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**THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF
GASTRONOMIC EVENTS IN THE INTERACTION OF GLOBALISATION
AND LOCALISATION PROCESSES, BASED ON EXAMPLES FROM THE
SOUTHERN GREAT HUNGARIAN PLAIN**

Dissertation (Ph.D.) theses

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I. Rationale for the choice of topic, research history

Prior to the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation of festivals was popular both internationally and in Hungary. Festivals have a centuries-old history (FALASSI, A. 1987), their spread in Europe started after the Second World War (CUDNY, W. et al. 2012), in Hungary mainly from the early 1990s, after the regime change (PUSZTAI B. 2003).

As a result of the recognition of the benefits of festivals for local development, following the positive examples of others and the trends in festival organisation, more and more localities at all levels of the hierarchy of municipalities are trying to get involved in festival organisation, which is leading to a surge in the international and national growth of festivals (KUNDI V. 2012; HJALAGER, A. M.– KWIATKOWSKI, G. 2018), making the celebration of the uniqueness of places a global phenomenon (HALL, C. M. 1997). The problem I see with the proliferation of festivals is that if many places use the same strategy, in this case the organisation of festivals, to bring about social, economic and cultural renewal, to bring the community together, to differentiate it from others and to attract tourists, then the festivals will not be able to fulfil this function due to their high number. At the same time, there is no interdisciplinary, internationally and Hungarian accepted definition of a festival (KUNDI V. 2013). For this reason, in my opinion, the term festival is now used for events that are very different in terms of the theme celebrated, territorial significance, attractiveness and scale, and temporal scope, whereas previously it was only used for large-scale artistic events. The over-generalisation of the word 'festival' has also led to an increase in the number of these events, which can have a negative impact on visitor numbers and even visitor satisfaction due to the different quality of the festival.

From a thematic point of view, several types of festivals have emerged, one of the most widespread in Hungary and internationally being the food festival (HALL, C. M.–SHARPLES, L. 2008; VÁRHELYI T. 2016). Gastronomy as a local resource reflects the landscape and cultural specificities of a locality, but it can also express its social and economic fabric, hence it is an important constituent in the promotion of uniqueness (BESSIÈRE, J. 1998; RINALDI, C. 2017). The proliferation of food festivals has created a wide range of themes to celebrate, and it has become increasingly difficult for new event organisers to choose a theme that other municipalities in a given area have not already celebrated. Thus, in the hope of benefiting from the advantages of food festivals, events have also been created whose theme is not exclusively the specificity of the host locality or community, but some general gastronomic value that is equally shared by others (PUSZTAI B. 2003). International literature identifies two main types of festivals and food festivals in terms of territorial importance, number of visitors and volume of programmes. It distinguishes between small-scale community festivals and larger-scale, tourism-oriented festivals (KUNDI V. 2012; DWYER, L.–JAGO, L. 2019). The diversity of events in terms of volume and target group in the festival offer helps to diversify the offer, but there is a risk that the proliferation of festivals and gastronomic festivals will create events that do not cover the potential value of festivals in terms of content and do not match the needs of the target group. Furthermore, the range of urban development benefits that such events can bring is limited, and the term festival is used merely for the sake of being catchy and fashionable. The existence of a large number of events can lead to a fragmentation of the festival offer and a densification of events in busy periods. In a saturated offer, events can divert resources and visitors, reducing the volume of gastronomic events and jeopardising the accessibility of goals and the sustainability of events.

RICHARDS, G. (2007) refers to these problems of festivals as festivalisation, which means the dilution and commercialisation of the term festival, the mass commodification of festivals, the lack of a clear definition of the target group and the territorial relevance moreover the loss of the uniqueness of festivals. This raises the problem that festivals created to express uniqueness and to support localisation efforts may, by becoming mass, tend to homogenise rather than heterogenise the offer.

There are numerous studies, both national and international, on the explosion of festivals and food festivals and the potential dangers that this poses. However, I have hardly come across any research that has attempted to quantify and typify food festivals, analyse their national territorial

characteristics, explore the reasons for their creation and the conditions under which they operate. The reason for this may be that research tends to use different definitions of food festivals, based on one or a few case studies, to examine small samples of elements at local scale, mainly using quantitative methods. Studies analysing the range of gastronomic events in larger areas from multiple perspectives and with multiple methodologies are rare. In my opinion, this would provide a better understanding of the causes and consequences of the massification of food festivals and how to solve the problems that have arisen.

Quantification of festivals is lacking in the literature, and the related statistical-tourist databases are incomplete, because the concepts and boundaries of festivals and food festivals are not clear, because these events are dynamically changing, making it difficult to keep track of their numbers. If a definition of a food festival could be established which would be more suitable in practice for a more uniform registration, typification and statistical comparison of these events over time and space in Hungary, the opportunities, constraints and directions for rural development and tourism development in relation to food festivals could become clearer.

Several studies have shown that food festivals can bring wide-ranging social, economic and cultural benefits to the municipality and the community organising the festival, making them an excellent tool for (endogenous) development based on local resources (BESSIÈRE, J. 1998; RINALDI, C. 2017). However, the set of objectives are often incompatible, which can lead to social conflicts between the different municipal stakeholders (PUSZTAI B. 2007; KISS M. 2014). Furthermore, the objectives to be achieved have a strong influence on the differentiation of festivals in terms of theme, territorial importance and temporal characteristics. Therefore, I consider it necessary to examine the range of motivations for organising a food festival and the objectives to be achieved, as well as their compatibility.

The attainability of the goals set, thus the role of food festivals in local development, as well as the volume of events thus the nature of the food festival offer, depends to a large extent on the availability of the financial and human resources needed for their implementation, which can be provided by various local or external stakeholders (BOYNE, S.–HALL, D. 2003; ANDERSSON, T. D.–GETZ, D. 2008). To get resources, organisers need to involve and win over different stakeholders, who often have different objectives. However, not all municipalities have the same quantity and quality of local resources to be able to create long-term sustainable food festivals that contribute to economic, social and cultural regeneration (ZARĘBSKI, P.–ZWEGLIŃSKA-GAŁECKA, D. 2020). This raises the problem that dependency on different resources and the ability to access resources varies from one locality to another, which can lead to the re-production of spatial inequalities by food festivals.

The problems concerning the functioning and sustainability of festivals and within them of food festivals were already present in the Hungarian offer before the pandemic as well, moreover Hungarian festival researchers have also drawn attention to them (e.g. PUSZTAI B. 2007; BÓDI J. 2008; KUNDI V. 2013; KISS M. 2014). However, the gaps found in the international literature are even more characteristic of research in Hungary and other post-socialist or other Central and Eastern European countries.

II. Objectives and questions

Given the problems outlined above, the main goal of all these dissertations is to examine the multidisciplinary, context-seeking, micro-, meso- and macro-scale empirical quantitative and qualitative data of Hungarian gastronomic events, which can be used to reveal whether unique celebrating but massive events are localisation, globalisation or whether glocalisation facilitators in Hungary. In relation to this objective, I formulated three main questions and several sub-questions. In the first, theoretical main question of the research and the sub-questions assigned to it, I will examine the reasons for the appreciation of localisation and the development model based on local resources and the role of the gastronomic specificities of localities in the development of settlements: 1. *How globalisation and the post-Ford transition are changing rural and urban cultural production and consumption.*

1.1. *What are the factors that have led to the valorisation of (rural) local resource-based development?*

1.2 *How can gastronomic traditions, which are part of cultures, be integrated into a development model based on local resources?*

The second main question and its sub-questions aim to explore the spatial pattern of the offer of gastronomic events in Hungary, according to the thematic, spatial and temporal characteristics of the events, based on the literature and empirical research:

2. *What differences and similarities can be found in the interpretation of food festivals in foreign and domestic practice, based on the analysis of the multispectral typology and spatial patterns of gastronomic event offerings in foreign literature and domestic practice?*

2.1. *How to define the concept of a food festival?*

2.2 *How can the relationship of gastronomic events to the cultural specificities of the host place be assessed in terms of local resource-based development theory?*

2.3 *What role do gastronomic events play in the tourism offer of each locality?*

Based on the literature and empirical research, the third main question and its sub-questions shed light on the scope of the urban development goals to be achieved by gastronomic events and the factors influencing the achievability and sustainability of these goals, mainly using the example of rural gastronomic events in the Southern Great Hungarian Plain region:

3. *what role can gastronomic events play in the social, economic and cultural regeneration of local communities based on local resources in the context of globalisation and localisation in a dynamically changing environment in the case of the selected sample area of the Southern Great Hungarian Plain?*

3.1 *What risks and conflicts might differences in the resource attractiveness of gastronomic events imply for the development of territorial inequalities?*

3.2 *How the ability of gastronomic events to adapt to external and internal changes and influences can affect the sustainability of these events?*

Based on this, the objective of the dissertation and the answers to the main and sub-questions related to it explain the increasing role of gastronomic events in local development, the thematic, spatial and temporal problems of the gastronomic events that have emerged as a result of this process. They show how many of these events meet the criteria of what I have defined as a food festival and how gastronomic events that celebrate uniqueness can play their role in local development depending on the various influencing factors.

III. The research methods used

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the research. The results of the methods used are interlinked and the findings from each method have been used as a starting point for other methods (Table 1).

At the beginning of the research, there was no available database of Hungarian gastronomic events and their data that would have allowed to identify their spatial pattern. For this reason, I chose the content analysis method to compile a collection of Hungarian gastronomy-themed events for the year 2019. The content analysis was based on keyword searches, which were determined by studying the names of events in archival festival databases. I searched for keyword phrases and the names of all municipalities in Hungary using Google search engine. I reviewed the results of the search and if I found any events that included a food, drink, product, produce or food production process in the name, I recorded the name of the municipality, the name of the event, the date and the year of the event in the database. The database of gastronomic events created does not include events in Budapest, as the primary aim of the research is to explore rural and small-town processes. Finally, 987 gastronomic events have been included in my database, which I will call gastronomic events.

I further extended the data documented in the database on the gastronomic events organised in 2019 by conducting an online media content analysis to examine the image of the events in the media. I searched for the 987 gastronomic events collected during the research using the Google search engine, and based on the content of articles, descriptions, photos and posters published during

the search, I scored the events according to my pre-defined criteria. On the basis of the criteria examined, I created complex indicators of "focus" and "function", according to which I classified the events into clusters using K-mean Cluster analysis. The "focus" indicator refers to the emphasis of the gastronomic theme of the events studied on the basis of the textual content published in the Internet media, i.e. the extent to which the events can be considered to have a gastronomic or cultural-musical focus. The "function" indicator expresses the territorial importance, volume and target group of the events and I took into account a number of aspects, including the time span of the events and their internet media activity. Furthermore, I used one-way analysis of variance to explore the relationships and differences between the thematic, spatial and temporal characteristics of gastronomic events in the results of the media content analysis and the questionnaire survey.

In order to find out the reasons for the creation of gastronomic events and the conditions under which they operate, I conducted a questionnaire survey among the organisers of the gastronomic events I collected. The questionnaire was created using the Google form and sent out by e-mail to the contact persons of the events, the municipality of the settlement and the cultural institution of the municipality on a total of 3 occasions between January 2020 and February 2021. I closed the survey with 479 relevant responses from 443 different festivals, a response rate of 44.9%. The questionnaire was completed by 389 different municipalities, representing 55.7% of the total number of municipalities organising a gastronomic event. The sample is dominated by events held in municipalities with a smaller population, which is also representative of the overall offer. 72.8% of all the municipalities organising a gastronomic event and 70.7% of the sampled municipalities have a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants. The questionnaire contained both open and closed questions. For the majority of the closed questions, a 4-point Likert scale and a 5-point semantic differential scale were used. Based on the closed questions of the questionnaire, I constructed the indicators "function", "focus", "dependency" and "life cycle" using K-mean Cluster analysis.

During the interview study of the research, 68 semi-structured interviews were conducted between November 2020 and February 2021, with two main target groups. In the selected sample area, the Southern Great Plain planning-statistical region, 34 interviews were conducted with mainly rural gastronomic event organisers, while 34 interviews were conducted with professionals from the national level who are familiar with the functioning of gastronomic festivals, e.g. with expertise in urban, regional and tourism development. The interviews help to support and deepen the exploration of the results of the questionnaire based on quantitative data. The interviews with the organizers focused on the operational background of the festivals, while the experts highlighted the nature of the festival offerings and their role in the development of gastronomic events.

During the research I examined three case studies in the Southern Great Plain region, which were the „Bócsator” in Bócsa, Pancake Festival in Derekegyház and the Rooster Festival in Csanádapáca, all three settlements with a population of less than 5000 people. During the case study research, I conducted interview research among the organisers and active supporters (e.g. volunteers) of the events to explore the operational background of the events between November 2018 and January 2019. 8 interviews were conducted in Bócsa, 7-7 in Derekegyház and Csanádapáca. In 2019, I conducted short, structured interviews with a small group of visitors (2-3 people) or 1-1 person when visiting the events to find out about demand motivations, needs and opinions. 30-30 interviews were conducted in Bócsa and Csanádapáca and 60 in Derekegyház.

Table 1: Summary of the methods used in the research

Methodology		Item number
Content analysis		987 festival
Questionnaire research		479 questionnaires
Interview research	Festival organiser interviews	34 semi-structured interviews
	Expert interviews	34 semi-structured interviews
Case studies	Festival organiser interviews	22 semi-structured interviews
	Visitor interviews	120 structured interviews

Source: own editing

IV. Summary of results

In examining my first main question and its sub-questions, my research findings based on the literature review are as follows:

1. Since many researches have shown that gastronomic festivals can be a tool for development based on local resources (endogenous), the study explores the factors that have led to the appreciation of this development model, based on foreign and national literature. According to the literature, globalisation, which became increasingly pronounced in the 1970s, can have three effects on culture as a result of the intensification and frequency of intercultural interactions (MCLUHAN, M. 1964; WOODS, M. 2007). The global spread of cultural elements and trends in consumption and values can lead to the homogenisation of cultures, which can lead to the erosion of local cultural specificities. This can be supported by festivals that do not aim to celebrate uniqueness but seek economic benefits through the transmission of global consumer culture. The opposite process is cultural heterogenisation, which leads to the valorisation of the uniqueness of localities. This can also be brought about by festivals, which, in this approach, help to develop the local economy, maintain community and preserve local cultural assets through the celebration of local specificities. A third way of understanding cultural globalization is that global and local processes interact, referring to the dynamic, ever-changing nature of culture (BOROS L.–PÁL V. 2010; ILLÉS T. 2018). Based on the literature, I argue that these three approaches are co-existing and shaping culture and cultural products, while also causing changes in production and consumption. In global capitalism, consumption is at the forefront, with an increasing demand for unique products and services, including in tourism. At the same time, production is also changing, from economies of scale to economies of choice, which also affects the development of settlements. In the case of rural communities, it has been recognised that rural problems cannot be solved by uniform development strategies because of their different specificities. Moreover that the countryside is no longer synonymous with agricultural production, but is increasingly being given a role in the residential, recreational and ecological functions of rural areas because of the values inherent in their specificities, lifestyle and culture, and proximity to nature (VAN DER PLOEG, J. D.–ROEP, D. 2003). The countryside is becoming a space of consumption instead of a space of production (WOODS, M. 2010; CSURGÓ B.–MEGYESI B. 2015). This gives rural spaces the opportunity to base their development on their specific and unique characteristics. Thus, the literature suggests that global and local interactions, the shift towards protecting and exploiting local assets against global influences, changes in consumer values are leading to an appreciation of rural resource-based development.
2. The increasing value of localism in the context of globalisation has led to a growing role for local assets in spatial and urban development. However, in order to base development on local assets, they must become a resource that can be developed through an endogenous development model. The model aims to deliver development based on local resources and local needs that are under local control and support localities development, sustainability and competitiveness, while reducing localities vulnerability and dependence on global processes (WOODS, M. 2010; G. BODNÁR 2013). However, both the literature and the results of my field research show that local communities often lack the material and intellectual resources to recognise and exploit their specificities. However, this model is based on the diversity of local conditions, the quality and quantity of resources available for development varies from one locality to another, differentiating rural spaces and increasing territorial disparities (HARVEY, D. 1982). In many cases, localities need external assistance to achieve real development results, as empirical research has shown (RAY, C. 2006).
3. Gastronomic traditions are an expression of the uniqueness of a place, as they are the result of a combination of the knowledge of local people, the cultural specificities of the place and its unique geographical characteristics. As such, they reflect the specificity of a place, express the way of life, shared values of the local society and can be important reference points for members of a community (BESSIÈRE, J. 1998; QUAN, S.–WANG, N. 2004; RINALDI, C. 2017).

In this way, gastronomic traditions help to distinguish one place from another and can be seen as a local specificity whose role in local development is increasingly recognised by more and more localities. However, gastronomy as a cultural resource is also affected by the heterogenising, homogenising and hybridising effects of globalisation (QUAN, S.–WANG, N. 2004), all of which may be reinforced by the transformation of rural functions, the transformation of rural society and tourism. The integration of gastronomy into local development is also generated by demand. In line with cultural heterogeneity and changes in consumption, today's tourists are increasingly looking for unique and special experiences, which they can obtain by experiencing the gastronomy of the host destination during their trip. For this reason, gastronomy is becoming an increasingly important part of the travel experience, an important complement to it and even the main motivation for travelling (QUAN, S.–WANG, N. 2004). The rise of gastronomy in tourism has led to the emergence of food tourism as an alternative form of tourism (DIXIT, S. K. 2019), which can be considered as a type of cultural tourism, but also as a form of tourism in its own right, thanks to its growing importance. Gastronomy tourism has many forms of manifestation, among which gastronomy-themed events, including food festivals, are very popular in Hungary (VÁRHELYI T. 2016). The role of gastronomy festivals as a local development tool is therefore due to the availability of gastronomic traditions as a cultural resource on the supply side, the exploitation of their role in shaping identity and image, and the interest of demand.

When I examined the second main question and its sub-questions, I obtained the following research results:

4. To define the concept of a food festival, I have used both literature and empirical research. Based on the literature, I compared the content of several festival definitions and found that all festivals have a celebrated theme, temporal and spatial characteristics and objectives (Table 2). In the definition of a food festival, it was found that the primary criterion for these events is that they draw attention to a food or drink by celebrating it. All this literature suggests that food festivals are limited in duration, celebrating and maintaining a gastronomic theme related to the culture of the local community in a particular space, but are also open to a wider audience, with different objectives. Based on the interviews with the organisers of the food festivals, a food festival can be defined as any event centred on a unique and special product linked to the traditions of a local community. Their aim is to promote these products to the local and wider public by making, presenting, tasting and selling them locally. These events will also provide a complementary cultural programme to enhance the visitor experience. So, according to the two definitions, a gastronomic festival is an event that celebrates a gastronomic theme linked to a place or community and that has a target audience beyond the local community.

Table 2: Characteristics of the festival concept in the literature

Festival component	Festival component features
Theme	Each festival celebrates a chosen theme, which can be diverse, but usually focuses on an element of local culture. In addition, the festival itself is a current trend of celebration in today's globalised world and consumer society.
Temporality	Festivals have temporal characteristics, as they take place at a given time, and they are phenomena that change over time.
Spatiality	Festivals have spatial characteristics, they take place in a specific area, they celebrate a specific culture. Closely related to the spatiality is the public nature of festivals, as the local community wants to share the celebrated elements of their culture with others, so festivals are not only for the local community, but also for those from outside the local community (tourists), differentiating festivals according to their target group and territorial importance.
Goals	Festivals work to achieve an objective, usually social, economic and/or cultural benefits, closely linked to the development of the area and tourism.

Source: own editing based on the literature

5. According to the literature and empirical research, there are several ways of choosing the theme of gastronomic events. In line with the findings of the literature, in addition to celebrating local gastronomic traditions, gastronomic events based on a general gastronomic element not particularly linked to the locality or community in question are increasingly common in domestic gastronomic events. Of the events studied in the interview surveys, about one third of the organisers chose such a theme, as in the municipalities in my three case studies. Such festivals are popular in places that have little or no marketable tourist attraction or image factor, or where the community lacks a cultural element that could be a key element in strengthening its identity. Furthermore, it may be the case that a locality belongs to an area with a common value, but is already the subject of a festival organised by another municipality. If the organisers still wish to take advantage of the benefits of organising a festival, they will create a new tradition, adding to the local cultural resource base. Events that celebrate a theme linked to a place or community are defined as meeting the criteria for a gastronomic festival. However, for the purposes of the topic, I also consider events based on established traditions in Hungarian practice as gastrofestivals, where uniqueness is expressed in the creativity of the locals and the shaping of the general value to the specificity of the locality, in hybridisation.
6. Less attention is paid in the international literature to the typification of gastronomic events in a given area. By analysing the names of domestic gastronomic events, I have grouped them into seven main categories and further subcategories. Before the COVID period, in our country more and more municipalities tried to identify themselves with some kind of gastronomic event, which made it increasingly difficult for them to find a specific theme. As a result, certain themes, such as the Hungarian pig feast, became particularly widespread in certain regions, such as the Southern Great Hungarian Plain. During the expert interviews, many felt that by spreading certain themes across the country and even compressing them over time, the organisers were promoting the homogenisation of the national offer. However, despite the popularity of certain themes, there are many examples of unique or infrequent events. (Table 3).

Table 3: Categories of gastronomic events by theme

Category	Number of events and distribution
Vegetable and fruit	199, 20.2%
Pork	192, 19.5%
Beverage	163, 16.5%
Meat related cooking and baking	156, 15.8%
Dessert/cake/pasta	125, 12.7%
General focused	81, 8.1%
Combined	71, 7.2 %

Source: own editing based on the literature

7. The attractiveness of gastronomic events depends to a large extent on the programme on offer. An analysis of the prominence of the celebrated theme in the programme offer (the "focus" indicator) shows that the methods used in the research display that the vast majority of domestic gastronomic events offered a higher proportion of gastronomic programmes or a similar proportion of gastronomic and musical programmes to visitors. However, based on my media analysis using image analysis, almost 30% of the gastronomy-themed events surveyed and 10% of the events surveyed by the organisers, gave greater weight to stage programmes compared to gastronomic elements. The reason for this is that their organisers considered that they were of greater interest to visitors. In other words, there were also events with a gastronomic name, where gastronomy was not the main attraction, which is the result of the massification of gastronomic events and the over-generalisation of the name 'food festival'.

8. The research shows that the creation of many gastronomic-themed events was motivated by the need to comply with some kind of tender, to transform the often too general or pejorative meaning of the village festival into a fashionable food festival, to get involved in the festival fever, to reach the target group and to distinguish the municipality from other localities, and thus largely by external pressure, to raise funds, to create an image and to compete with other municipalities. All this has contributed to the oversaturation of the gastronomic offer.
9. The spatial analysis shows that domestic gastronomic events are relatively evenly distributed between the planning statistical regions, but there were also areas of event scarcity and concentration on a narrower spatial scale. Typically, fewer gastronomic events occurred in peripheral areas, such as small villages, while concentration areas included tourist destinations (e.g. Lake Balaton) and cities (Figure 1). The research shows that 70% of the 987 gastronomic events collected for the year under review took place in rural settlements with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants, meaning that rural gastronomic events dominate the Hungarian offer.

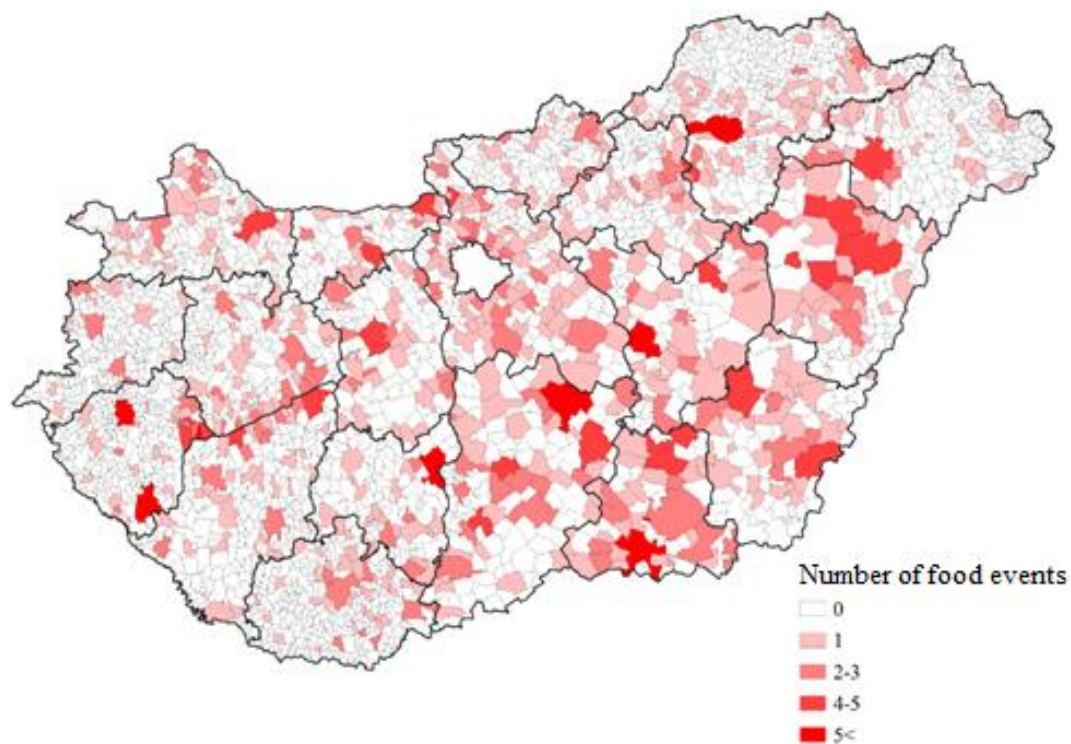


Figure 1: Regional distribution of domestic gastronomic events in 2019

Source: own editing based on own data collection

10. Also based on the analysis of media images and the "function" indicators created according to the results of the questionnaire, about 40% of Hungarian gastronomic events were fully or more targeted at local audiences as opposed to tourists. Moreover about 10% were more or less targeted at tourists according to the media analysis and 20% according to the organisers' questionnaire. According to the media analysis, most of the larger-scale gastronomic events with a primarily tourist function were held in the Southern Great Hungarian Plain region, while the distribution between the other cluster regions was relatively even. The relationship between the volume of events and the size of the organising municipalities, analysed by analysis of variance, shows that large-scale festivals were associated with municipalities with a larger population, while events with a local, community function tended to be associated with municipalities with a smaller population.
11. The high proportion of events without a tourist function, aimed at a local audience, may be due to the fact that many event organisers consider it more important to strengthen the identity of the local community than to serve tourists, according to the interviews. In addition,

constraints to tourism growth also contribute to the high proportion of small-scale events, such as limited resources available, unattractive themes and programmes, lack of appropriate marketing, lack of accommodation, the spatial and temporal concentration of gastronomic events. I do not think it is necessary for all gastronomic events to prioritise the development of tourism, as I also consider the social function of these events to be important. However, for an event to be called a festival, it must also attract the interest of people outside the local community, according to my definition. In turn, offering events that only appeal to the local community and calling them a festival triggers the festivalisation.

12. Based on the emphasis on the theme of gastronomic events, their volume and territorial significance, almost half of the gastronomic events in Hungary do not fit the concept of a food festival, as their target group is the local population, and they are not characterised by a tourist role. One third of these events do not meet the criteria of a food festival in terms of the emphasis of the theme, as their programmes focus on music, despite the gastronomic name and the use of the word festival in most cases, thus supporting the dilution of the word festival. Smaller and larger-scale semi-food festivals, which were not fully focused on gastronomy in their theme alongside music and theatre, such as the Rooster Festival in Csanádapáca, were 20% of the offer. One third of the gastronomic-themed events met the food festival requirements in terms of both the focus of the theme and the territorial importance, 15% of which were tourism-oriented and 85% of which could be defined as community festivals, such as the Bócsator and Pancake Festival in Derekegyház (Figure 2). The events classified as community festivals are comparable to community festivals as defined in international literature, which have a smaller scale of attraction, but their friendly, family atmosphere is the attraction that can support rural tourism. There are no significant differences in the distribution of events in the regions, but the most gastronomic festival-oriented region is the Southern Great Hungarian Plain, which was chosen as a sample area, with 23.3% of the country's gastronomic events, while 43.8% of the region's events were food festivals (Figure 2).

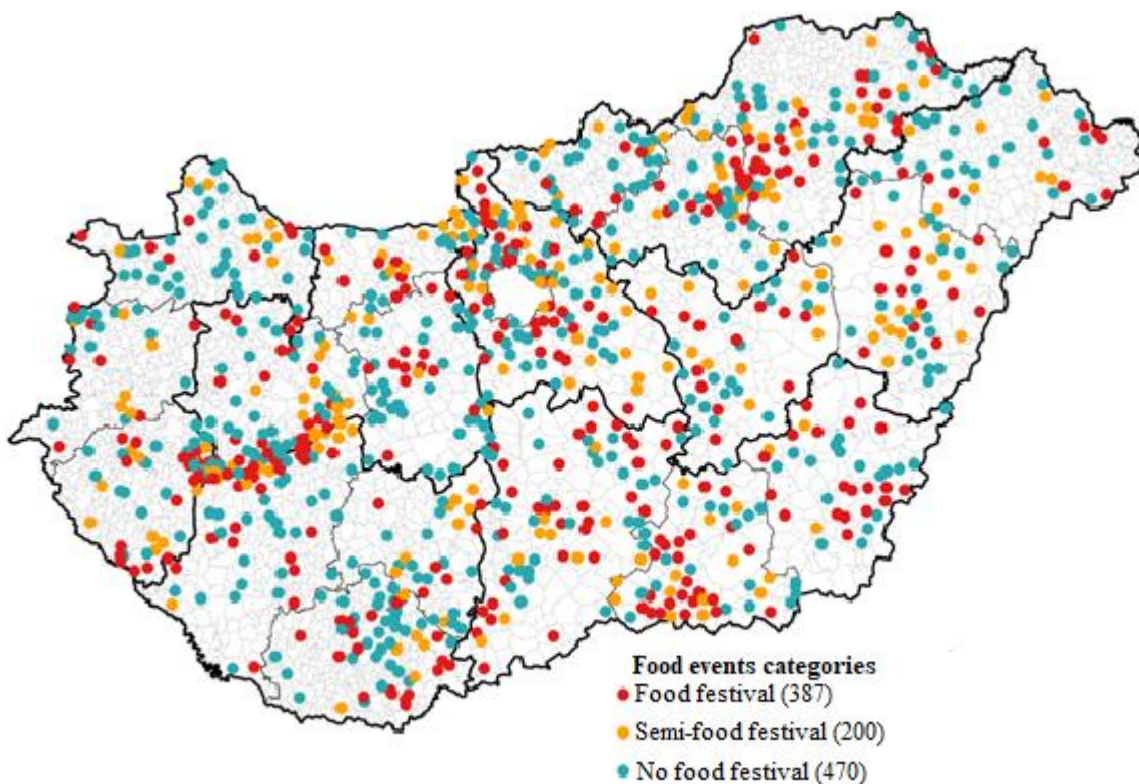


Figure 2: Spatial distribution of gastronomic event categories

Source: own editing based on own data collection

13. The popularity of gastronomic events in Hungary is reflected in the fact that most of the events in the sample year in 2019 were held for the first time. 70% of the Hungarian gastronomic events were only one day events, which do not generate significant tourism, events can be more of an additional attraction. In terms of supply, gastronomic events are mainly concentrated in the summer and autumn, in line with the seasonality of Hungarian tourism (Figure 3). The interviews also suggest that the concentration of events over time results in fewer visitors per festival. The fact that gastronomic events are available to tourists in almost any region at any time during the high season means that they are no longer as valuable as they would be if the choice were narrower, therefore a more unique and special experience would be to visit. This further fragments the festival offer.

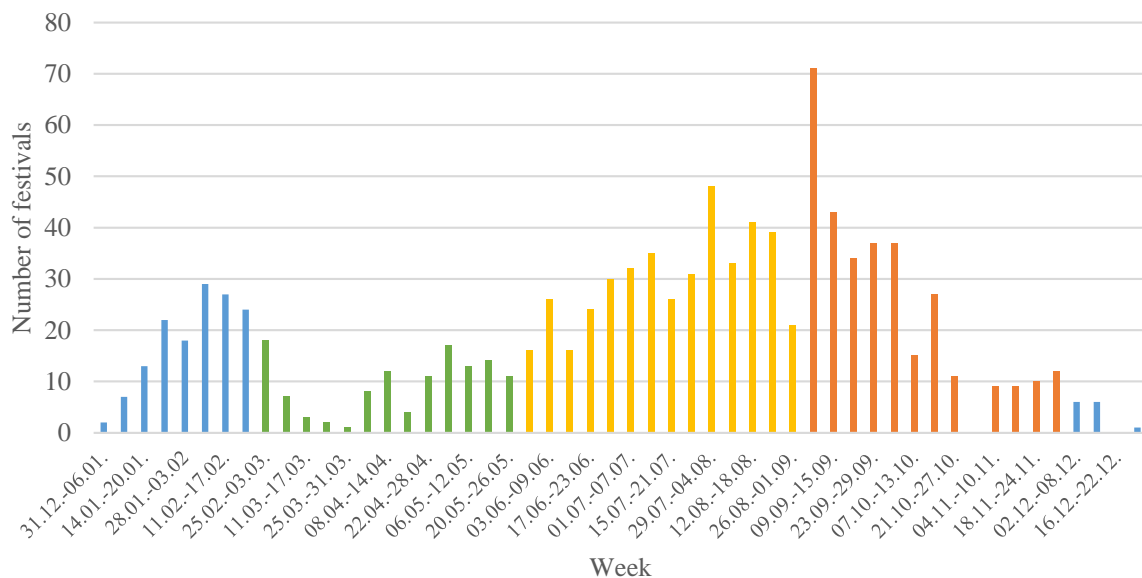


Figure 3: Number of gastronomic events on weekends in 2019

Source: own editing based on own data collection

My research findings on the third set of questions are as follows:

14. In the questionnaire research, I explored the aims of the organisers of the gastronomic events under study, regardless of whether they met the food festival requirements. The main objective was to shape the image of the municipality and to bring the local community together. This is in line with the findings in the literature that gastronomy helps to distinguish municipalities from others and strengthens community cohesion through shared values. However, as the interview research showed, many rural settlements, due to the changes in the countryside, have no local traditions to which they can relate, so they create their own traditions in the present, on which they build their identity and celebrate it in festivals, such as the "Csöröge" Festival in Árpádhalm. The expansion of the local tourism offer was also considered important by the respondents, but further results of the questionnaire and the interviews indicate that rural gastronomic events are less able to generate measurable tourism, except in a few cases (e.g. Honey and Cherry Festival in Szank). In addition, there are cases where the objectives of strengthening local identity and image and meeting the needs of tourists are less compatible, because an increase in the volume of local events and the increasing participation of tourists may lead to alienation of local residents from the festival. The literature also drew attention to this problem, several respondents from the organisers and local visitors of the Derekegyháza Pancake Festival, met with it. The preservation of gastronomic traditions was also mentioned as an important objective by the respondents, but this was less mentioned in the interviews with the organisers of the Southern Great Hungarian Plain. Rather, partners indicated that gastronomy was seen more as a means to achieve the aforementioned goals.

Thus, I see gastronomy as a cultural value that can help in municipal renewal, in line with current consumer trends, not depending on whether it is an established or pre-existing tradition, but on the way it is communicated to the target groups. To a lesser extent than the first four motives, but also to generate income for local entrepreneurs, was identified by respondents as an important objective, and according to the Western literature, the promotion and income generation of local producers is a key function of food festivals (HALL, C. M.-SHARPLES, L. 2008). However, the results of the interview research show that in the case of rural festivals in Hungary, entrepreneurs tend to act more as sponsors to support the implementation of the festivals, with less direct financial benefit. This may be because, unlike Western gastronomic events, Hungarian festivals do not focus on marketing local products. The aim of generating revenue for the local municipality is less than half of the events, as municipalities typically have a high financial cost for the implementation of these events. They are often unable to do this on their own and need to mobilise financial and human resources from various stakeholders.

15. My research shows that gastronomic events are highly exposed to external and internal changes and conditions. More than 90% of the gastronomy events in the survey, regardless of their objectives and volume, relied on various stakeholders such as local entrepreneurs, volunteers, media, public and other funding sources. The capacity to attract resources, the activity of volunteers, the skills of the organisers, the range of supporters, the necessary central funding to be obtained and the local cultural resource pools vary from one locality to another and also vary over time, resulting in variations in the quality of gastronomic events, in many cases, results difficulties in sustainability. Based on my research, gastronomic events can contribute to social, economic and cultural regeneration in those municipalities that are richer in social capital and material resources, thus can be a tool for local resource-based development. For this reason, these events ultimately reproduce territorial inequalities, in line with the findings of several other national authors (CSURGÓ B.–SZATMÁRI A. 2014; KIS K.–PESTI K. 2015; FARKAS J. ZS.–KOVÁCS A. D. 2018; PÓLA P. 2019). Moreover, a common theme during the interviews was the continued reliance of localities on external, public or other governmental resources, which in turn can be an obstacle to the functioning of the endogenous development model. At the same time, the hope of obtaining grant funding has also led the creation of gastronomic-themed events, for example, transformed from previous village festivals. That was highlighted by several of my interviewees, including the organisers of the Potato Festival in Nagykamarás and the „Csöröge” Festival in Árpádhalom.
16. The sustainability of gastronomic events is strongly influenced by their integration into regional and national offer, in addition to their financial aspects. If gastronomic events are more frequent in a given area and are similar in terms of the type of food on offer, there is a risk of a decrease or stagnation in the number of visitors, which is the case for 40% of the events studied. In order to avoid a deterioration in the quality of the events and a fragmentation of the offer, a greater degree of inter-municipal cooperation would be needed, which was the case for only 40% of the events in the year under review.
17. The development and continuity of gastronomic events were disrupted by the measures restricting the organisation of events, which were triggered by the coronavirus epidemic in March 2020. During the period of the pandemic, there were several changes to the regulations governing the organisation of events, which meant that they could not be carried out at all or only to a limited extent. This constant change and uncertainty made it essentially impossible to organise events. It is questionable how motivated local actors will remain to organise events after the pandemic and how the necessary resources can be mobilised. I therefore think it is likely that after the end of the pandemic, the range of gastronomic events will not return to its previous state, with some events disappearing and others being restructured and new ones being created. This also demonstrates the dependence and dynamic nature of gastronomic events on global changes.

Ultimately, the results of the research suggest that whether events celebrating uniqueness but becoming masses were facilitators of localisation or globalisation in Hungary before the pandemic depends on the objectives to be achieved and the scale of the study. At the local level, other events have less influence on the bonding of the local community and the maintenance of local gastronomic traditions and thus promote localisation from this point of view. According to this approach, there is a fundamental need for all gastronomic events in all municipalities, since all community events can strengthen the vitality of municipalities. However, if the event was no longer limited to the local audience, the wider gastronomic offer supported globalisation in terms of image building, expansion of the tourist offer and revenue generation. The reason for this is that not all localities can differentiate themselves from the others by applying the same development strategy, ie the organisation of gastronomic events. In future, when organising events, there is a much greater need to reconcile the resources available in a given area with the objectives to be achieved and to rethink the name accordingly, thus promoting a more balanced offer and the sustainability of events.

V. Possibilities for the use of the results

- In the thesis, the terms festival and food festival were defined on the basis of the literature, and the meaning of food festival was also defined on the basis of my questionnaire for festival organisers. These definitions may help to regulate the practical use of the word festival in the future, avoiding problems arising from conceptual confusion.
- The revealed pre-pandemic COVID gastro-event landscape draws attention to the operational problems of these events in terms of sustainability and shows the types of events that were oversupplied and undersupplied in time and space. These findings can help to re-launch gastronomic events that were operating before the pandemic in a more thoughtful way. It will also provide guidance to those thinking of creating new gastronomic events to better integrate them into the regional offer. In this way, a more balanced and sustainable gastronomic offer can be created in the future.
- My results highlight the fact that the hope of winning grant money has led to the creation of many gastronomic events, enriching the range of events on offer. However, they also point to the need for external support at local level for social, economic and cultural development. However, the conditions for obtaining grants are too restrictive in terms of local development. Thus, my dissertation may contribute to a more conscious allocation of public funds, as it revealed that calls for proposals were not always adapted to local needs, for example, by calling for the same development methods in many municipalities. Ultimately, the dissertation can be used to coordinate the local level and the higher, state level in the exploration of the areas to be developed and the allocation of state aid to them.
- The results of this thesis may also be useful for festival researchers. My research explores the pre-pandemic gastronomic event offer, which is expected to change significantly after the pandemic. Thus, my research can serve as a starting point and comparative material for studies of the future state of festival offerings, which can provide answers to the question of whether the problems of past festival offerings have been solved and what changes have taken place in this respect.

VI. Further possible directions for research

- Some of the methods used in the dissertation covered the national scale, but the organiser interviews, which were suitable for a deeper exploration of the processes, focused on small-scale gastronomic events in the South Great Plain, mainly in villages. The motivations for organising gastronomic events, the thematic, spatial and temporal context of these events, the role of stakeholders and reactions to changes in other regions and urban events can be examined to get a full, national picture.
- The empirical research was completed at the beginning of 2021, after which the restrictions on the organisation of festivals were gradually eased. In the future, it would certainly be useful to investigate how gastronomic event organisers have responded to the opening up, what

proportion of their events have been relaunched and with what changes, and how many and what type of new festivals have been created. This will also reveal the situation of the domestic gastronomic events offer post-pandemic and the changes in the operating conditions, as well as the adaptability of the organisers.

- The research has shown that gastronomic events are particularly exposed to external and internal changes and that their maintenance entails heavy financial implications. It would be worthwhile to explore what other types of attractions could be used more cost-effectively to achieve social, economic and cultural development in localities, in addition to or instead of food festivals.
- The organisation of municipal events has always been popular in Hungary for a long time, every era has had its community events (e.g. fairs, village fairs, and then food festivals), which have been organised in many municipalities. In the future, it could be explored what types of events could take their place if gastronomic festivals become unfashionable.
- The dissertation has mainly examined the supply side of domestic gastronomic events. In the future, it would be useful to further investigate the characteristics of demand for food festivals in order to explore whether demand meets supply, which would further support the sustainability of events.

VII. Publications in the field of the thesis

TÓTH, B.–VIDA, GY.–PAPP, S.–NAGY, GY. 2023: Differentiation of the Hungarian food festival offer according to the thematic, spatial and temporal characteristics before the COVID-19 pandemic. – International Scientific Journal „Turizam” 27. 7. (before published)

TÓTH B.–PAPP S.–HEGEDŰS G.–NAGY GY. 2022: A magyarországi gasztronómiai fesztiválok földrajzi jellemzői, 2019. – Területi Statisztika 62. 2. pp. 190-217.

TÓTH, B.–VIDA, GY.–LADOS, G.–KOVÁCS, Z. 2020: The potentials of cross-border tourism development in the Lower-Tisa Valley. – Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites 28. 1. pp. 360-375.

TÓTH B.–HEGEDŰS G.–PUSZTAI B. 2020: A falusi gasztrofesztiválok iránti kereslet és kínálat vizsgálata dél-alföldi példák alapján. – Turizmus Bulletin 20. 3. pp. 24-33.

TÓTH, B.–HEGEDŰS, G.–PUSZTAI, B. 2019: Rural food festivals in the perception of local residents and visitors in the Southern Great Hungarian Plain region. – In. Get ready for iGeneration, Contemporary Trends in Tourism and Hospitality, 2019. University of Novi Sad, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management. Novi Sad, pp. 77-85.

TÓTH B.–KÁPOSZTA L.–NAGY GY. 2019: Turizmusfejlesztés az erőforráshiányos térségekben Bócsa példáján/Tourism development in resource-deprived areas following the example of Bócsa. – In. Belügyminisztérium, Önkormányzati Koordinációs Iroda (szerk.): A helyi önkormányzatok fejlődési perspektívái Közép-Kelet Európában: Gyakorlat és innovációk/ Perspectives of Local Governments in Central-Eastern Europe: Practice and Innovations. Konferencia kötet/Conference volume. pp. 510-523

TÓTH B.–HEGEDŰS G. 2019: A helyi érdekcsoportok szerepe a vidéki gasztrofesztiválok működtetésében dél-alföldi példák alapján. – Turisztikai és Vidékfejlesztési Tanulmányok 4. 1. pp. 31-46.

TÓTH B.–NAGY GY.–HEGEDŰS G. 2017: A helyi értékek és hungarikumok turisztikai attrakcióvá való fejlesztési lehetőségei alföldi példákon keresztül. – Turisztikai és Vidékfejlesztési Tanulmányok 2. 2. pp. 4-19.