

# TOWARDS THE ANALYSIS OF TRADITION-BASED PROJECTS OF LOCALITY: A CASE STUDY FROM RURAL HUNGARY

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## ABSTRACT

In this case study\* I offer an insight into the activity of an association for local traditions in a Hungarian village. In addition, I provide some general analytical frames for the examination of such tradition-based locality projects. The field of the observation is Kóny, a village in north-west Hungary. Its peasant traditions – especially the famous male dance, Kóny *verbunk* – were re-contextualised from time to time in the 20th century. The latest, recent, wave of re-construction concentrates on the systematic (re-)valorisation of locality by highlighting its former peasant traditions and the vernacularisation of the concept of heritage. While the organising work means a new, shared everyday practice for the association's members, performing the traditions in the public space offers the villagers an occasion to reinforce local identity and identify with the locality.

**KEYWORDS:** culture building • local identity • organising locality • (re-)valorising locality • staged folk tradition

## INTRODUCTION

The highlighted elements of the set of historical categories and phenomena identified as folk culture are re-contextualised from time to time as a consequence of providing norms such as nation states or local initiatives. Assessment of the effects of social and political discussion of folk culture is a well-founded and important research topic for Hungarian ethnology (Hofer 1980; 1994; Niedermüller 2001). This paper focuses on the

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work of contemporary local actors who feel responsibility for organising and carrying out activities that fall into the category of tradition or heritage – the latter has become widely used as a result of the latest conceptual expansion – and aims to deal mainly with these elements. I chose rural settlements and villages to conduct my ethnological fieldwork because I was able to observe strong attachments to some phenomena performed on the stage the history of which dates back to the period between the two World Wars and which are at present highlighted as the essence of local tradition. Kóny, a village in north-western Hungary with approximately 2,600 inhabitants has become famous across Hungary since the 1920s due to a male dance, the so-called Kóny *verbunk*. Kóny *verbunk* is particularly important at local level because people consider it as undoubtedly local in origin. It draws public attention not just as a piece of possible ‘forgotten’ material of creating a local image but it was also known as an organising model earlier in the period of various (cultural) political eras (cf. Pusztai 2018: 22–24). In my research paper I aim to examine the present social environment of the Kóny *verbunk* and the working mechanism of the Association for Safeguarding Local Tradition and Culture (see below, as ASLTC), which has the responsibility of maintaining this practice. This local civil society was established in 2018 by some active members of the Kóny Folk Dance Ensemble as an association, thus intending to create an official framework of their activities. I intend to understand the function of this phenomenon (and in a wider sense folk culture presented on stage) in the complex world of locality. In my analysis, beyond the scope of local processes, I aim to construct a possible model for analysing similar groups, activities and strategies organised around the axis of tradition. I hope to receive a deeper insight not just into single communities but also into the movements of contemporary Hungarian localities.

#### THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS: PLACE – COMMUNITY – LOCALITY

To show how social actors cooperate in the aforementioned phenomena it is necessary to clarify what and who are investigated when the activities of a particular group organised along the lines of common interests are observed. To what extent can we grasp the whole society of an entity that exists in a physical place along the lines of such a special phenomenon, if this particular interest is only present in the life of a small part of it? Can this part be identified as a community? With reference to the Kóny *verbunk*, can we talk about Kóny people as real underlying content and as an analytical category?

Late modernity with its perceptive horizon and system of concepts questions place when it is considered as a clear-cut point of interpretation, and also the handling of communities imagined in space and identities defined by place as conceptual and analytical frameworks.<sup>1</sup> It is not just that the physical and symbolic boundaries of place and community do not coincide, but also that their participation in global economic, cultural and information networks makes the definition of communities according to different types of boundary (spatial, cultural, symbolic) doubtful (Bencze 2010: 146–150). In this wider sense, attempts to define a community by identification or participation seem to solve or eliminate the problem of boundaries, and not just in terms of space. Anthony P. Cohen (2001 [1985]: 108–110) defines communities as entities existing

not within boundaries that can be defined by objective characteristics but as mental constructions or ideas. In his model, communities are held together by symbolic self-expression through such condensation symbols,<sup>2</sup> which often belonged to the categories of the past or tradition. The feeling of community created this way succeeds in covering other internal differences or boundaries within the community. It does not even require a common interpretation of the chosen symbols of those identifying themselves with them: it is successful because the individuals with different experiences and expectations do not have to connect the same meanings or the same interpretations to the symbol(s) or to the interpretation of the community.<sup>3</sup> This model considers communities as entities with flexible boundaries held together by identification as a situationally arising, consciously shaped practice.

Over and above accepting that space is socially constructed, in the local-global system of correspondence of late modernity the (re-)valorisation of place has become another highlighted idea. Taking local and global notions as pairs of opposites, the strengthening of the spatial aspects of individual and community attachments can be considered a resistance to global processes, in essence a counter-effect (Bencze 2010: 146–147). For the analyses focusing on the co-existence, interactions and hybridisation of the local and the global, instead of the unstoppable expansion of globalisation, the attachment to concrete physical places constitutes an integral part of the 'glocal' perceptive horizon (Meyrowitz 2005). Recognising free choice in the level of engagement draws attention to the plasticity of attachments or the ability to shape them. The attachment to a physical place can rarely be considered a rational one, in most cases there is an extra emotional factor. Since they are socially constructed, places are inseparable from a series of co-notions with positive connotation such as the (local) past, continuity, identity or the (local) community. Ideas based on these notions try to organise the present according to esteemed patterns found in the past (for example, Boym 2001; Bauman 2017). The notion of *Heimat* 'my country', 'homeland', 'motherland' in German speaking areas focuses various aspects of the emotional occupation of a place. It was in the 19th century, with progress in modernisation, that *Heimat* as a legal, administrative quality became a concept expressing the emotional relationship between people and their geographical, cultural and social environments.<sup>4</sup> Following the turn started by Ina-Maria Greverus (1972; 1979), contemporary critical research into *Heimat* focuses on creating an immediate social environment and on occupying it actively (see Bönisch et al. 2020). In the research of the *Heimat* to be created, the emotional relationship of man (society) to places becomes significant, highlighting the importance of the dimensions of remembrance and interpretation of the past. Patterns derived from the (imagined) past and used in the present to create various *Heimat* related concepts draw attention to the fact that the creation of *Heimat* makes it possible to occupy actively not just a particular place but also the past (see Bausinger 1990: 89).

Actors in a society may consciously or strategically strive to create socially constructed places containing cultural meanings, assuming emotional identification. Cultural phenomena defined as local may be relied on by local actors as endogenous resources for want of exogenous development resources, or in order to attain them. The studies in the volume edited by Csilla Schell, Michael Prosser-Schell and Bertalan Pusztai (Schell et al. 2018), which focuses on the re-invention of local traditions that regained momentum after 1990 in East Europe, highlight the economic aspects of the

cultural self-definition of local communities and their embeddedness in local politics. As part of the theoretical background to their case studies, which mainly drew on Hungarian materials, Pusztai and Schell ascribe the genesis of the East European new wave of inventing traditions to several different factors (Pusztai 2018; Schell 2018). Because of the change of the political regime the previous cultural orientation defined from above disappeared and a vacuum appeared in local cultural life. After the institutions of local self-government were restored, the opportunity arose to apply local ideas and patterns in the creation of the renewed festivity culture. The invention of festivities under different names – festivals, traditional celebrations, folk customs – contributed to stability through the building of a successful and sustainable image in an era characterised by tenders and projects as the means of fulfilling development policy (Kováč 2012: 146–159). Apart from granting various economic advantages, public occasions of local self-identification provide opportunities to experience a notion of local identification (cf. Pusztai 2018: 33). Some of the patterns used to construct this festivity culture come from a set of phenomena identified as local tradition. Moreover, responses that use the past as an organising principle and seem to be retrospective at first sight are not characteristic only of Central and East European rural societies, they are also phenomena that accompany political transition as their motivations can also be connected to the global trend of heritage to at least the same extent (Pusztai 2018; Schell 2018).

Researches focusing on the indirect economic gains of the (re-)valorisation of place draw attention to the operation of local networks of relations that span several sectors, serving the purpose of creating the quality and characteristics of a place. The importance of direct physical resources may be surpassed by the success of techniques intended to create local culture or build a social network, for instance in the case of groups organised according to such special interests that do not aim to achieve economic gains but take responsibility for physical places (for example, Ickert 2009). If we do not intend to discuss to what extent it is the primary goal of a local culture-building activity to attain immediate economic profit, it is possible to move towards a comprehensive theoretical framework that focuses on a locality with cultural idiosyncrasies as resources. The culture economy theory of sociologist Christopher Ray (1998) is based on the idea that cultural characteristics are considered possible resources for rural territorial development to an increasing degree. (Re-)valorising a place by creating its cultural identity serves the purpose of reaching extra-local resources, which in turn strengthens the localisation of economic control and therefore the opportunities of a particular locality to enforce its social-economic interests.<sup>5</sup> The concepts of local development are carried out by applying such frameworks of symbols and ideas that are the products of discourses between social movements beyond the locality. This requires the recognition and acknowledgement of ‘local knowledge’ and its transformation into a resource, and as a resource it becomes available for a particular locality or regionality.<sup>6</sup> In Ray’s culture economy model, the community initiatives to create local identities are strategies for creating the quality of a place, independent of whether they aim to gain profit (for example tourism) or intend to maintain the image of a sustainable place, thus indirectly helping reach exogenous resources.

Therefore, I intended to choose a conceptual background, an analytical framework that considers the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and of spatiality. The activities of the ASLTC cannot be interpreted without taking into consideration its spatial

connection to Kóny as its essence derives from the individuals and the community attached to a physical place. For this it is necessary to accept that the identification forming the base of the attachment is flexible and connected to occasions and situations, and that its level can be freely chosen. This level applies not just to the internal cohesion of a particular group of people but also to their relationship with the place(s). Attempts to create places to which social meanings and feelings are ascribed, which are actively occupied, which have a significant role in the biographies of individuals and constitute the basis of group formation are interpreted in my analysis as attempts to produce locality (in which I follow Appadurai 2005 [1996]). In this respect locality is a property of social life, a structure of feeling and the ideology of a positioned community. Nevertheless, its existence is not obvious and requires continuous re-production. Therefore, in Arjun Appadurai's interpretation local knowledge means knowing how to produce or re-produce locality with its spatial and temporal aspects and the local subjects connected to it. In my analysis I basically use the notion of local knowledge after Appadurai (knowing how to produce and organise locality) while I extend this meaning with Ray's remark that (re-)valorising local knowledge ensures advantages in the field of attaining extra-local resources.

Although the production of locality is basically driven by context, as Appadurai stated, it also generates contexts that produce a comprehensive area for wider contexts. Producing contexts and being driven by contexts are described by Appadurai as two forces working against each other. This is the reason why attempts made by globalisation or modern nation states to create contexts mean challenges to the existence of contexts generated by localities (Appadurai 2005 [1996]). Another interpretation of the relations between contexts is cooperation, interaction and negotiation. Introducing the notion of global countryside, Michael Woods (2007: 497) draws attention to the fact that while localities are necessarily re-arranged and transformed in the context of globalisation, this is not a centrally controlled process but the result of continuous hybridisation between local and global actors. From this point of view, using global notions does not result in the weakening of locality but enables its creation and successful maintenance.

Approaching the role of folk culture, it is worth bearing in mind Pusztai's (2018: 37–38) observation on the relations of locality, culture and creating post-modern images. In Pusztai's opinion, attempts to (re-)invent local traditions and a festivity culture – or locality in the wider sense of the word – are only successful in those cases where they can use the frameworks provided by globalisation in accordance with their territorial development ideas. So, the production of locality is not based on the successful exclusion of the effects of globalisation but on their active integration and on applying them as patterns. In the production of locality, following contexts provided by wider structures does not necessarily impede the development of contexts generalised by localities, although they are interconnected in a complicated system. I do not accept the paradigm of being threatened by the operations of globalisation or any other normative structure (for example nation states and their institutions) as the motivation or the obvious frame of interpretation of the phenomena. I rather tend to interpret what I experienced in the field as the dialogues of local and extra-local contexts, placing the perspectives of the actors of societies in the centre.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, the activity of the group connected with the Kóny *verbunk* is regarded by me as an organised way

to product locality. Using this term 'organising locality' enables me to highlight the project-based environment which supports the operation of the ASLTC as well as the process of professionalisation that takes place in close connection with it. I assume that a possible model of organisation is provided by the local tradition performed on the stage. Within this, the Kóny *verbunk* has a significant role, which is considered a clear sign of a socially constructed place that is emotionally occupied. Folk tradition as a construction becomes a possible model of organisational activities. In this sense part of local knowledge is that folk tradition performed on stage can trigger the formation of a group, and can maintain it, therefore it seems to be suitable to organise locality at present. The main question of my research is how and why local tradition can function as the model of organising locality. What is the exact role of the Kóny *verbunk* in this process?

A MODEL FOUND IN THE LOCAL PAST:  
A TESTED RECIPE FOR THE KÓNY VERBUNK

*Verbunk* is a type of male dance, performed either solo or collectively, the roots of which go back to the 18th century.<sup>7</sup> Male circle dances with many local versions were documented by ethnographers across the whole region of the Kisalföld (north-western Hungary). According to the available data, for the first half of the 20th century the Kisalföld circle *verbunk* had a fixed structure involving the collaboration of a dance leader who guided the dance. The circular *verbunks* of this region were connected to the existence of lads' clubs (leagues of unmarried young men), as illustrated by the example of the Kóny *verbunk*. Dance was inseparable from the groups of young men organised according to the sections of the village: it was learnt, practised and performed in the clubs.<sup>8</sup>

In Kóny, between the wars, the *verbunk* was mainly a representational practice, serving the purpose of maintaining group identity and showing the social boundaries and differences within the locality. Lads' clubs were organisations separated according to age and village section, organised around the pubs in a particular part of the village. The village sections differed from one another in the social positions of their inhabitants: their place in the social hierarchy was given according to the amount of land they owned. The main occasion when the *verbunk* was performed was Michaelmas (September 29), the day of the patron saint of the church. The *verbunk* was performed after the litany with the companies of various pubs dancing their *verbunks* in separate circles. Therefore, the circles standing in front of the church symbolically displayed the structure and the hierarchy of the village for the local residents and those visiting the village on the day of the feast.

In the interwar period this dance started to become a stage sight. The Bouquet of Pearls (*Gyöngyösbokréta* 1931–1944) movement was the first to transform the performances of village dance groups into mass events, supporting the stage performances of folk culture in villages at a national level.<sup>9</sup> Apart from the festivals in the capital city, regional performances set village residents in motion and the *verbunk* was first performed on stage at regional meetings connected to this movement. Dance, which had been a local phenomenon up to that time, became the subject of social discourse on a grander scale when the dance of lads' clubs was transformed into the Kóny *ver-*

*bunk*. During the decade following the Second World War, dance practice connected to the lads' clubs existed in an intermittent, simpler form. The enforcement of communist agrarian policy at a local level, by eliminating private farming, shattered the economic structure that had been the base of separating lads' clubs according to village section. The earlier social network was rearranged. At the same time, dance was performed rather as a staged spectacle: under the inspection of the local authority, this phenomenon was transformed from a religious feast into a political one.<sup>10</sup>

After the 1950s there was no surviving organisation based upon the *verbunk*. The reinvention was started by the catholic parson, who had just come to the village, and the cantor in the atmosphere of the political transformation of 1989. The dance on the day of the patron saint's feast was reconstructed at that time: the *verbunk* was performed by a group of children accompanied by the parson with an accordion. At the same time, in the 1990s a school folk dance club was established which later became the village folk dance ensemble. Those who shape the present processes are all members of this generation, appearing as initiators in the early 2000s. They are considered to be the main motivators of today's self-organisation. Due to their efforts the event was transformed into a festival-like occasion by the folk dance ensemble at the beginning of the 2010s; as to the feast, other folk dance groups of the region are also invited.

#### THE STORY OF A NEW GROUP ORGANISATION

I first participated in the *Verbunk* Festival in 2019. The event was organised by the ASLTC, founded in the previous year. The event gave me some insight into the formation of a new entity, a civil association based on local tradition (see Photo 1). My participation started on Saturday afternoon with the first public program of the festival, the rehearsal of the dance ensembles. The locals together with the guest groups prepared for the Sunday morning church feast in the sports centre, which was followed by a dinner together and a feast with music and dance in a local inn. On Sunday, the day of the patron saint's feast started with a rehearsal in the courtyard of the country house and open-air museum. The program of holy mass was based upon the active participation of the dancers: in his greeting, the parson emphasised the members of the folk dance ensemble, who attend the ceremony in traditional costumes. The first and the second Scripture readings and prayers were read out by members of the ensemble. I left the church with the crowd after the mass, but I tried to be in the front to gain a favourable position to make video recordings. The best view can be had from the stairs leading up to the church and from the level of the church surrounded by stone railings, but these places were almost full of people by the time I came out. This way I managed to observe that there are many people who do not take part in the mass on the saint's day, but come to watch the performance, gaining for themselves good positions in the square (see Photo 2). The venue was surrounded by tape; a little further, members of the local Association for Civil Security could be seen. Finally, I managed to record the event clearly, although from a really inconvenient position. I saw others doing the same around me: several people made video recordings of the event on their smart phones. After a short speech, given by Miklós,<sup>11</sup> the president of the association greeted the participants and the dance started. For the *verbunk*, the dancers stood in concentric circles:

the internal circle was formed by the Kóny dancers and the external circles by guests (see Photo 3). The *verbunk* was followed by a short choreography of dancing pairs so that the female members of the folk dance groups could also participate. Afterwards, the dancers performed shorter versions of their choreography in front of several local pubs. The *Verbunk* Festival ended with a common lunch in a restaurant, in which the members of the local ensemble and the members of the invited groups took part.



Photo 1. A banner with the emblem of the association hangs from the railings of the church during the *Verbunk* Festival. Photo by Szabolcs Tóth, 2019.

After the 2019 *Verbunk* Festival in Kóny I visited several events organised by the association and later interviewed several members of the dominant core of the group. During the observations and discussions, I was especially interested in the motivation of the local members and the emic interpretation of the formation of their association. However, I am certain that the effect of a re-contextualised tradition on the whole of a locality can only be seen if neither those who only occasionally join the activity nor those who are completely unaffected by this phenomenon are neglected. In order to ensure a better understanding I offer for the reader's consideration a short video example on YouTube as a piece of the material I recorded in 2021 at the *Verbunk* Festival (Eitler 2021).<sup>12</sup>





*Photo 2. People gather in the square in front of the church and wait for the performance of the Kóny verbunk. Photo by Beáta Magyar, 2019.*



*Photo 3. The performance of the verbunk. The most significant moment of the festival. Photo by an unknown photographer, 2018, the owner is Péter Balázs.*

## PROJECTS OF LOCALITY: THE POSSIBILITIES TO INTRODUCE A CONCEPT

### *Project-based Culture Building*

According to the founding members of ASLTC, the establishment of this type of organisation was supported by financial arguments and opportunities that could only be taken this way. In the first stage of formation, tasks within the association were quickly divided. The aims were worded and the work of the organisation was carried out by a core group of seven who were in their early 30s. Apart from dividing the offices of the association among themselves at the foundation, such as the positions of president, vice-president and secretary, they divided the duties into several fields. Members undertook to deal with tenders, finances and to control the communication according to their personal interests, professional experiences and competencies.<sup>13</sup>

Well, I bring many things from my job at the local administration. To record all these, everything should be systematised, we should pay attention to who we invite to certain events of ours or how we speak to certain people. I got it from my work at the local administration. (FM: Petra)

The work in the different fields is controlled by the president of the association, Miklós, who is also the leader of the folk dance ensemble. His grandfather was a recognised practitioner of the *verbunk* and played a key role in the restoration of the dance in the 1990s, something that is important in Miklós's motivation as well as his legitimacy to others.<sup>14</sup> Since 2019 Miklós has been an independent member of the body of representatives in the local. Many of the slogans on his placards displayed in the election campaign – such as “let it be a good feeling to live in Kóny, be proud to be from Kóny!” and “safeguarding traditions, culture building, a dynamic way of thinking, development, commitment, cooperation, creativity” – are closely connected to the locality vision of the association. In other words, these are ideas for which segments of the locality could be used as local resources in the development of the village (see Photo 4).<sup>15</sup> Thus the need to extend the aims of a small, common interest-based group for at the locality level appeared on the local political stage. Furthermore, the placards and Miklós's program provide examples of the various aspects of local culture-building activities not just as a means of political effectiveness at local level but also as the endogenous resources of local development (cf. Ray 1998).

Some of the material or other resources necessary for the operation of the association and the organisation of events are produced in the village as normative support from the local authority and as a donation from local residents. Nevertheless, the majority of the funds can be reached as exogenous resources in the form of state tenders, something that supports the organisation, but also forces it to become professional.<sup>16</sup> Initially, the activities in the tenders, and therefore the types of tender, fell into the category of folk culture. They served the purpose of acquiring special equipment that is necessary for the existence of the folk dance ensemble, such as costumes needed for the performances, in accordance with a state tender for “supporting the community building function of folk culture” (Csoóri 2018: 1). Soon, the horizon of attainable resources seemed to open wider with tenders aimed at village civil organisations under the aegis



Photo 4. Miklós's placard from his 2019 election campaign. Owned by Miklós.

of rural development. The funds from these tenders helped the association buy a property in the centre of the village, which in the future is intended to provide a venue for dance rehearsals and the events of the group. These funds will also provide a physical place for the organisational activities. Some of these exogenous resources are invested in the enterprise, mainly financing marketing activities, for example building an image of a successful association online, using various types of social media.

Well, our media coverage is very, very good, if we win something, it can be found on Facebook or Instagram. So that they know that we achieved this, so much money, six million, that we won the house. It is not a small sum. (FM: Anita)

It is worth observing that the process of local culture building is becoming project-based from the wider perspective of (rural) development policy. According to Imre Kovách (2012), the most important changes in the power structure of rural Hungary since the turn of the millennium is that the project-based division of resources, following the model of the European Union, is gaining ground in financing the development of local governments and the civil sphere, instead of the system of normative subventions. As this project-based system of subventions is gaining ground, new local key actors, the 'project class', is on the rise, leading to the division of local power between local government and experts, designers and administrators who aid in obtaining exogenous resources. (Ibid.: 140–152) The example of the ASLTC leads to the conclusion that even the operation of civil organisations in the sphere of local culture is becoming

project-oriented, therefore those teams have the advantage that they are able to achieve their goals in a project-based subventional system and have the relevant know-how (cf. Harrison 2009: 38). In this case, the process is generated by the fact that this particular group feels that the normative subvention coming through the local government is inadequate, or to be more exact, they feel that it is not adequate to finance the expected costs of their goals.

### *Organising Locality*

The experiences gained in the field lead us to suppose that the association applies for the tenders as it draws up projects for the locality as a whole. The consolidation of the association and moving towards project-based operation indicates the increased needs of the group and the intention of expanding their scope.

The association, with 32 members, is organised based upon the common interests of the members and is connected to a physical place, the village of Kóny. The activity of the team falls into the category of leisure activities, and most of its members considers tradition, mainly dancing, a hobby or pastime activity. Performing the *verbunk* is not common knowledge shared by all locals. In this sense, knowing the *verbunk* and practicing it distinguishes performers as a group of villagers who takes responsibility for ensuring the transmission of dance within the frames their organisation as well as presenting it in public. Apart from the time spent on doing this special activity, the connections created by belonging to the group structure everyday life either through other actions such as excursions or dinners organised by the association for members or through the friendships developed within the group (see Photo 5). Organising the group's activities beyond pursuing the hobby in its narrow sense is voluntary, performed by members and directed by the leadership. Concerning the internal operation it can be observed that by forming various common customs, the leadership intends to intensify interaction between members. Some of the newly created customs are connected to private occasions, for example greeting those leaving school. Others are celebrations of calendar feasts such as making Christmas cards or organising the common Easter sprinkling of water. Apart from the feasts, the feeling of belonging may contribute to the normality of everyday life through the positive experiences in the intensity and the quality of everyday communication.

I like that youngsters respect us. When we go in the street, say, I am always surprised when they greet me aloud. [...] Or when we meet somewhere at a party, with another group of friends, they sit next to us and talk to us. (FM: Eszter)

It is worth observing the occasions when the scope of the activity reaches beyond the well-defined framework of the association. Events requiring locality are held in public places, especially at the most important and centrally located points of the village such as the square in front of the church. On Christmas Eve, after the midnight mass liturgy, association members make mulled wine for those leaving the church and other passers-by, greeting them for the holiday. The New Year pig slaughter is also an annually organised occasion to work and to celebrate, a family occasion transformed into a village-level festival.



Photo 5. Members of the association gather for their annual general assembly followed by dinner. Photo by the author, 2021.

The various forms of support given to the association connect local actors temporarily or permanently to it without becoming members. Supporters become engaged in activities as private individuals, entrepreneurs, or members of some other local organisation. The cooperation of the local church and the association is based upon the parson's personal sympathy. When the parson started to serve in Kóny, the framework of the *Verbunk* Festival had already been set up. He took over the liturgy of mass on the saint's day with the active participation of the folk dance ensemble and considered the festival in front of the church an integral part of the religious feast in which he also participates as a spectator. It was the parson's recommendation to include the *verbunk* in the procession on Saint Rita's Day and dance it after the liturgy. The association also cooperates with other local organisations, usually on a mutual basis: for example, the Association for Civil Security secures the venue and the safety of the people at the *Verbunk* Festival and the folk dance ensemble usually opens its annual ball. Among local supporters we can also mention pub owners and innkeepers, who regularly provide venues for association events without requiring any rent.

With its marketing activity the association aims to reach out to the locality as a whole. Coordinating the presence in various media is a separate responsibility in the operation. At present they have a Facebook site and an Instagram profile, and a website is being developed for the association (see Photo 6). Apart from an online pres-

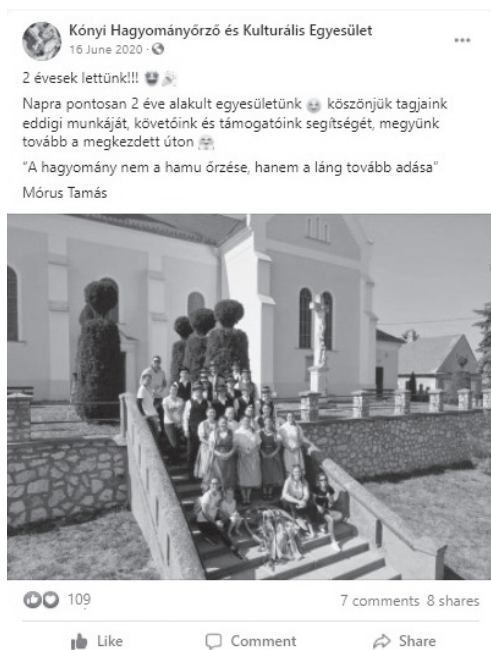


Photo 6. The association shared a Facebook post about the 2020 second anniversary of its establishment: "We have become two years old! Our association was established two years ago on this day. We are thankful for the work our members have done so far and for the help of our followers and supporters, we are going forward on our way. 'Tradition is not to preserve the ashes but to pass on the flame' (Thomas More)."

These efforts, which aim to do more than just create and strengthen group cohesion, organise the locality including events that are within the scope of tradition or in the wider sense of the word, projects carried out as part of local culture-building activities.

### Locality Projects

At this point in the analysis I suggest introducing the notion of 'locality project'. This concept includes the main features of the association, i.e., being project-oriented, and the high level of professionalism in connection with this and the need to organise the locality. By locality project I mean a community connected to a place, organising the locality according to a certain theme. It is responsible for producing and maintaining a feature of locality, ensuring the complex quality of a place. It works in the following manner: 1. The community is organised based on a common interest in a particular feature of locality, its cohesion is the result of the increasing density of internal interactions (for example establishing a system of norms and standards, inventing customs,

since the leadership also felt it necessary to have a printed periodical. The *Hírmondó* ('Association News') was first published in December 2020 as a freely distributed four-page publication introducing the association and summarising its activities and future goals. It was delivered to all households in the village. This printed press, and the online presence, involved to some extent even those who did not take part in the events, at least for the time they were reading the news.

O, well marketing in today's world is really... We put our force into community media: Instagram, Facebook. The posts, the videos, everything is about media. Our website is under development. [...] That's also an interface. Because these days if you are not on Facebook, you are lost. It is as if you didn't exist. [...] It is completed with printed publications, our leaflet from the 1% of taxes,<sup>17</sup> which was released, and the *Hírmondó*. Because we must bear in mind the generation that doesn't keep pushing the mobile phone all day long but walks to their post box and opens *Kisalföld*<sup>18</sup>. On and off we appear in it too. (FM: Petra)

creating the mechanisms of internal communication, etc.). 2. It affects the sphere of leisure, with activities organised around a thematic axis practiced by members as hobbies. 3. To obtain the necessary extra-local resources for the community to become professional, and divide the tasks of the operation so that, 4., concepts and projects can be organised for the locality as a whole. The benefit of the project is the re-production of a chosen characteristic feature of the locality with all its positive implications. According to this logic, by using the notion of locality project I hope to grasp those mechanisms by which a team of actors tries to organise the locality by maintaining a feature that is part of local knowledge such as staged folk tradition (cf. local practices and projects, Appadurai 2005 [1996]: 184–186.) The parallel existence of the two natures of the project is of key importance: switching to project-based financing in the field of culture building transforms these communities into quasi business enterprises, whereas the nature of the expected benefit – the successful organisation of the locality – rather strengthens its voluntary nature shifting towards (taking) responsibility and voluntary efforts (see social entrepreneurs in Ickert 2009: 54).

### *The Features of Locality*

The horizon of the analysis is enlarged by the introduction of this concept. If I consider the activity of the ASLTC as a locality project, in a similar way, organising the locality can be investigated from the perspective of communities formulated along other thematic axes such as local sport, fishing, hunting, civil security, pigeon fanciers', volunteer firefighters and choir associations. In the case of the association I observe, tradition is this chosen feature around which the members organise other activities too, revealing a more general need to build local culture.

If we bear in mind what generates and context-driven double nature of locality mentioned by Appadurai, locality projects can be considered to produce certain types of (thematic) context by making use of the given endogenous resources and local knowledge. Here, local knowledge is successfully using a well-known and proven model of organisation, i.e. the staged folk tradition, mainly the Kóny *verbunk*, thus knowing, using and following certain extra-local contexts in order to organise a particular group or the whole locality. The contexts of norm giving structures not only ensure the possibilities of activities aimed at maintaining locality, but also influence the nature of organising. In the case of project-based financing the activities funded by tender shape the experience of the features maintained by the locality project, the concrete programs organised around it and ultimately, the concepts themselves formed around locality.

If the definition of locality project is expanded to other organisations according to the aforementioned characteristics, we can see a picture of the operation of locality from a certain point of view. The communities organised voluntarily around a special activity maintain certain features of the locality. These are the features by which individuals can be connected to locality as locality projects provide occasional opportunities for those who do not participate in it to identify themselves with the activity.

I think that these civil organisations have some activities, a goal by which they give something to the residents of the village. Either it is a hobby or if I think of civil security, they provide protection of the property or something else. Because civil

security works in an organised way, hats off to them. The fishermen provide the possibility for anglers to spend their free time fishing by releasing fish to provide an adequate supply for the year. So these are things the local authority may not have the time to arrange or deal with. There is a small organisation, a civil organisation specialised in dealing with that problem! So it is a task for it! Okay, they get some financial support for it, but I think that it can be seen as a duty too. (FM: Miklós)

By maintaining the feature assumed by them, locality projects organise not only a certain special leisure activity for a small group of people connected by their common interests. Their activities and goals contain elements of applying for the locality, in some cases these are emphasised as with civil security or volunteer firefighters, in other cases they are less direct, for example in the case of fishermen and hunters, and pigeon fanciers who also take care of the natural environment. The sport association and the choir as well as the association for safeguarding local tradition sometimes represent the locality and Kóny people outside the village at sports matches or performances.

Locality projects are connected by information and knowledge sharing as well as cooperation in the project-based development system. These communities often share information about tender opportunities informally. Sometimes members of other associations even help one another with applying for a tender. On occasion local groups that do not operate as associations have also applied for financial support with the help of an association as a legal body. The networks and forms of cooperation created by local actors may lead to the formation of a (regional) milieu in which innovation is the result of a collective learning process. This concept, which first appeared in West European science in the 1980s, and since then has been applied many times in local cases, constitutes the basic analytical framework for Johanna Ickert's (2009) research in the peripheral eastern German region of Müritz. The innovative, creative milieu – or using the concepts created when this idea was used for German cases, *Lernorten* ('the place of learning') and *Lernkulturen* ('the culture of learning') – are created on the basis of the networks of regional actors who are in face-to-face relationships with one another. The communication, cooperation and knowledge sharing between the members of the network result in new common and creative forms and solutions for regional development (ibid.: 21–22, 38–41). Ickert, based upon former examples, uses the terms of creative and innovative milieu for a region level entity, *Lernende Region* ('region of learning'). However, a creative milieu, the place of learning, can be conceived at a local level too, as the result of a network of connections. In 2022 the ASLTC will organise an event called Civil Day, which will call attention to opportunities for cooperation for local organisations. The main goal set by the association and the discussions following it seem to indicate that locality projects would like to intensify their interactions by creating places and occasions of common learning (see creative milieu). Local actors are increasingly aware of the rules of the project-based development system in the civil sphere and make use of the experiences and the know-how gained at the network level to improve on them and become more successful in attaining extra-local resources.

Q: And what would be the point of such a civil day?

A: What is the point of it? On the one hand, we could introduce ourselves to some extent, say that we are here and we are working. And on the other hand, to cooperate with the other civil organisations [...] It was Miklós's great dream, a coopera-



tion of civil organisations, which, I think, is a very good thing. I rather see it as helping one another. Sharing experiences with one another. "Do you also apply for a tender?" "I also apply for a tender!" "How do you do it?" etc., etc. "Are you organising an event?" "Do you have a tent?" "Yes, you do." "Would you lend it to us?" "We also need it." Benches etc., etc. Just off the top of my head, the fishing association. "Are you cleaning the peat bog?" "Just call us and we will go!" "Let's collect garbage together!" So it would have a force holding together the village community. (FM: Anita)

Locality projects are closely connected to the sphere of leisure. The self-organised groups relying on the voluntary work of their members build social identities by spending their free time in a certain way, thus reaching a sense of bonding, in this case, with the locality. Leisure seems to be of high importance in maintaining locality. With separate workplaces and residences<sup>19</sup> spending one's free time in their residential place is a vote for locality. Through this, locality can be experienced both at an individual and at a community level.

And the people, their day... they work eight hours. After that they go home, work around the house, in the garden, etc. But everyone has some interests that... that help them relax. It is part of recreation. And it is embodied by civil organisations. They go fishing, they do some sports, they keep pigeons, they sing, they go dancing, they take part in a pub quiz, they work as civil security people. Anything else, I don't remember all the associations – they go hunting for example and it relaxes them, and they can do it successfully in an association. And these civil organisations organise those people who would like to spend their leisure free time in a useful way. And to some extent they do it for the village community. For example if a newcomer moves to the village saying "OK, I worked eight hours, OK my garden is all right... I would like to do something else, what can be done in this village? What? Where can I go?" (FM: Petra)

Various individual experiences of time, thought to be characteristic of the post-modern age, may provide the bases for many divided identities, for example through the individual composition of leisure time (Urry 1994). This means that those local actors who are outside the well-defined boundaries of single groups, the outsiders can acquire the locality by occasionally participating in the features provided by the various locality projects, by immersion: this results in individual and group identity connected to a place.

#### THE KÓNY VERBUNK: THE AXIS OF A LOCALITY PROJECT

The ASLTC offers various forms of bonding and involvement for those not participating directly in the life of the association, with the feature maintained by it, i.e. with the axis of tradition and heritage. Apparently, three types can be identified: 1. participation in the programs offered by the association, 2. acts of support, 3. imagined forms of participation. Participation in its classical physical sense perhaps does not require any further explanation. Watching a performance, attending dance or musical events or drinking

mulled wine on Christmas Eve are examples of this. The fact that the renovation of a house bought by the association was planned by a local architect free of charge or when the wine for the mulled wine was offered by a local resident can be considered supporting or patronising gestures. The term 'imagined occasions of participation' refers to Benedict Anderson's (1991 [1983]) concept of imagined community, supposing that with regard to its mechanisms, raising awareness of belonging to a locality can be connected to the process described by Anderson. He mentions as one of the prerequisites of the birth of national self-consciousness the development of print capitalism, which made a new community, the nation, conceivable beyond the identification based upon direct empirical experience. In this case, the locality project tries to become integrated into the knowledge of local people by way of printed leaflets, the printed publication *Hírmondó* and the social media presence. The association tries to reach out to those who do not come in touch with the given locality feature by either of the aforementioned methods. We must also take into account how social media activity, which makes it possible to exceed the physical limits of locality, is mainly aimed at local actors in this case.

Q: Who is [the social media presence] mainly aimed at? Or why is it important that people should know about it? Because I suppose that Facebook and Instagram are addressed both to you and to others, no?

A: Of course, it is obvious. It is clearly for others: it is addressed to the village. It is addressed to the village so that they can see that we are here. And anyway, from the feedback I feel that it is quite a positive thing in the eye of the village. That we are here, working. Well, I think that to some extent it makes the community live. By viewing it, anyone can be part of it a little. If not a member, but... "Oh, I see, I was at that event", "Oh how beautiful you are, I will write about it, I will comment on it." (FM: Petra)

The forms of participation described above serve to continuously strengthen the feeling of attachment and belonging (cf. Wright 1992: 215), by which the locality can be re-organised and maintained continuously along a certain axis.

The axis of the locality project is concerned with the phenomena identified as tradition, the condensation symbol (cf. Cohen 2001 [1985]: 102) of which is a staged *Kóny verbunk*. In this case it is not that a phenomenon is emphasised from the past to become the model of organising locality in the present, as another turning point can be observed in the process. Dance was an organising model for local groups to some extent even when it was practised by the lads' clubs, and to a greater extent when it became a staged performance. So it does not come back from oblivion to become part of local life in a completely new function (cf. Boym 2001; Bauman 2017; Pusztai 2018: 23), but rather it will be re-constituted according to the screenplay known and performed before the locality.

At this point using Egil Bakka and Gediminas Karoblis' (2010: 172–174) terms of concept and realisation, introduced to the field of dance research, might elucidate what exact role *Kóny verbunk* plays in this complex process. The *verbunk* as a concept is a shared knowledge of locals: by and large, villagers all have an idea of its scenario and its most important audio-visual characteristics. Its local narrative, which contains the most significant information about its essence has been shaped by various factors and processes, for example turning past individual experiences into collective memory, constructing and popularising village histories as well as ethnographic interest includ-

ing the effect it might have on local actors. However, the realisation – the situation when the *verbunk* is actually danced – is accomplished only by members of the association. Since this group has the responsibility of maintaining the practice through its performances, members make the concept available for everyone. Dance as a concept is not fixed, hence it can be affected by each new realisation. (Ibid.: 173–174) In this sense, with the *Verbunk* Festival the association has created the latest version of the concept. Therefore, as has already been mentioned, the Kóny *verbunk* as a model for organising locality is part of local knowledge.

Nevertheless, locality projects based upon this segment of local knowledge represent a hybrid form (cf. Woods 2007). It is accommodated to the norm-giving contexts above locality, for example at the level of nation states; moreover, it integrates certain patterns or recipes of globalisation into its operation which are considered useful (see Pusztai 2018: 37–38). To interpret the presence of the association in social media, which might be of local interest, it is worth quoting Joshua Myrowitz's (2005: 25): "Electronic media lead to dissociation between physical place and social place. Yet, in many ways, electronic media also foster greater emotional attachments to place." From this perspective, the electronic media that allow the separate identification of physical and experiential place may be used effectively in organising locality. The hybrid nature of this locality project is further strengthened by the corporate communication strategies deliberately used by the president of the association both in public discourse and in internal communication. Miklós makes use of his experiences of the patterns of multinational corporate communication and the operation of Audi Hungária that he gained in his professional career to popularise locality. The greatest opportunity for this is the Saint's Day, when the *Verbunk* Festival starts with the president greeting the participants before the dance is performed. Miklós explained the motivation behind this annual speech in the following way:

And on this occasion I like taking the opportunity to strengthen this attitude in everyone and therefore I always use those words. It's not that I couldn't write new speeches, as I write somewhat new speeches every year, but I try to leave its essence in it. [...] But that it is repeated several times and they hear it several times that they should be proud of being from Kóny, of the Kóny *verbunk* [...] And if two out of one hundred people remember it and apply it and I heard it back from the people several times, thank God. Therefore, I say that I learn quite a lot of communication. At Audi I did not deal with it, but here, since I have been in this leading position, there has been a lot of training about it and I am trying to pay attention to it and I am trying to pay attention to the people. How they communicate and what comes back. (FM: Miklós)

To present how Miklós's above-mentioned principles are realised in the *Verbunk* Festival, I would like to quote the following lines from his 2019 greeting speech:

Dear guests, last year in my speech you could hear an idea from me several times, and although I don't like repeating myself, at this year's event I also say: it is good to be a Kóny man! I wish that this feeling should be with you every day of the year and be proud of being from Kóny, that you live in Kóny where the past is not left to sink into oblivion and the people are proud of the culture they inherited from their ancestors. Today I am also a proud man from Kóny! (FM: Miklós)

The Kóny *Verbunk* Festival is really a condensation symbol: it tries to invoke identification with the locality in the minds of local actors by choosing a particular feature – the idea of tradition – and by condensing it into a symbol. Remembrance and reminding aims to trigger an emotional response, an attitude. Visualising a highlighted and re-created past characteristic conjures up a feeling of timelessness, a contact with the past, making us believe that the past is within our reach (cf. Cohen 2001 [1985]: 99–104). The action, which takes place in one of the most significant public places in the village, is an opportunity to occupy emotionally not only the physical and social environment but also the local past (cf. the efforts to create *Heimat*). In the greeting speech the statements about the efforts made against oblivion, the connection to the ancestors and the emphasis laid on the existence and maintenance of their heritage all seem to refer to this intention. According to Francois Hartog (2005: 14–16), considering the past as a heritage requires that the actors of society should realise the distance between the past and the present so that the rupture between their past and present becomes recognisable. It implies that expressing and realising the heritage is an attempt to span this break from time to time. The fact that the Kóny *verbunk* appears as heritage in public discourse draws our attention to the phenomenon of heritage organised from the bottom up. The interpretation of heritage as a social practice focuses on the local level adaptation of the global paradigm of heritage and its active use and formation instead of the operations of bureaucratic apparatuses and ‘heritage regimes’ (see Harrison 2009; cf. Bendix et al. 2012). In 2020 the Kóny *verbunk* was nominated for the Collection of Hungarikums, for the Győr-Moson-Sopron County Collection of the Collection of Hungarian Values,<sup>20</sup> although so far no decision has been made. However, considering it heritage – as an attitude or behaviour – has become part of its discourse and the practices organised around it. The local level embeddedness of the paradigm of heritage does not mean that the terms used for this phenomenon (for example, tradition) have become obsolete, it rather means the expansion of the set of rhetoric figures of speech used in the organisation of locality.

The operational modes of the model of culture economy do not primarily connect the spheres of local culture and economy with the purpose of gaining any direct material profit, although they provide the opportunity for that. From Ray’s (1998) operational modes, which either take effect together or complement one another, two modes can be observed in the world of the *Verbunk* Festival, specifically the construction of local identity and the projection of this identity towards the outside world, and the promotion of local and regional identity towards locals. The message of “It is good to be from Kóny” is addressed to both locals and to the guests. The festival activates not just the members of the association’s internal contact network and a wider network spanning over sectors (civil and self-governmental sphere, the church, local entrepreneurs), but also makes the extra-local connections of the locality visible: a network regional-ity organised around the topic of tradition (cf. Fejős 2002). The festival also shows the norm providing contexts on a grander scale, at the level of nation-states (for example nation state development policy). In this case, the promotion of locality is not connected directly to the intention of gaining economic profit, although the locality projects aims to create a local identity that may contribute to the creation of the quality of the place.

Investigating the contemporary social embeddedness of the *verbunk*, the *Verbunk* Festival and this certain feature of locality built on it, we can observe that there is no

need or necessity for a unified interpretation, which may be a key issue. According to empirical methods, from the emic perspective we cannot detect whether organising locality is a response to system-level issues (for example globalisation). Nevertheless, the association reacts to crises of local life that are directly experienced by the actors and which they feel worsen the quality of the place by posing an obstacle to using endogenous resources and obtaining the extra-local resources that are necessary for the (re-)organisation of locality. My experiences in the field highlight how the life of locality is seen by members of the association – and by some actors out of it too – to be extremely polarised along the lines of political convictions. Members of the older generation talk about controversies going back decades, originating from the land ownership conditions of the interwar period, which were transformed into sympathies for political parties in the present. According to some internal points of view, party politics at the local level hinders the cooperation and concerted action of local actors. This topic was always broached by my interviewees, and was mentioned in each case. They usually drew my attention to the political controversies as an issue to be solved after I put the questions: “What would an ideal Kóny be like?” and “What can the association do in the village?”

Q: If you think of what you would like to achieve through the association, what would you like the village to be like and what could the association do for it? What is such a goal, what would an ideal village be like? What would be good for the village, something in which the association could take part?

A: Well, cooperation itself. There should be no opposing one another. [...] To communicate that it could be done in a different way, cooperating and not pointing at one another and catcalling no matter what political views one has, it is possible to cooperate with them and to create a liveable community, so to say. (FM: Adél)

In public discourses association members do not mention this as an objective, but they talk about how their project contributes to the normality of everyday life in this area as a personal motivation and a realistic conception. Having the concept (cf. Bakka and Karoblis 2010) in mind, the Kóny *verbunk* can be the basis of emotional identification with locality for people with different experiences and different horizons of expectation (see Koselleck 1995 [1979]).

Because there are external supporters who are of this opinion, but they support the association, or others are of another opinion and they also support the association. So this supporter or that supporter is against another, but for the association they take us somewhere, support us, offer us something, bake or cook something for us and so on. That’s the way I see things at the moment. (FM: Anita)

## SUMMARY

Through a case study, I intend to investigate the role staged folk tradition can play in organising locality. I consider the activity of the investigated association to be a possible method of organising locality, trying to build it up along the thematic axis of local tradition and heritage. The group, held together by a special interest, not only aims to create internal cohesion but also tries to organise the locality. To maintain the chosen

feature, the members of the association increasingly rely on using exogenous resources, which leads to locality organisation becoming project-based and the group becoming more and more professional. I suggest using the term locality project for the activities of the local actors, wherein I hope to include both the quasi business-like operation and the responsibility taken voluntarily for the successful organisation of locality. Locality projects operating mainly in the sphere of leisure enable local people to occasionally participate in the feature maintained by them, thereby ensuring the opportunity of identification with the locality. Among the elements of tradition it is the Kóny *verbunk* that primarily constitutes the axis of organising locality for the association. The Kóny *verbunk* as an organising model is part of local knowledge, as it has triggered and maintained the organisation of various groups since the 1920s as a performance on the patron saint's day or as a staged folk dance. The most significant event of the locality project and its condensation symbol is the *Verbunk* Festival. The acts observable at the festival reveal a deliberate intention of the association members to contribute to the creation and maintenance of the quality of the place by producing and promoting the place and local identity. It is a characteristic of the locality project, organised around the axis of the tradition, that the *Verbunk* Festival and other occasions of identification offered by the association ensure opportunities for people to emotionally occupy the immediate social environment as well as the local past.

## NOTES

1 It also highlights that space is a social construction. In social sciences this problem can be traced back to the so-called spatial turn that started in the 1960s. Those reflecting on the essence of spatiality argue that space is socially constructed (for example Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

2 Cohen (2001 [1985]: 102) takes over the term condensation symbols from Victor Turner (1967: 30) quoting the definition.

3 Susan Wright (1992: 214), who tried to define new directions for English community studies in the 1990s, continued this train of thought. According to Wright, observing the internal ideas and images of community, might define the frameworks of the category to be analysed. Her concept takes into account the uncertainty of the boundaries and their dependency on situations.

4 About the difficulties of giving a proper translation of *Heimat* and translating its substance in other languages see Bönish et al. 2020: 7. About the history of the concept see Bausinger 1990; Bönisch et al. 2020: 2–8; Hänel 2020: 70–76.

5 Ray places the mechanisms of culture economy at the intersection of local resources and resources above the local level, called by him extra-local, and supposes that they have been generated by the contemporaneous effects of local and global processes.

6 For Ray (1998: 9) the notion of local knowledge means the techniques of understanding and interpreting the world and the possible methods of taking action.

7 The emergence of *verbunk* was linked to the recruitment of the permanent army on the territory of the Habsburg Empire; such recruitment was accompanied by music and dance.

8 See more Martin 1965: 489–491; 1974: 36–39.

9 After the First World War, within the framework of the nation-state, ethnic thinking became dominant in dealing with folk tradition, in line with the Hungarian state's peace revision efforts. Within the framework of the nationwide Bouquet of Pearls movement, which promoted the stage presentation of the most visually characteristic elements of folk culture in the 1930s, the role of

staged folk culture in national self-representation continued to grow. For wider political and social context, see Taylor 2021: 36–46.

10 About this period see Eitler 2019.

11 I use partial anonymisation, identifying narrators only by their first name.

12 However, I basically use the case of the *Verbunk* Festival 2019 for my interpretation. I share here the recording of the 2021 festival, in which I also participated, due its better quality.

13 The members of the leadership team all have university or college degrees in the following areas: commerce and marketing, technical management, economics, international administration and organising administration, architecture, economic architect and environmental engineering.

14 With regard to his social embeddedness, he is a member of other local organisations such as the Association of Volunteer Firefighters and the Advisory Body of the Parish, as is the vice-president of the association, András.

15 The aims of the association are summarised in the basic guidelines in the following way: “1.1. The association aims to reveal, to care for and to safeguard the traditions of Hungarian folk dance, folk music and folk culture; to educate, to teach and to develop skills; cultural activities; organising events. 1.2. To achieve its aims, the association cooperates with all state, social and economic organisations, legal and non-legal entities and other clubs and associations who help in the successful operation of the Association and in achieving its aims.” (ASLTC 2018: 1)

16 By professionalisation I mean the division of the operation into special fields and the permanent system of task division, decision making and internal communication mechanisms.

17 In Hungary each individual is free to offer 1% of their income tax to civil organisations and churches.

18 *Kisalföld* ('Lesser Plain') is the county's daily paper.

19 According to the 2001 census, 68% of employed people living in Kóny worked elsewhere (KSH 2001). In the last two decades a company called Audi Hungária, in Győr, has employed more and more labour from the village (mostly young and skilled workers). It has to be noted that both the president and the vice-president of the association work for Audi Hungária.

20 Act XXX of 2012 on Hungarian national values and Hungarian values established a hierarchical system of multiple levels building from the bottom up (Local Collection, Regional Collection, County Collection, Collection of Hungarian Values, Collection of Hungarian values), with the purpose of collecting “the values of the Hungarian nation, to arrange them in repositories, thereby ensuring their proper protection and documentation, as well as their preservation for posterity” (Collection of Hungarian values 2019). The system prioritises the ethnic interpretation of the concept of heritage, since the “repositories” of Hungarians living outside the state borders are also part of the collection of values, thus applying a fundamentally different approach than, for example, the UNESCO National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which applies to the territory of a given state.

## SOURCES

FM = Author's fieldwork materials.

In publishing texts from interviews I use partial anonymisation, identifying narrators only by their first name. I also abandon the names of public figures (their first as well as last names) in the texts, rather I refer to them by their public functions. When quoting from interviews I asked the interviewee for agreement. In line with this, I also deleted family names in the photos that are used as illustration.

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