourist attraction.

Keywords: tourism development, local festivals, national minorities, local cultural heritage, serbs, swabians



Local Festivals in the Storm of Economic and Political Changes

After the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989–1990, a significant economic transformation began in Hungary. This caused serious unemployment in many rural areas, leading to further unfavourable social processes (emigration, ageing, segregation). Many localities faced the problem that economic structural changes left no resources to improve living conditions locally.

Due to the fundamental economic transformation, the economic weight and employment role of agriculture decreased rapidly. Simultaneously, multinational corporations entered Hungary, primarily establishing manufacturing based on cheap labour in the region. This brought some degree of economic development, but it was very unevenly distributed.¹ It accelerated development in some areas but also created serious internal imbalances, not reducing the lag of border and inner peripheral areas.²

In resource-poor peripheral areas, it was often expected that economic change would come from tourism. The focus was primarily on forms of tourism that did not require significant investment. These were mainly based on cultural phenomena. Exploiting real or perceived local cultural characteristics in tourism development became a widely adopted starting point. The unique features of the local culture were almost always presented in an organised event. Organisers refer to these events by various names, most commonly as festivals, folk festivals, or traditional festivals. In our study, I highlight how a feature of local culture, the traditions of national minorities, can become the core of culture-based local development.³

Since the late 1990s, I have been researching local festivals. I examined such phenomena in *Pusztamérge*,⁴ *Baja*,⁵ and *Feked*⁶ with an international research group. In addition, I conducted several individual studies and shorter field observations. I extended my research to Finland⁷ and Scotland,⁸ where I also

¹ Lengyel 2003: 96.

² Czirfusz 2017: 195–197.

³ Tourism geography has highlighted the issue from a different perspective, cf. Szeidl–Aubert 2019.

⁴ Pusztai 2003.

⁵ Pusztai–Martin 2007.

⁶ Schell–Prosser–Schell–Pusztai 2018.

⁷ Pusztai 2020.

⁸ Pusztai 2017.

investigated the phenomenon at several research sites. Since the beginning of my interest, I have been following the media representations of local festivals. Over the past decade, with my university students, I have collected Hungarian festivals into a festival database. In this writing, based on fieldwork in *Feked* in 2016 conducted with colleagues from Freiburg's *Institut für Volkskunde der Deutschen des östlichen Europa* (IVDE), shorter observations in *Deszék*, and the analysis of media representations of the *Deszék* festival, I present two festivals where the cultural heritage of minorities provides the basis for attractions.

The Stifolder Festival in Feked

Feked is a cul-de-sac village of Swabian origin⁹ in *Baranya* County. Following the depopulation during the Ottoman Empire, German-speaking settlers organised by the Fulda Abbey in *Hesse* arrived here between 1710 and 1720. The Eastern Hessian settlers were called “stifoller” in the Carpathian Basin due to the Fulda Abbey (*Stift Fuldaer*).¹⁰ From its settlement, *Feked* was predominantly a German village reaching its highest population in 1910, when out of 901 residents, 813 declared themselves to be German.¹¹

After World War II, not only the concealment of German identity, but also the displacement of Germans in Hungary significantly reduced the number and proportion of Germans. In 1949, out of 837 inhabitants in *Feked*, only 81 people declared German as their mother tongue, but only 3 declared themselves to be of German nationality. A part of the German population later returned to the village, and the concealment of national identity gradually decreased, so by 1960, out of 786 inhabitants, 150 people declared German as their mother tongue (and only 1 person as their nationality). With the natural out-migration of the population, the number of inhabitants rapidly decreased, while the number of German speakers even increased. In 1980, out of 439 inhabitants, 170 had German as their mother tongue, and 17 declared themselves as German nationals.

⁹ In contemporary Hungarian usage, the term ‘Swabian’ is employed as a collective designation for all German-speaking inhabitants living within the territory of modern Hungary. Our discussion adheres to this usage. However, it should be noted that historical Hungary received German-speaking settlers not only from Swabian regions, cf. Gerner 2020; Marinka 2016.

¹⁰ Gerner 2020: 17.

¹¹ On the uncertainties of national minority statistics in the 19th and 20th-century censuses, cf. Tóth–Vékás 2008. For all census data until 2011 on *Feked* cf. [Népszámlálási adatok] n.d.

After the regime change of 1989–1990, the decline of the village accelerated, but simultaneously the proportion of German-speaking and national population increased. In 1990, out of 324 inhabitants, 172 had German as their mother tongue, and 50 were of German nationality. In 2001, out of 246 inhabitants, 116 were of German nationality, and in 2011, out of 199 inhabitants, 123 were of German nationality. The latest census in 2022, similar to national trends,¹² showed a decrease in the population and a decrease in the number of German nationals: it recorded 178 inhabitants, of whom 76 declared themselves as German.¹³ The preservation of the minority identity was not helped by the fact that, parallel to the rapid decline of the village, the kindergarten and school had to be closed.

To mitigate the negative processes, the settlement leaders came up with initiatives to strengthen local identity. Since the village's only tangible cultural heritage is the Swabian peasant houses, they tried to encourage at least partial renovation of these. The picturesque cul-de-sac village caught the attention of residents from nearby cities, with more and more houses being bought as holiday homes and undergoing renovations. Since 2006, these buildings have been protected,¹⁴ and since 2018, a local ordinance regulates the protection of the townscape.¹⁵ The undeniable role of the urban intelligentsia moving in or buying holiday homes in the increasingly conscious protection is evident.¹⁶

The local government also supported the strengthening of the local community by organising events. The most significant of these is the Stifolder Festival, held annually since 2010. This festival focusses on the thick sausage, “stifolder”, made by the local Germans, the “stifollers”.¹⁷ Similar sausages are known in the *Hesse* region of Germany as well. These include the legally protected “Alte Wurst” from Northern Hesse, which requires a long maturation process, and the renowned “Rhöner Bauernwurst”.¹⁸ The stifolder has been influenced by the cuisine of the Carpathian Basin, so it contains ground paprika, unlike the Hessian sausages.¹⁹ The making of stifolder and its festival is

¹² [Népszámlálás 2022] n.d.

¹³ [Népszámlálás 2022] n.d.

¹⁴ Szeidl–Horváth–Nod–Závodi 2021: 234.

¹⁵ Tillmann–Friedrich 2018.

¹⁶ Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 145.

¹⁷ The sausage was named after the local name of the settling Hessians. In the media, there is sometimes a confusion between the names of the sausage and the settlers, cf. Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 123–124.

¹⁸ Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 125.

¹⁹ Szabó 2021: 205.

an important example of the touristic use of minority gastronomy, identified by tourism geography, but not critically examined.²⁰

The Stifolder Festival has gradually developed and now attracts about 2,000 visitors, according to estimates. It occupies public spaces and yards in the village. Prosser points out that the atmosphere of restored buildings, yards, and squares is an indispensable part of the success of municipal events. They provide the stage and framework for the encounter with traditional foods offered at the events. The festival has its own logo, which also appears on the municipality's website. The most important part of the festival is the competition to select the tastiest sausage, which had over a hundred entries in our research year. The competition has now developed precise rules,²¹ with a professional jury evaluating the entered sausages, which the public can also taste. The ethnic connection is emphasised not only in the name of the festival. A bilingual invitation is always prepared for the celebration, and cultural programs showcasing Swabian ethnic culture are prominent. In addition to Swabian accordion music, local and nearby Swabian dance groups and choirs entertain the participants.

Over the past years, the Stifolder Festival and thus the stifolder itself have become defining symbols of identification for *Feked*. However, it is important to point out the construction mechanisms rather than searching for its origin and recipe: defining the central element of the festival, setting its regulations, and the observable brand building related to it. We believe that these local festivals very consciously select the cultural element that can become the central element of settlement and tourism development. This is already evident in the naming and standardisation of the name. During our 2016 research, Prosser noticed that what is known today as stifolder was often referred to as Sommerwurst in the past. The term “summer salami” indicated that this salami was consumable after a long maturation period, in summer. According to him, putting the previously known but not highlighted stifolder name in the spotlight is clearly an act intended to draw attention to one of the locally known cultural elements with an attractive name.²²

The Stifolder Festival is a new, invented tradition, as it has no equivalent among the village's traditional celebrations. Prosser pointed out that originally, a village day connected to the Roman Catholic church's fair was organised in *Feked*, which later evolved into the stifolder celebration. While clearly a new cel-

²⁰ Horváth–Jónás–Berki–Szeidl–Aubert 2016; Tóth–Hegedűs–Pusztai 2019; Szabó–Szeidl–Závodi 2017.

²¹ Szabó 2021: 204.

²² Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 127.

eburation, “it evokes some traditional elements from the past of ethnic German culture in Hungary, emphasising and reinterpreting them”²³. He also states that brass music and bands were considered characteristic of the Germans in Hungary since the late 19th century. With the decline in knowledge of the mother tongue, this, along with Swabian folk dance, became especially important in preserving identity.²⁴ Visitors to the festival react in their own way to this re-interpreted German rural culture. Alongside the folk dance groups, some visitors adopt what they consider to be German-like attire, such as leather shorts, believing it to be fitting for the occasion. Despite the fact that clothing sold in commerce under the names “Tracht”, “Dirndlmode”, “Lederhosenmode” has no connection to *Feked* or the traditional *Feked* attire. Prosser draws a parallel with the visitors wearing the same attire at the Munich Oktoberfest or the Cannstatter Wasen festival.²⁵

The current name of the festival, Danube Swabians Stifolder Festival, is also the result of gradual development, focussing attention on how places trade and compete with those cultural elements they can turn into symbols of their locality. According to my research, until 2014, the event was simply referred to as the Stifolder Festival, and only then did they start using the longer name. One reason for the change was undoubtedly that more and more non-locals entered the stifolder competition at the festival. However, the extension of the name to the “Danube Swabians” occurred when other localities also began to incorporate stifolder into their local image. With the new name *Feked*, however, does not just organize one of many competitions, but the competition for all Danube Swabians. The most important competitor is the International Ethnic Stifolder Competition held in *Villány*, the namesake village of the famous wine region of Southern Hungary. A year before the *Feked* festival, in 2009, the gastronomic press suggested that *Villány* could be the homeland of the stifolder,²⁶ but they only organised the first stifolder competition in 2012, lagging behind *Feked*.²⁷ *Gödre*, another Swabian settlement in Baranya County, has been organising a stifolder competition since 2016.²⁸ Since 2019, a stifolder and sausage stuffing competition named “Traditional Stifolder and Sausage Stuffing Contest” has been organised in *Hőgyész*.²⁹ As illustrated by the

²³ Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 117–118.

²⁴ Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 132–133.

²⁵ Prosser-Schell et al. 2018: 141, 162.

²⁶ Csíki 2009.

²⁷ Csíki 2012.

²⁸ Gödre 2019.

²⁹ Brunner 2022.

example of the stifolder, when a particular cultural element gains recognition and success within a locality, it often sparks a wave of competitive dynamics and attempts at appropriation. This phenomenon is echoed in various forms across the Hungarian festivals, where similar processes are readily observable.³⁰

In *Feked*, the efforts to monopolise the use of stifolder extend beyond merely broadening the name of the festival. The village's endeavours have been significantly bolstered by the establishment of a business, named Traubert Hof, in one of the traditional Swabian farmhouses of the settlement.³¹ This enterprise, specialising exclusively in the production of stifolder, has set up its shop, restaurant, and tasting room there.³² The company not only produces Alte Wurst without paprika, in the spirit of the original Hessian recipe, but also offers “original” and “classic” stifolder among its various other products. On its website, Traubert Hof extensively details the tradition of stifolder and *Feked*'s role in it. Moreover, to popularise the stifolder of *Feked* elsewhere, they undertake pop-up ventures under the brand “Swabian street food Feked”. Meanwhile, in collaboration with the festival, there is an ongoing effort to develop the Swabian gastronomic offerings as fully as possible: in 2023, *Feked* even organised its own October Fest. The festival's promotional materials indicate that the village's image has entered a new phase: “Beer(s) + Swabian Music + Gastronomy. Not a Bavarian beer fest, but a Feked one. Lederhosen & dirndl are welcome... in fact, essential!”³³

The Feked Stifolder Festival has utilised a facet of the national culture in a village historically dominated by a German population, serving to sustain the life of the settlement. Today, developments have progressed further and, although the proportion of German national minority has decreased, events built on Swabian culture within the renovated and protected Swabian village landscape now represent an advanced stage in the construction of a unique village identity.

The Ajvár Festival in Deszk

Deszk is a settlement located in the southeastern part of Hungary, merely 10 kilometres from the city of *Szeged*. The village is connected to the neigh-

³⁰ Pusztaí 2007.

³¹ Cf. Vörös–Egyed 2020.

³² [Fekedi Stifolder] 2024.

³³ Traubert Hof 2023.

bouring city by a main road and railway. Since the political changes of 1989–1990, *Deszke* has undergone significant infrastructural development. Due to its proximity, it has become a popular relocation destination for the residents of *Szeged*, as indicated by the rapidly increasing number of newly built private houses on the village’s edge facing *Szeged*. As a result of this relocation trend, while Hungary’s population is decreasing, *Deszke*’s population is rapidly growing: from 3027 in 1995 to 3446 in 2006, and 3711 in 2021.³⁴

The village, of medieval origin, was destroyed during the Ottoman conquest in the early 16th century. In 1746, it was repopulated with Serbian border guard soldiers. By the second half of the 19th century, over 70% of the village’s population was of Serbian nationality.³⁵ By the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, due to higher emigration rates and lower natural population growth among Serbs, their proportion decreased to around 50%.³⁶ After World War I, the village became part of Hungary and was no longer in a Serbian-speaking area. This led to a significant wave of emigration to Serbia, further reducing the number and proportion of Serbs. From 1526 Serbian residents in 1910, only 331 remained by 1931.³⁷ After World War II, the job opportunities in *Szeged* led to continued migration to the city, and by the 1960s, the Serbian population had decreased to under 10%, totalling 224 people. By 1980, only 5% (175 people) identified as Serbian.³⁸

Following the political changes, the suburbanisation around *Szeged* accelerated, with the most intense growth occurring in *Deszke*.³⁹ This further shaped the local population’s composition. Due to significantly more favourable conditions compared to *Szeged*’s real estate prices and environment, many people moved to the village, creating an entirely new residential area. The housing estate inhabited by the “newcomers” became a stable part of the original inhabitants’ mental map.⁴⁰ Consequently, the number and proportion of Serbian residents continued to decline: in 2011, only 99 people, just over 3% of the population, identified as Serbian.⁴¹ With this, the settlement predominantly became Hungarian.

³⁴ Erdős–Széll–Vágási 2007: 86.

³⁵ Baranyai 1984: 446.

³⁶ Szász 1984: 54.

³⁷ Ráidity–Gyukin 1984: 536–539.

³⁸ Ráidity–Gyukin 1984: 546–549.

³⁹ [Deszk településfejlesztési koncepció] 2021: 37.

⁴⁰ Erdős–Széll–Vágási 2007: 92.

⁴¹ [2011. évi népszámlálás] 2013: 186.

Despite the continuous decrease in the number of Serbian residents, members of the Serbian community have always been prominently present in the public life of *Deszke*. Since the early 20th century, an intensive Serbian community music and dance scene can be distinctly identified in *Deszke*.⁴² In the decades following World War II, the village leader was Serbian, and during this period, the president of the Association of Yugoslavs in Hungary was also a resident of *Deszke*.⁴³

Today, *Deszke* in the southern Great Plain region still has a vibrant Serbian community life, and the small Serbian community continues to play a significant role in local public life. Alongside Hungarian, Serbian language signs on the village boundaries mark their presence. There is not only a Serbian church, kindergarten and school, but the president of the local Serbian minority self-government is also the deputy mayor of the municipality, strengthening community integration and presence. The local newspaper regularly publishes detailed reports on the news and programmes of the Serbian community. The Serbian community actively organises Serbian festivals, which are not only for Serbians but also aim to preserve local ethnic cultural heritage (for example textile arts).⁴⁴

In terms of *Deszke*'s active cultural life, two events receive significant media attention outside the village: the Deszk Village Days (including the International Mayors' Cooking Competition) and the Ajvar Festival. From our research perspective, Deszk Village Days are of lesser importance. This event, held since 1994, fits into the village days found in almost every settlement in the country. Since 1999, this has been enhanced by the International Mayors' Cooking Competition. The three-day village days feature exhibitions, street dances, fireworks, cultural programmes, and festive concerts for visitors to the settlement.⁴⁵

The Ajvar Festival, which enriches the active cultural life of the local Serbian community, was first organised in 2011. There is a comprehensive EU financed cross-border cooperation programme between Serbia and Hungary, previously known as Interreg and now called IPA. Initially, the Ajvar Festival was a supplementary event in a cross-border development project. Over the past decade, the Serbian national self-government of *Deszke* has developed several other events. These include the Serbian Pig Slaughter Festival, the Serbian

⁴² Felföldi 2003.

⁴³ Rádity–Gyukin 1984: 550.

⁴⁴ On the history and activities of the association, cf. Bánát nd.

⁴⁵ [Deszk településfejlesztési koncepció] 2021: 53.

Easter – International Egg Tapping Competition, the Rain Summoning Ceremony “Dodole”, and the Serbian Church Dedication Feast. Over the years, the most significant event has undoubtedly become the Ajvar Festival, which has evolved into an independent event.

Ajvar is a widely used condiment in the Balkans, made from roasted peppers, eggplants, and garlic. Traditionally not part of Hungarian cuisine, it is universally associated with Serbian cooking in Hungary. Its popularity is growing along the southern border of the country. The organisers intentionally chose this dish because, among other distinctive South Slavic gastronomic elements, it is “the least known as a ‘festival opportunity’, yet a fundamental traditional delicacy”⁴⁶. *Ajvar* also has a variety of recipes. It is an excellent accompaniment to typical Balkans-style grilled meat dishes, making it a perfect addition to street food in a festival setting. Due to the diverse recipes, an *ajvar* competition is an important part of the festival program.⁴⁷

Following the success of the inaugural festival in 2011, the event has been held annually. The festival is often incorporated into various Serbian-Hungarian collaborative cross-border projects. It serves as an excellent medium for experiencing Serbian culture in Hungary, thanks to the local Serbian minority community. The event related to *ajvar* is unique to Hungary and is not held elsewhere, thus *Deszke* does not have to contend for the monopolisation of this cultural element, unlike *Feked*. However, the aspiration for a unique identity is also evident here. Since 2014, the Ajvar Festival has also been called the “Ajvariáda”. With the Greek and Latin-derived suffix ‘-iada’, the festival elevates to an epic status, akin to a narrative poem dedicated to *ajvar*.

The festival is organised by the Deszk Banat Serbian Cultural Association. The predecessor of this association was the Deszk Serbian Folk Dance Ensemble, established in 1948, which was rebranded in 1972 as the Banat Folk Dance Ensemble, expanding its activities.⁴⁸ Following the political changes, it continued its work under the name of Banat Serbian Cultural Association.⁴⁹ Thus, the festival is not organised by the municipality, but given the municipal positions of the organisers and the financial support from the local government, it can be understood as one of the most prominent, image-building events of the locality. As the deputy mayor and main organiser stated, “For

⁴⁶ Stated by one of the organizers, Péter Dunai, cf. Hrisztov 2014.

⁴⁷ Hrisztov 2014.

⁴⁸ Szász 1984: 55–56.

⁴⁹ Bánát nd.

Deszk, located just a few kilometres from Szeged, the Serbian culture and the village's Serbian roots offer a leapfrogging opportunity⁵⁰.

The programmes of the Ajvar Festival characteristically include distinctly Serbian elements. For example, the vespers at the local Serbian Orthodox church. Given the scarcity of nonminority Orthodox believers in Hungary, this invites attendees into an exotic world in its physicality (language, lights, sounds). The entertainment also features Serbian elements: folk music and dance. All these aspects attract locals, neighbouring Hungarians, and Serbian cultural groups in Hungary. However, such a presentation of minority culture also provides an opportunity for other non-Serbian minority cultural groups. In this way, the Ajvar Festival also becomes a showcase of other minority cultures. In addition, a significant craft fair and a culinary offering that displays elements of Balkan cuisine complement the festival. Turkish coffee, *baklava*, *gibanica* and Balkan wines are offered – items not commonly found in Hungary, except perhaps in special ethnic restaurants.

Like the Feked Stifolder Festival, the Deszk Ajvar Festival stages an element of minority culture. However, a key difference is that this success is achieved by a community that is in a total minority but maintains its public positions effectively. This occurs near a large city, which means it is not a development action based on the culture of a remote locality. In fact, in one of the fastest growing and affluent suburban areas, such development is not necessarily needed. The festival has evolved more as a representation of a minority, which reinforces the image of *Deszk* as a livable and culturally rich community.

The Role of Local, Non-Local and Minority Cultural Elements in Festivals

The origin and local connection of the cultural elements highlighted at local festivals can vary greatly. On the basis of my research, we can categorise them into four major groups. Festivals that focus on a well-identifiable local cultural or economic phenomenon are based on local agricultural produce, typical local economic activities, or cultural heritage connected to a specific locality. Another major group of festivals aims to preserve or revive disappearing or disappeared local cultural elements, placing them in a festive context. The third major group of local festivals emphasises invented traditions. Finally, there are festivals based on humour, grotesque details, or random coincidences.

⁵⁰ HandCraft 2022.

In festivals that focus on well-identifiable local cultural or economic phenomena, the highlighted cultural elements can sometimes be very explicitly and stereotypically associated with the location. This category can include agricultural products or animal breeding methods that have local traditions. In some cases, a processing industry may have already been built around these, and sometimes these industries may have already been associated with professional (e.g., food industry) image-building activities. This category also includes prominent intellectual or architectural heritage that has been strongly and long associated with a location. In the case of events categorised in this manner, previous ethnographic research can serve as a source for authentic representation and presentation, and organisers often favour relying on this.

In Hungary, a prominent example of this category is the *Csabai Kolbász-fesztivál* [Csaba Sausage Festival].⁵¹ Since 1997, the annual festival has become one of the country's largest gastronomic events. The four-day event, attended by 60–70,000 people, centres around communal sausage making.⁵² The event has been able to rely on the support of the meat industries of *Békéscsaba* and *Gyula* since its inception, and their products were already well-known in the country before the regime change. These meat industries were established in the late 19th century, based on widespread pig farming in the area.

The second subgroup of festivals includes those where the cultural raw material highlighted is either disappearing from the local culture or has already been completely forgotten. This often involves forgotten or dying elements of peasant culture (e.g., some peasant calendar traditions) or previously overlooked details of the built cultural heritage. In these cases, more or less professional preparatory activities and research related to cultural heritage authenticate the phenomenon, which is then presented as a local speciality. When a festival highlights a peasant custom, it is not an enduring tradition but rather an accurate replication, one whose function in contemporary times has entirely transformed, and which now involves a different set of participants. In these cases, the cultural element is forgotten so much that it is often necessary to educate the local public about the connection between the cultural element and the locality. These informative texts are usually simplified versions of previous ethnographic research that seeks to prove the local connection. In these texts, the creation of myths is sometimes also discernible. Sometimes, civic activism revives or keeps these phenomena alive.

⁵¹ Official website: *Csabai kolbász-fesztivál* <https://www.csabaikolbaszfestival.hu/> – 10.10.2023.

⁵² Formádi–Hunyadi–Koppány–Németh–Solt–Zsigmond 2019.

As an example the event called *Marha(nagy)Hajtás* [Great Cattle Drive] has been held in *Nagyvázsony*, Veszprém County, since 2007 can be mentioned.⁵³ This festival, held around Saint Michael's Day, revives the peasant culture tradition of driving cattle back from the outer pastures in autumn. Since it occurs in autumn, the organisers have combined it with a harvest celebration, so today it is called "Saint Michael's Day Great Cattle Drive, Shepherd's Festival, and Harvest Celebration". One of the highlights of the event is the procession of the herd of cattle through the village, reviving a phenomenon no longer seen today.

The third group of festivals includes those where phenomena with no local connection are linked to a locality. In such cases, cultural brokers⁵⁴ of the locality attempt to prove that the widely known cultural element in question is indeed a unique feature of the specific place. The discourse supporting the local appropriation of this cultural element often emphasises mythical elements, as scientifically (and expertly) appearing arguments do not find convincing evidence to support their stance. In these cases, local organisers generally do not use previous ethnographic research related to local culture, as it does not support the local connection of the particular cultural element. Another typical example of such actions is the appropriation and monopolisation of certain vegetables or fruits, or animal breeding traditions, or commonly available foods.

Following this logic, the village of *Pusztamérges* in the southern Great Plain began to develop tourist-attracting festivals in the mid-1990s. One of them was the *Nemzetközi Töltöttkáposzta-főző Verseny* [International Stuffed Cabbage Cooking Competition]. Stuffed cabbage is a well-known dish throughout Central Europe, but there was no specific recipe or cult for it locally. However, since it is widely known, it was likely that there would be no shortage of participants for a festival that focused on this dish. The leaders of the village chose this dish as the centrepiece of their event and attempted to associate it with the settlement. They also organised the *Lúdas Matyi Libaszezés- és Libafuttató Verseny* [Matyi the Gooseboy Goose Beauty and Goose Running Competition], named after a Hungarian folk hero. There was no particular tradition of goose farming in the village, but after a poultry slaughterhouse was built there,

⁵³ The event does not have a separate website; the program for 2023 can be found on the homepage of the village: <https://nagyvazsony.hu/szent-mihaly-napi-marha-nagy-hajtas-nagyvazsony/> – 10.11.2023.

⁵⁴ Bendix–Welz 1999; Pusztai–Varga 2008.

more people started raising geese for the factory. The invented competition was based on this.⁵⁵

I classify separately those cases where a festival is clearly built on something humorous, random coincidence, or a humorous presentation of a mundane process or characteristic. These often involve humorous competitions, and in these cases, no one tries to prove the local connection of the cultural element in question. Instead, the organisers rely on the playfulness and curiosity inherent in everyone.

A clever Hungarian example is the case of *Kán* (pronounced like Cannes, France) village in Baranya County. The population of this settlement began to decline after World War II and ceased to be an independent locality in 1978. The completely depopulated village houses were bought by city dwellers, primarily from nearby *Pécs*, as vacation homes. Urban dwellers who spend more or less time there have been organising the Kán Film Festival since 1998. In the firehouse designated as the “film palace” and outdoors, they screened crowd-favourite movies and listened to the joyful music of amateur bands.⁵⁶

In our examination of the Feked festival, we illustrated how elevating elements of minority culture can reinforce the uniqueness of a locality, especially in places where the given minority constituted or until recently constituted the majority of the population. The Deszk festival aims for something more ambitious: it turns an element of a culture, which is a minority even locally, into the most important attraction of the settlement. This essentially represents a strategy of exoticization: to transform an unknown but attractive characteristic of only a small group of the population into a central element of the image of the settlement. In both cases, employing Dean MacCannell’s theory on the creation of tourist attractions,⁵⁷ we can say that minority culture becomes a marker of the locality. In *Feked*, the thick sausage originating from Swabia, the stifolder, becomes the marker. In *Deszke*, it is the Serbian-originated dish, *ajvar*, that becomes the settlement’s marker. This marker’s content is a foreign cultural element unknown to the local or regional, national majority community.

The approach is by no means unique. Following a trend in Hungary during the 2000s, where every locality endeavoured to create its own unique event, the

⁵⁵ Pusztai 2003. The competitions no longer exist, as the main organizer, who was the mayor, was replaced, and his successors did not see potential in this method of community development.

⁵⁶ The event does not have an official website. According to its Facebook page, it was not held after the COVID pandemic, cf. https://www.facebook.com/kanifilmfeszt/?locale=hu_HU – 08.07.2023.

⁵⁷ MacCannell 1976.

potential cultural elements for such events gradually became saturated. Consequently, it became increasingly challenging to create an event that could attract national attention. In this context, events based on national minorities' cultures offered a new avenue to establish local uniqueness.

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