

## CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN REGION - MANSION UTILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN HUNGARY

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### Abstract

Cultural heritage plays an important role in the tourism sector nowadays. When the European Union realised this, it started founding programs, aiming at, on the one hand, preserving cultural heritage and, on the other hand, assigning functions to them to attract tourists. The programs are in cooperation with the governments of the member countries. In this paper, we take a closer look at the use of mansions, which are part of our built cultural heritage. Hungary is abundant in historic estates, which are all very popular tourist destinations. We analyze the latest huge tender, the National Castle and Mansion Program, the thinking process behind the decision making, and the spatial distribution of successful tenders. Using the Special Eurobarometer 466 dataset, we will showcase the different attitudes towards cultural heritage in Hungary. Comparing the two sets of data, we will be able to conclude, how the developments and mansion restorations affect cultural sensitivity, local identity and the opinion of the financing system. Our main research area is South Transdanubia, where we took a trip to visit the buildings, to make interviews with the municipality leaders, and to analyze the mansions from different perspectives. We carried out a case study in Lad, where the strong civic sphere has to find a way to preserve the Hoyos mansion.

**Keywords:** *tourism, settlement development, cultural heritage, mansions, Hungary*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Smith wrote in 2003 about the elements he believed are parts of an activity-based list that he had created for inventing cultural tourism. These elements are heritage sites, performing arts, visual arts, festivals and special events, religious sites, rural environment, indigenous communities and traditions, crafts, languages, gastronomy, industry and commerce, modern mass culture, special interests (Smith, 2003). Such cultural heritage values are mansion houses, which are all a part of heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is a kind of “inherited tourism, where heritage is the central element of the product, on the other hand, the main motivation for tourists” (Swarbrooke, 1994). Heritage tourism can be realized in rural areas and cities also, whereas urban tourism is a growing phenomenon worldwide (Fernandez & Escampa 2017).

The word “castle” is of Latin origin, deriving from the word “castellum”. “Today, according to our concepts, a mansion is described as the residence of the former aristocracy, built in rural, park surroundings, which has a large-scale, a complex layout, it is a unique,

picturesque, massive residential building” (Koppány, 1974). These buildings play a prominent role in international tourism. Of course, mansions can not only be imitating tourist destinations but they can also become a subject of settlement development (Act XXI of 1996).

In Hungary, there are nearly 4500 of them, but many are completely unused or used inadequately. (Virág, 2016). Therefore, the studies that deal with the use of the mansions is of utmost importance in the topic of tourism and in the field of urban development.

The mansions we studied are part of cultural tourism, in a narrower sense, heritage tourism. Cultural tourism has been the subject of many researchers in recent years. Eder W., defines cultural tourism as such: "In a value-oriented view, cultural tourism provides on-site realistic, comparable and consistent information on past and present events" (Eder, 1993). "Tourism is a multipurpose activity happening in a place out of the tourist's usual and typical environment" (Rahmani et al. 2016)

We cannot ignore the identity of tourists and visitors, which is shaped by heritage tourism (Ashworth, 1998). In heritage tourism, hospitality, tourists, and visitors are connected by local heritage, which has a dual role to play: this is the purpose of the journey, a motivating force, but at the same time a guest becomes an element of the identity of the local community (Park, 2010).

## 2. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goals of this research, we had to work with a complex methodology, in which both the application of the secondary data sources and the showcasing of our own primer results receive priority. We also have to take a closer look at the Hungarian and the international literature of previous researches, relating to our topic. Moreover, our examination is based on the analysis of the Hungarian laws and applications, that deal with castles and mansions. These tender documents and regulations are mainly available online, on different Governmental sites or in a digital form in the archives of Laws and Regulations. As to the literature we rely on, we have to mention the results of our previous studies, BSc and MSc theses, which will be integrated into and widely used in this paper. They include numerous common clarifications regarding Hungarian expressions and new scientific conclusions about mansions, both in Hungary and Somogy county, which are still relevant at this moment.

During field research, our main goal was to update these previous works and to find new destinations, to examine more cultural heritage buildings. On the field trips, interviews were also conducted. One interview was made in Lad, the hometown of one of the authors, where the mayor of the settlement provided us new insights into the use of the local mansion. The location of the other interview was Kutas, where we could talk with the mayor and an economic executive of a five-star mansion hotel. In Lad, we had local people fill out a questionnaire (N=54), which is a high percentage of the total population and we tried to meet the requirements of the representativeness.

As we mentioned earlier, the European Union (EU) pays more and more attention to the preservation and the utilization of cultural heritage buildings, enhancing their tourism potential. But we can not forget that "Tourist arrival numbers in Europe will also depend on the development of tourism and political situation in other regions in the world, as Europe's tourism numbers might drop if the political stability in some countries increases (Teoman 2017). An indication of such a process is the fact, that 2018 has been declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Supporting this project, commissioned by the European

Commission, the Eurobarometer organization, which makes public surveys in the member states, prepared a study, called the Special Eurobarometer 466, Europeans and Cultural Heritage. Using the data available for Hungary we are looking for answers as to how strongly Hungarians are connected to cultural heritages, whether they support future improvements or not, and who they expect financial support from? The fieldwork part of the survey took place between 23. 09. 2017 and 02. 10. 2017, using face to face methodology. In total, the survey reached 1050 respondents, which is obviously only a little segment of the Hungarian society. Data collection is considered representative of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and statistical regions. The thematic maps representing the spatial distribution of the selected Hungarian castles and mansions were created by ArcGIS 10.2.2.

### 3. MANSION CONVERSION TENDENCIES

Due to past events the number of Hungarian mansions has diminished over the years. The first major changes took place during the Second World War. The war caused enormous damages to the buildings, not only because of the military actions and bombardments but because of the fact that they had been subject to war operations and served as military objects (armory, base, etc.) for many years. Even those buildings that survived were doomed, once the process of collectivization started in Hungary (just like in other country under Soviet influence). Before the war, more than 1,500 castles and mansions were maintained in the country and supplied by their own land, but after the war, these buildings got state ownership, with many damaged and plundered lands and with approximately 4600 km<sup>2</sup> uncared-for cadastral moor parks and gardens, which was not sustainable (Fekete, 2016).

Unfortunately, the state gave these buildings new functions that, the mansions were totally incompatible with. They became cemeteries, offices, military headquarters and social homes. We could find numerous examples, when the government entirely left some mansions on their own, unchecked and after some years, the buildings were on the edge of total decay, but there are also pieces of evidence for cases, when the estates lost their former beauty, due to the constructions, required for their new functions, but their survival was at least assured.

On the other hand, these partly regrettable events have also led to the birth of the Hungarian monument protection in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the first such organizations, The National Monument Protection Inspectorate, preserved approximately 800 castles and mansions, out of which many have been disclaimed due to severe deterioration (National Monumental Inspectorate, 1960). With the improvement of the economic situation, some improper functions have been removed from several mansions, and usage of the building has become limited because of the preservation of the monument.

Due to the monumental nature of castles, they can be perfect for housing ethnographic museums and exhibitions. The Berzsenyi Memorial Museum in Nikla is a perfect example for that. This form of conversion is the most suitable, since the building does not decay any further this way and it can preserve its heritage value. Of course, more forms of usage are suitable for castles and mansions, such as cultural houses, archives, or event centers. Turning mansions into tourist destinations (mansion hotels) can perhaps be regarded the most appropriate form of conversion since it serves a similar function as their original function. Furthermore, “tourist settlements are often linked to a complementary opportunity for sports and recreation, which adds value and attempts to attract certain market segments” (Cuadrado-Ciuraneta & Dura-Guimera 2018). A cost-effective conversion plan may, in many cases, be a hindering factor in tourism utilization, as the premises cannot be taken apart, rebuilt, only minor modifications can be made, no drastic adjustments are possible. But we must not forget

how important culture is and that cultural conversion plays a huge role in cultural identity. “European identity, to take ownership of the future generations besides their national, if deeply conservative stereotypes of the past are not combated and if they are not replaced by a new mixture of culture and values” (Galani 2016). Of course, we must not forget about mansion conversions made for social purposes, where mansions are turned into children's homes, psychiatric institutions, hospitals and educational establishments, such as the Pallavicini mansion, located in Somogy county, which was turned into a teaching hospital. There are some obvious problems with that sort of conversion, for example, it makes the mansion more difficult to visit and its maintenance becomes much more expensive. When converting the building into a hospital, the high level of hygienic expectations, which often hindered this type of conversion, became a separate obstacle (Péterfi, 2015).

These challenges brought the first mansion program to life in 1981, namely the Economic Committee Mansion Program, which included the restoration of 72 monuments – out of which 22 were mansions (Petravich, 1996). In 1992 the State Stewardship of the Monuments (MÁG) became the trustee of state-owned mansions and it set up a program the aim of which was to transform the mansions into a tourist scene (Fekete, 2016). In 1997 the list of monuments have been enlarged as part of the LIV. monument protection law, the Monument 2000 has been drawn up and an archive of the exploitable heritages has been produced. In 2000, the project of the National Mansion Program was adopted and the Millennium Mansion Program provided additional resources for the MÁG (Berger, 2001).

The Mansion Program in 2004 was a similar measure, where there had already been an attempt to involve private capital with state aid, with the aim of opening the re-established mansions to the public (Mansion Program I. 2004). However, it was not the largest change that year. Hungary gained membership to the EU, which basically changed the conversion trends of the mansions on the financing side.

#### **4. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE IN THE HUNGARIAN MONUMENT HERITAGE SYSTEM**

The EU in cooperation with the Hungarian Government has been successfully promoting and implementing more successful heritage protection and tourism projects in the past few years. During our previous study, we have already categorized the tenders available for these buildings, based on the types of subsidies, three main types can be mentioned. The first category is the state funding program, the second is based on the financing of the local government, and the third, as the main subject of this research, includes projects funded by the EU. Of course, these tenders cannot always be completely separated, as the subsidies received from the EU are associated with the necessary state capital, through self-financing. The local government tenders in Hungary only affect Budapest (Péterfi, 2017).

Among the grants received by the EU in the framework of several Operative Programs, billions of euros appeared in Hungary in the form of various investments affecting the monuments. We would like to examine these tenders to clarify the role of the EU in the protection of the Hungarian heritages. As Hungary became a member of the EU in 2004, the first full budget cycle the country was involved in happened between 2007 and 2013, the second, which is still in progress is scheduled between 2014 and 2020 and it will be called "Széchenyi 2020". This budget provides more opportunities for funding in the framework of several Operative Programs. Tenders for inheritance can also be found in many of these programs, depending on the specific purpose of the tender. Showcasing some examples from the last closed budget cycle could illustrate the complexity of this process better.

Such a tender is, for instance, the project "Preservation and Restoration of Botanical Gardens and Protected Historic Gardens", KEOP-3.1.3, which operated between 2009 and 2012. The mansions, which we have examined, have almost always possessed gardens or parks that are protected and thus becoming historical gardens. In this tender, several estate gardens were also supported, such as the Erdődy Mansion in Doba-Somlóvár, the Károlyi Mansion in Füzeradvány or the Festetics Mansion in Dé. The purpose of this fund was to conduct an entire reconstruction of the historic gardens belonging to the mansions.

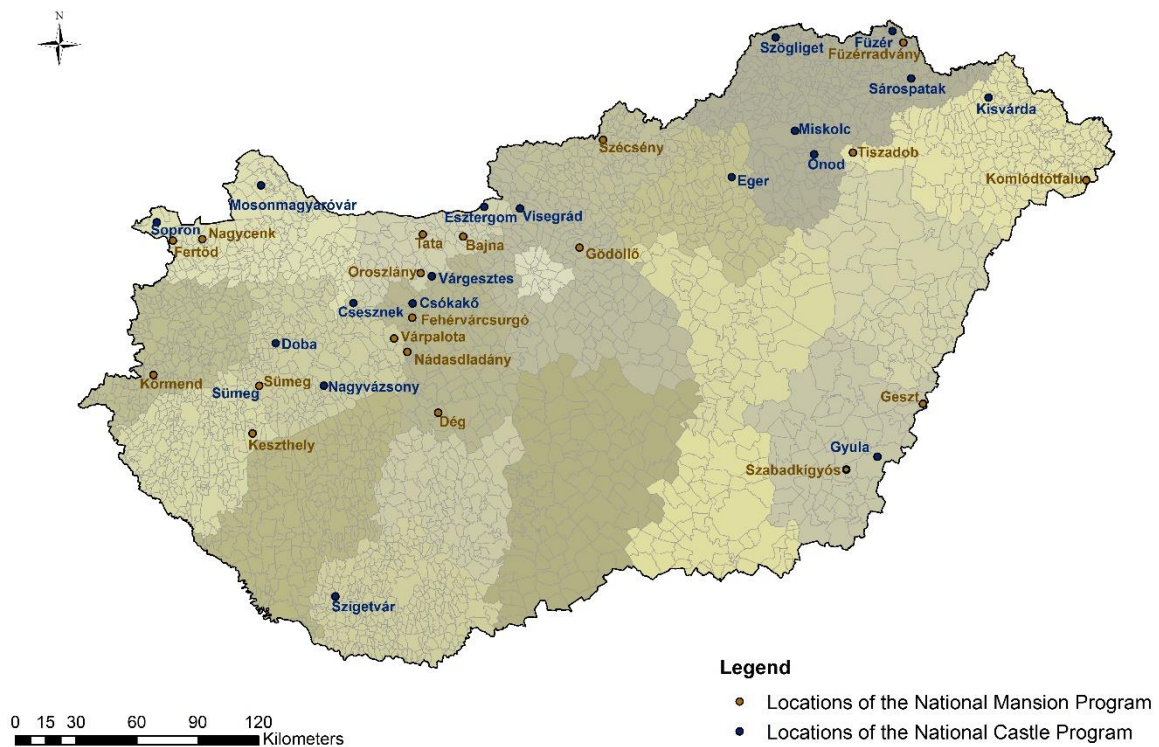
The tender under the code DDOP -2.1.1 (the name can alternate between NUTS 2 regions), was called 'The development of tourist attractions and services' which is also essential in the field of heritage protection. In its framework, the Benedictine abbey in Somogyvár, the hermitage in Oroszlány, the Pipo Mansion in Ozora, the estate in Edelény and the cave castle in Sirok could be renewed. The amount of these subsidies is approximately 4.6 million €, which is also an indication of the European Union's contribution to the funding of heritage protection.

These tenders offer extraordinary opportunities for the selected mansions and parks, as renovations make the monuments more attractive as tourist attractions, generate revenue and promote heritage protection. Of course, these are only a fraction of the successful tenders. Within the frameworks of the TÁMOP there have been numerous advances, such as the establishment of job opportunities connected to the museum in the Fáj mansion or the development of public cultural activities in the Pécs mosque (<https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/>).

#### **4.1 The spatial distribution of the current applications**

We gained some insight into the ways in which EU funds are flowing into the country, with the help of a number of examples from the last closed budget cycle. Within the current 7-year cycle, there are also countless applications for direct and indirect targeting of restoration and preservation of monuments and the development of tourist attractions. For example, TOP-1.2.1, called "Socially and Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Development", provides financial support for a total of 159.3 million € for the applicants. The VP-6-7.4.1.1 'The development and external reconstruction of buildings defining a settlements image, the creation of a multifunctional community space and the energetic modernization' is very similar to it, there the total amount of EU funding is 83.35 million €. The most outstanding heritage protection tender currently running is the National Castle and Mansion Program (GINOP 7.1.1), which we intend to present in more details in order to perceive the territorial inequality of this tender and the unbalanced distribution of EU grants.

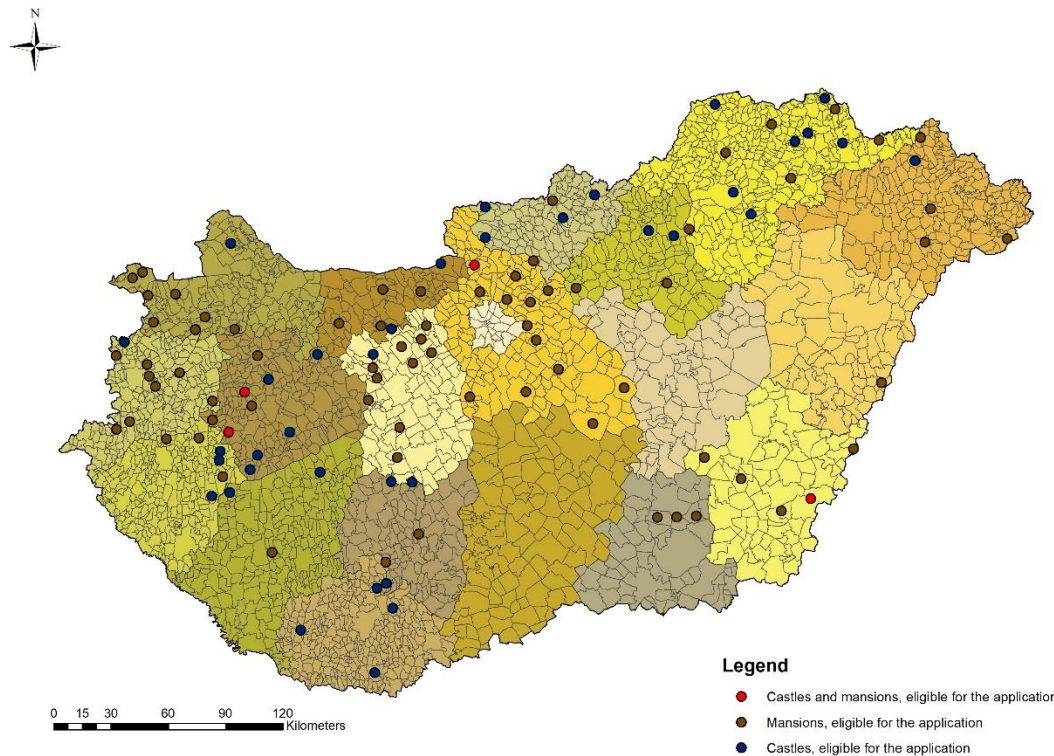
As the name of the program already suggests, this tender does not only give mansions an opportunity for development but castles as well. The tender was announced by the EU in 2015 and a total of 39 monuments (20 mansions and 19 castles) have won 125.18 million €, in the framework of EU and partially public budgets (which was later inflated to 155 million €). Only buildings that were considered top priority national assets from a national economic point of view, and are state-owned or at least under a state-owned asset management were able to apply. The aim of the tender is to provide the mansion with cultural content and modern features that make the buildings more self-sustaining in the long run, so it is a clearly defined goal beyond the heritage protection to convert the mansion and its surroundings into an attractive tourist destination where it is possible. The map of the castles and mansions, that have successfully competed for the tender are shown in Figure 1 (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The locations of the National Castle and Mansion Program (Source: own editing based on [www.nkvp.hu](http://www.nkvp.hu) 2018)

We can clearly see on the map the location of the castles and mansions that are part of the tender. These venues were ruled out by a 2016 government decree, but this meant that two buildings (in Geszt and in Tiszadob) should be reclassified as top priority national assets and that the original list made in 2014 should be narrowed down. The question is how these sites were selected. According to the GINOP tender (<https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/doc/4503>), only buildings that were considered as stressed momentous national assets from a national economic point of view could be applied. This fact is a powerful restrictive factor, as the list of these buildings is fixed in a 2011 decision (modified in 2016), which is shown in Figure 2 (Figure 2).





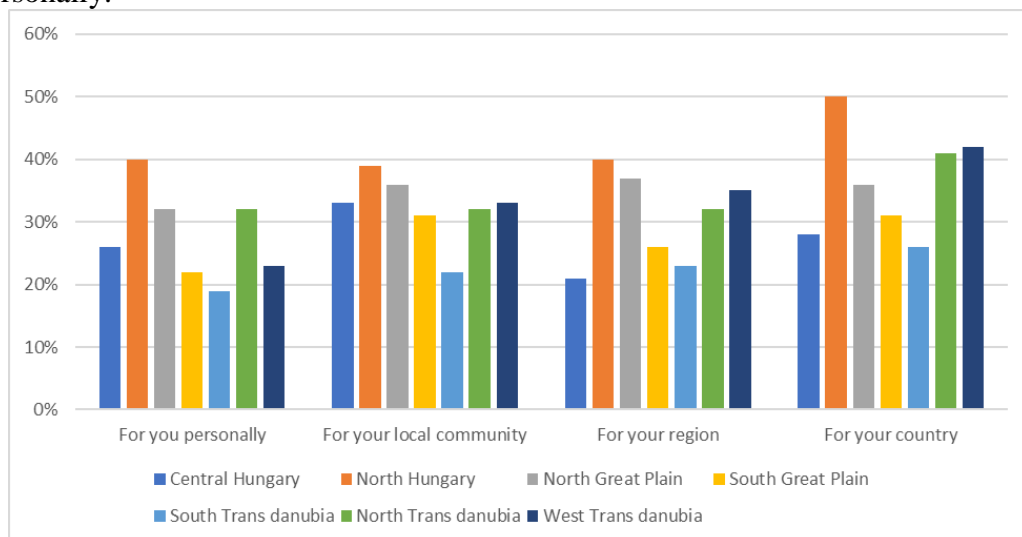
**Figure 2.** Mansions, castles, halls, and palaces, considered as stressed momentous national assets from a national economic point of view (Source: own editing based on <https://net.jogtar.hu/> 2018)

As one can see there are plenty of such buildings in our country, many of which have unsuccessfully applied for the GINOP tender (e.g. Somogysárd), but we do not know the specific reasons behind their rejection. It can be stated that, where needed, the range of national assets was expanded, so a point of subjectivity was added to the decision making process. The geographical location of the winning tenders is significantly uneven in the country, but there are some historical reasons for that as well (fewer buildings have been built in the Great Plain; condensation can be found in the north-western part of the country, because of the proximity of the Viennese Court). If we take a look at the location of the mansions (and castles) that fit the criterion, this scheme also prevails as there are spatially scattered buildings on the Great Plain, and North-Transdanubia is a densely populated area. However, there is no clear-cut explanation as to why, the only mansion in Somogy County (Somogysárd) who could apply for and eventually applied to the tender, have been excluded from the final list of the mansions for development. From the comparison, we can conclude that even though in the terms of criteria compliance we can speak about territorial inequality, the decision makers have missed a number of possible destinations that would need development, the building, the settlement, the county and the region as well. That's why it is an important factor, what local people think about these trends, the EU itself, the monuments and the subsidies. In addition, it would be interesting to see how strongly connected they are to those buildings and settlements, or in other words, how strongly their sense of identity is linked to the monuments.

## 4.2 The opinion of the locals about the cultural heritage

In this part, we will analyze the results of the Eurobarometer survey. In support of the map in the previous chapter, North Transdanubia, and West Transdanubia is in the lead regarding the question of how many percent of the population lives near a historic monument (palaces, castles, churches, gardens, archaeological sites, etc.). Surprisingly enough, the third place goes to South Transdanubia, that appears on the map almost as a blank spot. In addition, the survey was carried out in settlements of a different nature (village, small town, city), scattered spatially. The difference can be explained by the fact that there are a high number of historic buildings in South Transdanubia, but they are not in the condition to receive the labeling of top priority national assets, another reason is that they are mainly owned by the private sector, which is a disqualifying precondition for entering into this tender.

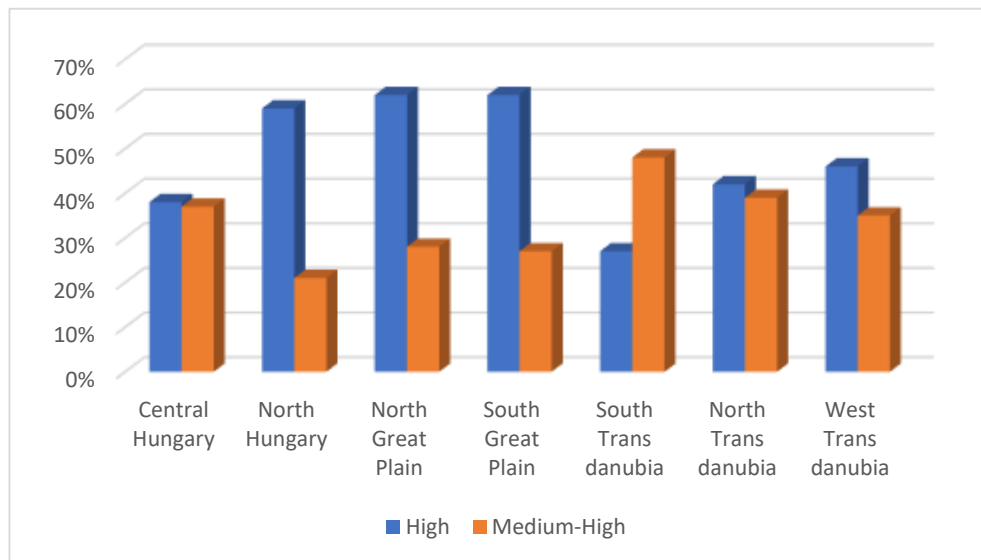
Although, there is a relatively large number of monuments in a region, the population does not have a connection with them, they do not consider them important from neither an ideological, nor an economical, nor an aesthetic point of view. These problems are largely due to the depletion of the buildings and their unexploited utilization. The following figure (Figure 3) illustrates the results of the Eurobarometer survey on the importance of cultural heritage. The monuments in West Transdanubia and North Hungary, which are in excellent condition, and many of their development is due to the financial support of the government and the EU have a role to play in the fact that the people living there appreciate cultural heritage and in particular that they attach great importance to them in the context of the life of the settlement. At the other end of the scale, with virtually all issues, South Transdanubia has the worst scores, even the South Great Plain, which traditionally short of castles and mansions, comes before it. The overall question concerned cultural heritage, which makes the result even more strange, since South Transdanubia is historically rich (Roman, Turkish memories) and it also has abundant ethnic traditions (Busójárás in Mohács, which is on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity), and the center of the region, Pécs was in 2010 the European Capital of Culture, so its cultural life is not insignificant. It is particularly sad that the only 19% of the respondents thought that they could relate to the topic personally.



**Figure 3.** How important do you think cultural heritage is... those who answered 'very important' (Source: own editing, based on Special Barometer 466 2018)

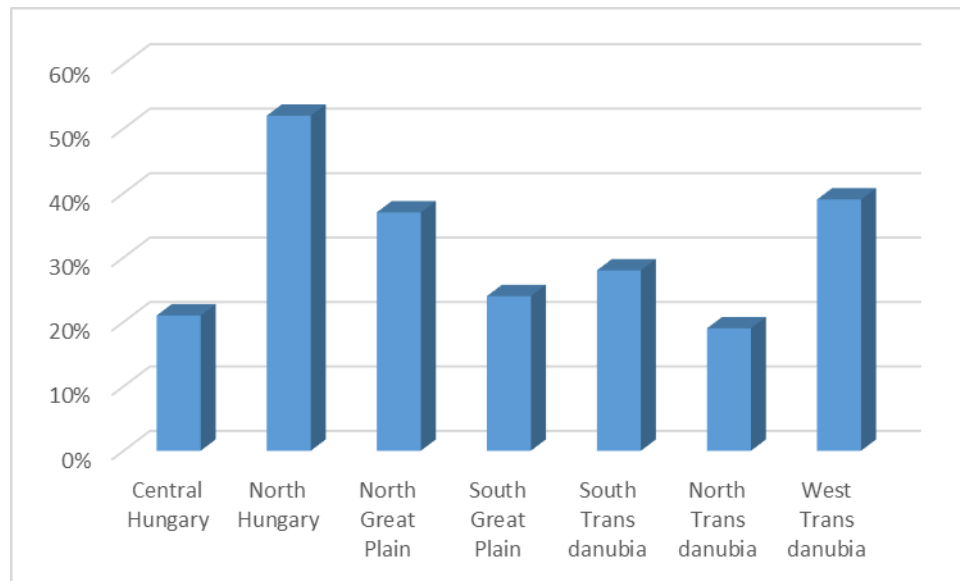


By using five questions, the questionnaire measured the positive attitude towards cultural heritage, out of which an index was developed. The proportion of people with 'high values' is by far the lowest in South Transdanubia and medium-high and medium-low is the more dominant category (Figure 4). Looking at the components of the index, it is apparent that respondents in the region do not take pride in seeing the built monuments in their environment, and only a few have completely agreed with the statement that these cultural values can improve people's quality of life. It shows how darker the picture of this region is, against those who can exploit the potential of the built heritages, which also has a positive effect on locals, and that is partly the reason why the inhabitants have a soft spot for monuments.



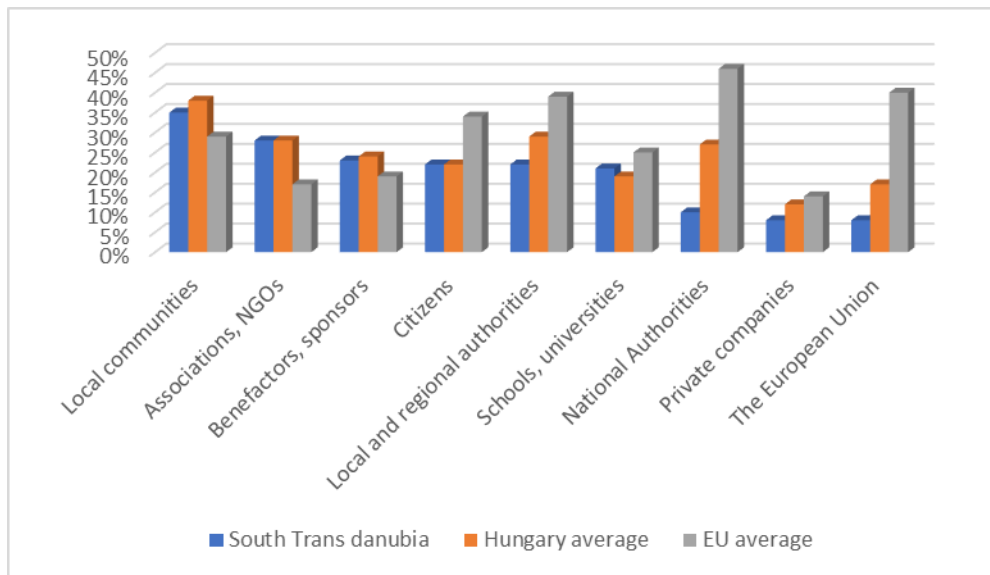
**Figure 4.** Positive attitude towards the cultural heritages (Source: own editing, based on Special Barometer 466 2018)

The question arises as to whether the attitudes of residents to the cultural heritage could be positively changed by the renovation of buildings and involving them in the community's economic life, whether they would improve their perception and increase their affiliation towards the settlement and the region. In addition, the European Year of Culture also aims at expanding the population's knowledge on cultural values. The following figure (Figure 5) shows the percentage of those who fully agreed with the phrase that public authorities should allocate more resources to the heritages. The fact that South Transdanubia took the fourth place indicates that there is a need for further improvements by the population, and this placement is not better because there are relatively few good examples in the region that would show the usefulness of the developments.



**Figure 5.** Percentage of those who fully agreed with the phrase 'Public authorities should allocate more resources to the heritages' (Source: own editing, based on Special Barometer 466 2018)

There is only one question left. Who should finance these developments? There is a significant difference between Hungarian scores and the EU average (Figure 6). The role of local communities, organizations and private sponsors is highly valued. These three shared the first places in the South Transdanubian region. This is because some of the well-functioning and well-organized monuments have been successfully through civic organizations or investors, such as the Hertelendy Mansion Hotel in Kutas, which has been running profitably under Swiss ownership. The lower value of local and regional authorities is a Hungarian feature, as we can see municipalities except Budapest can not apply for resources that affect built heritages and lack the strength of their own budget. It is worth noting that the difference in the national authorities' role between the national average and South Transdanubia is strangely significant. Since the distribution of all resources is virtually decided by the state, and in this region, as we have seen in the National Castle and Mansion Program, fewer subsidies are received, the population living there can rightly underestimate the role of the state. Although the money to be used for monument protection is largely EU funded, yet Hungarians attach little to no importance to the EU's financing role. This also means that 73% of the respondents in the region have negative opinions about the EU.



**Figure 6.** Who should finance the cultural heritage developments? (Source: own editing, based on Special Barometer 466 2018)

#### 4.3 Attitude towards the cultural heritage – Case study: Mansion in Lad

When investigating the negative opinion in the questionnaire survey, it is necessary to raise a concrete case to find out whether this situation is as bad, as it seems. Lad is a village of 562 people in Somogy county, 38 km south-east of the county center. The population of the settlement, compared to the trend of developed western states, shows deterioration. Lad is a typical rural village, well-visible from a large number of agricultural entrepreneurs. Out of 413 people from the working-age population, 69 are unemployed, thus the unemployment rate is 16.6%, which is the double of the national average.

It is not the purpose of the study to give a detailed picture of Lad, but it is already apparent from this brief description that the village can be defined as disadvantaged. Based on our opinion, the development and the restoration of the local mansion could improve the poor picture, lower the unemployment, establish a better infrastructure and overall raise the living standards.

The mansion, located in the middle of the settlement, was built in 1910 in an English hunting castle style, that was popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The builder, Count Miksa Hoyos, was a landowner, who played a significant role in Somogy County's economic life. The building also features a nearly thirty-hectare park, with countless exotic plants.



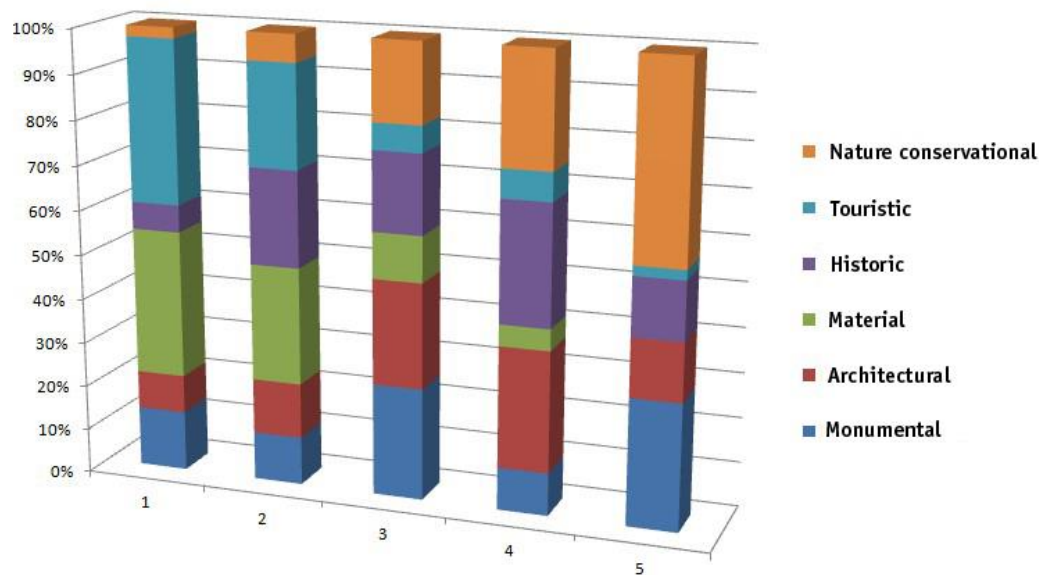
**Picture 1.** The Hoyos Mansion in Lad (Source: [www.historicgarden.net/](http://www.historicgarden.net/))

The building and its belongings were given to the settlement by the Count before his death. The mansion with its four thousand-volume library and Biedermeier furniture was a village school until 1992. The diminishing number of children, heating issues, and expensive maintenance costs made it apparent that changes were needed, so the then mayor gave the building to a contractor, in exchange for the new owner of the mansion to build a new school in the village. As to the size of the new school, it was smaller and also met the regulations that were in effect then, but over time and with the decreasing number of children, and with damp walls, it proved to be difficult once again to maintain the school. This deal was recklessly made, given the value of the mansion, as the entrepreneur could not return the mansion to its former glory, because he run out of money. The property is for sale and is still empty, waiting for its buyer constantly, losing its value.

Legally, the former Hoyos mansion and its integral units, the arboretum, garden and the horse stable have separate geographic numbers and different ownership circles. In the past decades, the mansion and the mansion hall have experienced a significant deterioration, the rooftop is leaking, the roof has been broken up in several places, the doors and windows are incomplete and do not fulfill their function. The 53/2011. (VIII.25.) NEFMI Decree declared the mansion and the little mansion as a monument and the rest of the areas were acknowledged as historical gardens. The Office for the Protection of Heritage obliged the owners to take a number of measures, which apparently have not been met.

Naturally, in such studies local people's opinions are also significant, since, once co-operation is established, the attitudes of local residents can hinder or facilitate the process, so an easily comprehensible questionnaire was prepared and completed by 54 people in the village as a representative sample. The questionnaire was conducted with the help of a pollster and the process took two days. Evaluation and chart editing was performed using the Microsoft Excel 2010 program.

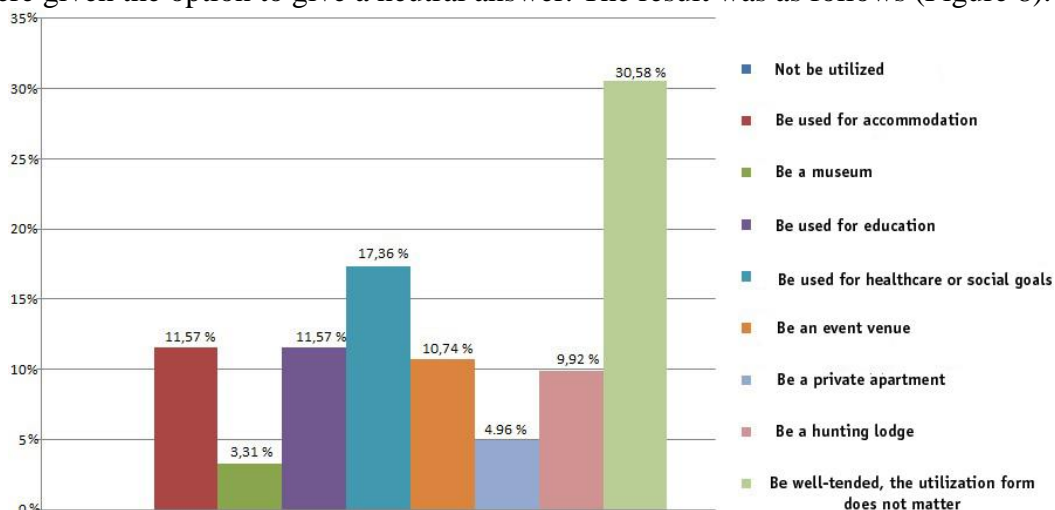
The former Hoyos Mansion represents values in different ways for the local population, as illustrated in Figure 7 (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** What kind of a value possess the mansion in Lad and its park? (Source: own editing, based on a survey made in 2015)

In the diagram, the numbers on the horizontal axis represent one to five intensities for each type, so if the given category is one, it means that the respondent says that the mansion and its park have the least in that given value. The respondents' opinion is that, the mansion is worth basically nothing and that it is not something people would want to see. In this context, the most valuable importance for the estate is the monumental and nature conservational category. The people paired the historic and architectural benefit to the mansion on the medium level. These data can also be explained by the fact that the property is getting worse and worse. At one point it had a magnificent architectural, what is more, a material value, but the only reason why it is still standing is because it is under protection and it is not attracting visitors to the settlement at its present state (Péterfi, 2015).

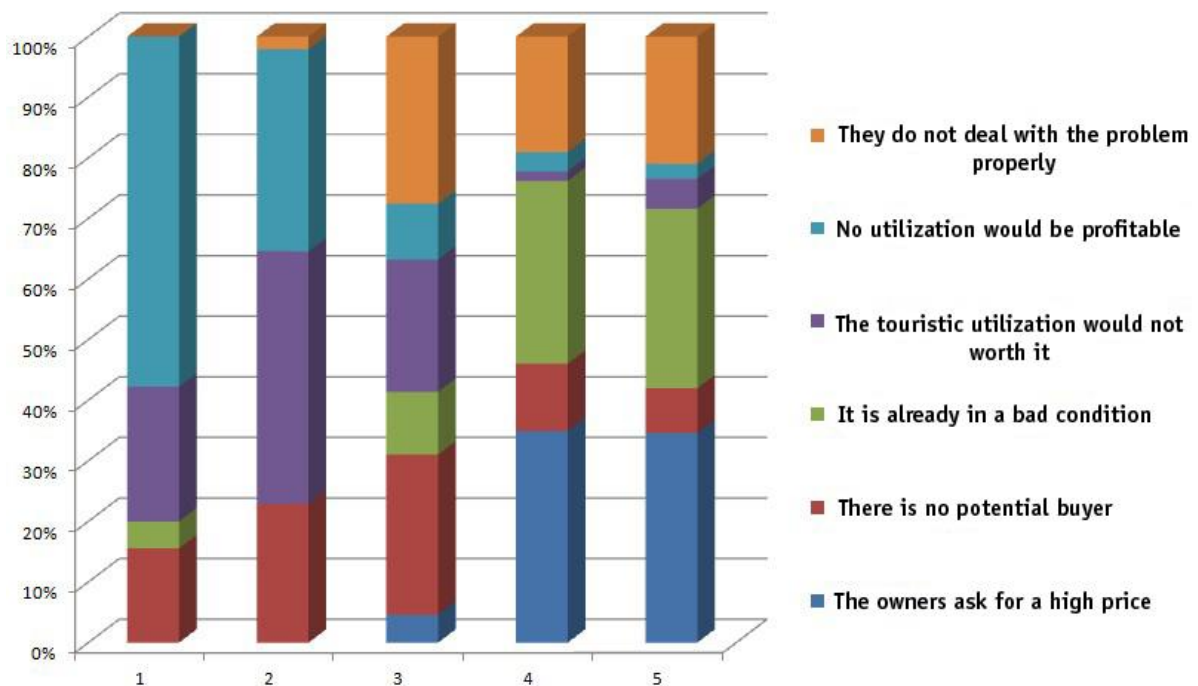
We asked the residents what they thought the most suitable way of conversion was, and they were given the option to give a neutral answer. The result was as follows (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Which conversion form would you prefer the most? (Source: own editing, based on a survey made in 2015)

As we can see in the figure, nearly 12% of people would like to have the mansion converted into a residence, educational institution, event venue or hunting lodge. Of course, from a tourist point of view, the accommodation function would be the most profitable, connecting to various attractions, for example hunting in the nearby forest. Almost 18% of them would use the property for healthcare or social purposes, which is understandable, as the settlement shows an aging picture, but this form of recovery would raise some difficulty. The privately owned residential building was mostly chosen by those who believe that the current owner will restore the property and move there, the odds of which are very small. And finally, 30.58% of the respondents said it would not matter if the mansion were used for a specific purpose, but that they would be delighted if either one got realized. (Péterfi, 2015).

Figure 9 illustrates what local residents thought the greatest obstacle to conversion was (Figure 9). Here, the highest value (5) is almost equal in terms of 'owners ask for a high price' and 'it is already in a bad condition' categories. The smallest obstacle is that the potential conversion would not be worth it, so in their view, it would be possible to create a profitable form of usage (mainly tourism) for the mansion.



**Figure 9.** What is biggest obstacle in the way of conversion? (Source: own editing, based on a survey made in 2015)

The questionnaire contained one single question that I wished to get a detailed answer for. This question required the respondents to express their opinion on the mansion. In many cases I did not get answers to this question, but most of the questionnaires reported that the locals were sorry that the mansion started decaying and that nobody cared about our heritage. A high proportion of respondents answered that they liked the building because they went to school there and want to do something for the restoration of the mansion.

As a result of the questionnaire, it became apparent how close local people felt to the mansion as cultural value and how positive they were about the possible ways for its conversion. So it can be said that the built heritage plays a key role in the local population's identity, as well as in the image of the settlement, and many would be able to do something to



preserve the mansion. Unfortunately, the current situation does not bode well for the future. The estate and its area are a monument and a historical garden, so its conversion could only be realized within certain limits. In my opinion the problem is not only that the owners cannot sell the property and they do not have the financial support for the investment because most of the tenders require self-financing too, but also that nobody wants to make an effort. Local people might have the desire to preserve cultural values (such as local patriots), but the owners mostly only play financial interests.

In parallel with the issues discussed in the previous chapter, it can be said that however the opinion and attitude towards cultural values in the region is very negative Lad's case is much more plausible. In our opinion, if the building were to be used again then not only the economic situation of the settlement could improve, but the cultural sensitivity would be enhanced in the people, too. They would be proud of a beautiful monument and it would contribute to their identity, so it would be even more important not only to develop and protect cultural heritages in regions, where people have a positive attitude, but also in areas, where there is even more space to flourish. If improvements were to be made in the South Transdanubian region, people might form a different opinion on the EU and public investment, they would have an easier time accepting the system and attach it to the monuments as well. And do not forget that, "rural tourism as a strategy for rural development is used and many thinkers and planners pay special attention to it, because they believe that the development of rural tourism is one of the suitable strategies for rural development and it solves challenges and problems" (Azmi – Razlansari 2015).

Here we would like to showcase an implemented project as a positive example, in Kutas settlement. This village has a population of only about 1000 inhabitants in relatively densely populated areas.

Despite the relatively poor social conditions, the mansion located there was bought and refurbished by a Swiss investor in 2007, which has since been the only 5-star hotel in the region.

From an interview with the manager of the mansion, we learned that the mansion is self-sustaining, and that there was no use of any tender, and the economic land belonging to the 100% privately-owned building also contributed to maintaining the continuously developing mansion hotel. From the aspect of tourism utilization, this estate is a success story, if we look at the identity of the local population, we can say that they are proud of the estate, but they do not feel attached to it in any way and they have no strong connections with it. Many local people are also working on the preservation of the monument, which in itself is an achievement, but because the interior of the mansion can not be visited and the wellness department is not accessible to the locals for financial reasons, they are physically separated from the mansion hotel, which is under foreign, Swiss ownership (but operated by Hungarians).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The once prosperous Hungarian mansions have been characterized by the lack of vacancy and continuous destruction due to the collectivization after the Second World War and the loss of the original functions associated with it. In order to prevent further deterioration, the previous governments have also announced several programs that have listed these mansions and conserved them, and in some cases refurbished the monuments. In the 21st century, with the flourishing of cultural tourism, the role of these facilities was enhanced, the mansions rebuilt in their original style with well-tended parks, gardens and abundant events became

national economical values. The Hungarian government, with the support of the EU, recognized this and launched the National Castle and Mansion Program, which offers further development opportunities. However, the winning entries are spatially unevenly distributed, which can partly be explained by the historical mansion culture traditions. This dense system may also be beneficial, for example by creating thematic roads, but so relatively large areas of the country remained without development. These regions are those where less populace relate positively to cultural heritage, they do not consider it important in the life of the settlement or the individual, which weakens the identity associated with the place of residence. One such region is South Transdanubia, which received the worst values in the survey. Although it is rich in cultural heritage, public and EU funds have not prevailed here. Residents also feel that, as they have a negative opinion of these two sources of financing. They are hoping for assistance and support from the founders and sponsors to maintain the buildings, because they see well-functioning best practices for it, and that support could help the development of the settlement and evoke a sense of pride. The result of the questionnaire shows in our case study, that the local population wants to find a new purpose for the neglected monuments and that they are willing to do something to make it happen. It is because of certain criteria and the shortcomings of the application system that they are unable to apply while it is almost impossible to finance renovations from own resources. It would be a huge step forward if private mansions that have long been unused and cannot find a buyer, who would be eligible for a tender, could be involved in the life of the settlement. Their sustainable maintenance towards upgraded touristic functionality could be equal to or better than the few mansions, which until now have managed to get involved in the program.

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