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**The relationship between the built cultural heritage and the
local identity –
actor-centred geographical analysis
based on Budapest case studies**

Theses of the PhD dissertation

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Introduction

Due to the global reevaluation of the cultural heritage cities lay strong emphasis on their built cultural heritage. As the result of this process, the rehabilitation and the maintenance of the built cultural heritage becomes the compulsory element of the development strategies, even if, in often cases, the residents of the cities regard the heritage status of their homes and residential areas rather a burden than advantage. Though, the advantages and the disadvantages deriving from stressing the importance of cultural heritage do not concern everybody equally. The actors determining the development directions of a city and the future of its built cultural heritage try to advance their own interests. The different power relations of the various actors may lead to the situation that the decision finally taken does not coincide with the concept of the residents. In some cases there are such changes coming into force, that the residents do not regard to be desirable at all, still they face day by day the consequences of the unwanted changes. The residents of the areas rich in cultural heritage are often (even if not consciously) tightly attached to the built cultural heritage, which also infiltrates into their local identity and heightens heir feeling of being home.

As the relationship between the built cultural heritage, the local identity and the feeling of being home are slightly researched topics in the Hungarian social geography, therefore in the focus of the dissertation stand these issues. The dissertation introduces the Hungarian specialities of the mentioned relationship by analysing the case of three residential areas of Budapest.

I. Research topic, antecedents in the literature of the field

The starting period of the scientific research on cultural heritage can be dated to the post-war period (Word War II) in Europe, when the wounds of the urban fabric had to be “healed”. The question of renovating, or rebuilding the old buildings injured in the war, or rather raising new ones on their plots were debates that raised several questions that were of less importance earlier. The interest towards these aspects of cultural heritage was further increased by the numerous political changes of the last decades (e.g. the redrawing of the national borders) and the intensification of certain demographic processes (e.g. migration). Thus several theoretical and empirical research came into light and examined the effects of heritage on such diversified topics, like identity (BHABHA H. 1990; SMITH, A. D. 1991; LOWENTHAL, D. 1998), the physical and social processes of cities (BOHLAND, J. D. – HAGUE, E. 2009; PAP Á. 2009, 2012a), local residents

(ENNEN, E. 1999, 2000; HAMPTON, P. M. 2004), tourism (IONIȚĂ, S. 2005; GÜNLÜ, E. *et al.* 2009; PAP Á. 2012b), the image of the cities (ASHWORTH, G. – VOOGD, H. 1997; BOROS L. – GARAMHEGYI Á. 2009) and economic processes (BEDATE, A. *et al.* 2004; RUIJGROK, E. C. M. 2006; TUAN, T. H. – NAVRUD, S. 2008; CHOI, S. A. *et al.* 2009; BOWITZ, E. – IBENHOLT, K. 2009). Based on the approach and the research aims of the various fields cultural heritage is defined in various ways. There are more approaches even within social geography (TUNEBRIDGE, E. J. 1994; GRAHAM, B. *et al.* 2000; CZENE ZS. 2002; KELLY, C. 2009). Out of the broader and the narrower definitions on heritage (everything is heritage that is in connection with the inherited culture vs. only that part of the culture is heritage that is regarded (by the bearers of the culture) to be important and worth of passing through for the next generations), the narrow one is used in this dissertation. This approach also involves that the scope of heritage is not stable, but it is changing continuously with the changing of the needs of people. Out of the various types of heritage defined (based on the owners of the heritage (KELLY, C. 2009), on its forms of manifestation (UNESCO 1972) or geographical scales (CZENE ZS. (2002)) in this dissertation only the common (not personal), material, built cultural heritage is focused on.

As the most important principle of the cultural heritage is that the community regards it to be valuable and wants to immortalise it, cultural heritage represents continuity between the predecessors and the future generations, which is the fundamental element of identity (FRYKMAN, J. 2004). There are several types of identities diversified in the literature. While CASTELLS, M. (2006) defines identity based on the relationship between groups of people and power, TÖNNIES (2004) differentiates between three forms of community: the community of blood (kinship), the community of place (neighbourhood) and the community of spirit (friendship). As the community of space is of pivotal importance from the dissertation's point of view, in this research local identity is focused on.

As heritage buildings represent the continuity and the permanency in the life of a city, heritage is in strong relationship with the local identity of the local residents (WARF, B 2006). The strong local identity is important for residents to feel home in the cities where they live. The stronger is the feeling of home, the more actively residents participate in forming their surroundings, in maintaining the built cultural heritage and in negotiating the development of their city (BŔHM A. 1988, 1996; TÓTH Z. 2001; BUGOVICS Z. 2007; SCHEFFLER, N. *et al.* 2009).

As built cultural heritage has several positive effects (on tourism, on defining the image of cities, on strengthening the local identity of residents, etc.) it is rather important that the heritage buildings be used properly (TÓTH

Z. 2001; ROMÁN A. 2004; ÁGOSTHÁZI L. 2005). Exactly for this reason it is very important that in case heritage buildings are rehabilitated, the principles of heritage-based integrated development be kept. According to its principles, heritage-based integrated rehabilitation is not to conserve the buildings in their present form but to use them according to the needs of the present life (ASHWORTH, G. 1991). It is important that heritage-based integrated rehabilitation takes into consideration not only the physical aspect, but also the social and economic aspects of the buildings (TÓTH Z. – HÜBNER M. 2001; JANKÓ F. 2005; ERŐ Z. 2005). Integrated rehabilitation also means that when the development strategies are negotiated all the affected actors (governments, NGOs, local residents, investors, entrepreneurs, institutes of cultural heritage) can participate in the process. Thus in case of integrated strategies no decision can be taken that is not in align with the wish of the residents, thus they would not feel excluded from their residential areas. On the contrary, the local identity of the residents would become stronger and they would endeavour more actively to maintain the built cultural heritage.

II. The aims of the research

The main aim of the dissertation was to find out what kind of local answers the settlements can give for the global revaluation of the built cultural heritage, and what kind of effects these answers have on the built cultural heritage itself and on the local identity attached to it.

The main question of the study was divided into three sub-questions or sub-fields. By analysing the results of these sub-questions will we be able to give the answer for the main research question. These are the sub-fields to be analysed:

1. *The presence of built cultural heritage in the local politics and development strategies.* In connection with this sub-field it was analysed how emphasised the questions of maintaining the built cultural heritage and strengthening the identity are in the urban politics and the development strategies of the examined residential areas. It is also analysed here whether the built cultural heritage is regarded to be an engine or a hindering factor in the development of these territories.

2. *The importance of the built cultural heritage from the residents' point of view.* In connection with this sub-field it was analysed how people living in cultural heritage buildings or living on cultural heritage territories relate to the heritage aspect of their houses, to the special rules concerning their living environment and to the often exaggerated attendance of the tourists. It was also analysed whether the built cultural

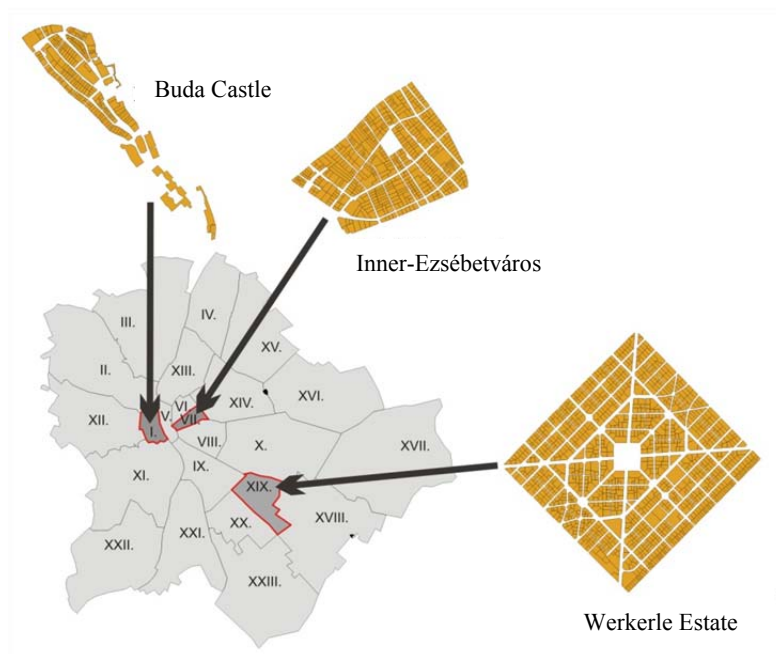
heritage contributed to the development and strengthening of the local identity.

3. *The actors shaping the development of local processes, the conflicts deriving from the difference of their interests.* In connection with this sub-field it was analysed what kind of different factors and different group of interests influence the possible local answers of the various territories. It is also analysed here which actor has the biggest importance on which territory, and what kind of conflicts the heritage status of a building or a territory can evoke.

III. The research areas and the applied research methods

The dissertation introduces the relationship between cultural heritage and local identity by analysing the case of three residential areas in Budapest. All the selected residential areas are rich in built cultural heritage, but their location within the body of Budapest (Fig. 1.), their characteristics and the functions they have differ a lot.

Fig.1. The location of the three research areas within Budapest



Source: edited by the author

We selected by intention different areas, so that three different development paths with different problems and solutions can be revealed. We also intentionally selected the examined territories from different districts of Budapest, so that the differences between the local strategies could be perceived.

The first quarter is the Castle District at the Buda side of the city, which is the part of the 1st district. Buda Castle is the most important tourist destination of Budapest and Hungary as well. The buildings in the Buda Castle are the rather old, many of them dates back to the 16th and 17th century.

The second quarter, called Inner-Erzsébetváros comprises the inner part of the 7th district. As this neighbourhood was the cultural-religious centre of the Jews before World War II, the quarter has a rather unique and organic architectural-cultural heritage.

The third examined residence is the Wekerle Estate, which is situated further away from the previous research areas, in the 19th district of Budapest. This residential area is a unique, garden-city-like part of the city with more thousand houses built in the Hungarian art nouveau style.

As the development of the three examined territories dates back to different times, the age, the state and the characteristics of the buildings differ significantly. Due to this, there are differences in the social characteristics of the tenants and the social processes going on at the various research areas. Thus the analysis of the three examined territories reveals several development paths.

Due to the rather significant dissimilarities regarding the research areas and due to the complexity of the main question of the dissertation, several research methods were used during the analysis. Besides the secondary research methods (literature review, analysis of statistical data) we used several primary methods (survey on the building stock, content analysis, questionnaire, interviews) as well.

At the beginning of the research, as to detect the processes going on regarding the changes of building stock of the various areas, a survey on the building stock was carried out. As there has already been such a survey carried out in the inner city of Budapest (by the HAS Geographical Institute in 2005), the same method was used in our survey in 2011. Thus based on the older data base and the data base created in 2011, a comparative analysis could be carried out in case of two territories (Buda Castle, Inner-Erzsébetváros). However, this survey was carried out for the first time at the Wekerle Estate. In this case the most important parts of the data collection sheet used at the two other areas were kept, but basically a new data

collection sheet was created which gave the opportunity to measure the presence of special phenomenon typical of Wekerle.

The next step was – as to be able to measure whether the changes in the building stock cause changes in the composition of the population (e.g. intensifies the immigration or outmigration) – to examine what kind of tendencies regarding the housing market characterise the various territories. The tendencies regarding the number and the average price of the flats sold yearly at the various research areas were revealed by analysing the data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

As the third step of the research, the results of the surveys (the survey on the building stock and the analysis of the housing market) were compared with the situation analysis and the vision regarding the cultural heritage phrased in the Integrated Development Strategies (IDS) of the districts. As to be able to find this out, the three IDSs of the three districts were analysed. With the help of the content analysis we wanted to find out how the certain districts think about the built cultural heritage situated on the research area. We also wanted to find out what roles these buildings are given in the future developments, whether cultural heritage is related to the local identity, and whether any steps are taken to establish or strengthen the relationship between the two.

In accordance with the literature that urban development has to take into consideration the interests and the needs of the residents as well (TÓTH Z. 2001; BUGOVICS Z. 2007), a considerable effort was taken to measure the attitudes of the residents towards their living environment and the local built heritage. This was carried out by a questionnaire survey research, within the framework of which 893 questionnaires were filled in at the three territories between March and June in 2012. This research was carried out with the help of some geographer students of the University of Szeged. The students were prepared to be able to interview the residents. Before the interviewers arrived to the area, information letters were posted to the residents to inform them about the aims and the time of the research.

Carrying out three series of interviews was also the part of the research. We made interviews with actors who are able to influence the role and the destiny of the building stock of the examined areas and who participate in the decision-making regarding the city development. Some of the interviews were carried out at the beginning of the research. These interviews helped us to determine which are the crucial problems or phenomena in connection with the built cultural heritage that we should focus on in the questionnaires. In the second phase of carrying out the interviews, which was at the end of the research, we talked with our interview partners about the so far known results of our research. But during these interviews we also focused on

measuring our interview partners' various approaches, interests and abilities to enforce their interests. During the selection of the interview partners we were making efforts to make interviews with persons who are the key-actors of the certain processes and see these processes from different points of view. Thus we made interviews with leaders or participants of different NGOs and with people working at the local government. During the research we carried out altogether 21 interviews (3 in the Buda Castle and 9 both in the Inner-Erzsébetváros and in the Wekerle Estate).

IV. Summary of the research results

1. Based on the results of the content analysis on the Integrated Development Strategies of the districts, it can be concluded that all of the three districts reckon with the built cultural heritage of their own territories and all the districts regard their maintenance and development needed. While the IDS of the 19th district highlights the importance of the heritage mainly in the chapters dealing with the strategy, the IDSs of the other two areas emphasise the importance of heritage mainly in the introductory chapters, and not in the chapters dealing with strategy. The IDS of the 19th district mainly highlight the importance of strengthening the identity through cultural heritage and that of heritage based rehabilitation. While the IDS of the Buda Castle also highlights the importance of the heritage based rehabilitation, the need of the rehabilitation is emphasized in the IDS of the 7th district, but it is not mentioned here that this revitalisation should be based on heritage. Furthermore, as the need to strengthen the local identity of the residents is hardly mentioned, but the need to strengthen the entertaining-diverting function of the area is stressed, the standpoint of the local government regarding one of the outstanding conflicts in the territory can be concluded. In this conflict the interests of the local residents (to have a peaceful living area) and visitors (to have fun in the bars, restaurants and ruin pubs during night) confront with each other (PAP, Á. 2014).

2. Independently from the various characters (state, character, ownership) of the built cultural heritage found at the three examined areas, the residents are happy about the heritage status of their houses and residential areas – at least in principle. However, at the Wekerle Estate, where the flats are the private properties of the residents, though the residents stand up for preserving the monuments, many of them often betrays the rules fixed in the Special Regulatory Plan and transform their houses without permission (Fig. 2.) (PAP, Á. 2013). These small changes all contribute to the fading of the uniform picture and the atmosphere of the Wekerle Estate. In Case of the

Buda Castle, as the flats are owned by the local government, the residents' modification of the houses is out of question. Regarding the multi-storey buildings of the Inner-Erzsébetváros it is not only the ownership (flats owned by private persons and flats owned by the government within single houses), but also the financial possibilities of the residents living there (mainly belonging to lower social stratum) that hinders the rehabilitation of the houses.

Fig.2. The rate of violating the rules concerning the built heritage of the Wekerle Estate

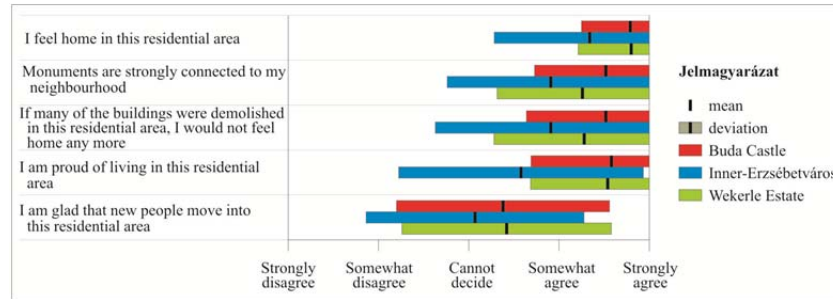


Source: edited by the author

3. *The feeling of being at home is stronger in case of the residents of the Buda Castle and the Wekerle Estate than that of the Inner-Erzsébetváros (Fig. 3.).* The pattern based on the answers of the residents of the Buda Castle and the Wekerle are very similar to each other, but they sharply differ from the pattern of the Inner-Erzsébetváros. The residents of the Castle and of the Wekerle are more proud of living at their residential areas and they are binding more strongly to the built cultural heritage of their residential area. This may be due to the fact that the population of the Inner-Erzsébetváros is changing rather intensively and some of the residents are

living there only temporarily for some years, during which time strong local attachment is impossible to develop.

Fig.3. The evaluation of statements regarding the local identity and the feeling of being home

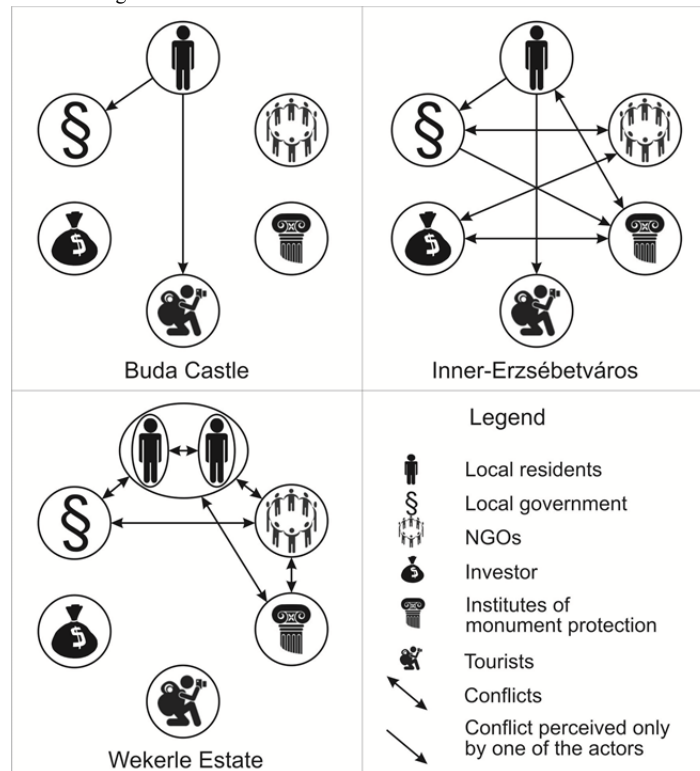


Source: edited by the author

4. At all the three examined territory, about 1/3 of the questioned persons stated that the residents of the certain areas have local identity. Though, there were significant differences in the way the residents of the various areas defined the special characteristics of their local identity. The two outstanding elements mentioned in the case of the Buda Castle and the Wekerle Estate were the “local-patriotism” and the “cohesion of the community”. In the Inner-Erzsébetváros it was not the local-patriotism, but the “multiculturalism” and the “international characteristic” of the territory that defined the identity of the residents living there.

5. The scope of the actors participating in the urban development of the three examined areas was changing depending on the firmness of the concept being in force at the research areas. The less obvious the development directions and strategy of a territory were, the more actors tried to participate in defining the development of the urban heritage. Higher number of actors also meant more conflicts between them. While the solid strategy of the Buda Castle lives no open space for the actors to challenge the concept, the unsettled development concepts of the Inner-Erzsébetváros is the source of numerous conflicts (Fig 4.). The conflicts realised on the three examined territories can be grouped into 10 different types of conflict, depending on which actors participate in them.

Fig.4. The conflicts outlined at the various examined territories



Source: edited by the author

6. Based on the research three different strategies can be outlined on the three different territories.

In the Buda Castle mainly the strategy of the local government is materialised. The local government here, exactly due to its willingness to maintain and use the built cultural heritage properly, does not privatise the flats in national monument houses, which is in contradiction with the aims of the residents. Above the proper management of the national monument houses, the local government also devotes assiduous attention on the residents' feeling of being home. To initiate and underpin this feeling local residents are given several preferences (the inheritable law on tenancy, the rental fee aligned to the time the residents have been living in the area). The services are also aligned to the needs of the residents (the line of the 116 bus is prolonged to reach more easily the market in the Feny Street, the prices of

elementary goods at the grocery store are kept at an even level, even if tourism flow would turn them higher). These interventions may have a decisive role in the fact that – apart from being the tenants and not the owners of the flats – the residents of the Buda Castle District feel home here exactly as much as the residents of the other examined territories. Apart from this, the prestige of the Buda castle as a residence and its favourable image strengthens the residents' attachment and bonding to this area. This may be the reason for the fact that out of the three analysed territories it was the Buda Castle where new residents (mainly of higher social status) move in despite the pretty high exchange rates and the rather complicated exchange transactions of the flats (the flats cannot be sold and bought, but only exchanged here). They move in despite the fact that they will not be able to become owners, just tenants.

The strategy of the Wekerle Estate is rather different from the one that is perceived in the Buda Castle. The local government here also stresses the importance of maintaining the heritage buildings. Although the flats were privatised here and are the own properties of the residents, the local government has less devices to preserve the buildings. The Special Regulation Plan is of pivotal importance in preserving and maintaining the built cultural heritage, but it is rather unwelcomed that it was installed only in 2004, by which time all the flats had been privatised and the new owners had already carried out numerous modifications on the buildings. The installation of the Special Regulation Plan and the Wekerle Estate being pronounced as monumental area in 2012 both created the framework of the regulations, but the local government is not able to control whether the rules are kept. Due to the bureaucratic procedure of the construction engineering institution, in case of violating the rules specified in the Regulation Plan, the owner is mostly informed about having broken a certain rule in an official warning letter, but fines or obligation to restore the original state of the buildings are set rather seldom. As the local government has no sources for the continuous monitoring of the area or for restoring the modifications carried out by the residents, the maintenance of the heritage building basically depends on the residents' individual decision. When sensing this process the local civil society, the Wekerle Association undertook the task to stop the erosion of the built cultural heritage. The Association is making steps on numerous fields (sometimes even taking over the tasks of the local government) to help the residents realise how important the built heritage of the Estate is. Thus the Association would like to strengthen the local identity through making the residents more conscious about the value of the built heritage. They believe the stronger local identity would contribute to the

residents' protection of buildings – even by playing down their own amenity or even by undertaking some surplus expenses.

As our research also revealed, it is the building stock of the Inner-Erzsébetváros which is in the worst conditions out of the three examined territory: the majority of these buildings needs a fully comprehensive renewal. This situation is due to the fact that these hundred-years-old buildings have never been rehabilitated by the state (like the buildings of the Buda Castle in the 1950s) and neither the residents can renew their buildings on their own (as it happened in the Wekerle). This is due to the facts that the houses are far bigger with lot more flats than in the Wekerle Estate (which makes the organisation more complicated) and the financial circumstances of the owners is generally less favourable here (e.g. the high proportion of retired persons). Thus the buildings of the Inner-Erzsébetváros are among the worst conditions and thus a well-functioning strategy on renewal is the most needed here. However, this territory does not have a definite strategy how to maintain the built cultural heritage. The strategy based on “conserving the buildings in their original form” phrased by the local civic organisations and the national institutions of cultural heritage is not feasible at this territory. The main reason of this is that there is no state contribution for the renewal of the monumental cultural heritage buildings in Hungary. The residents, as it was already stated, are not able to renew the houses, and due to the strict law on monuments neither the global investors are interested in the renewal of the properties. The obligations to preserve the original form of the buildings keeps away the investors as their investments would not pay off if the building cannot be at least partly rebuild. They would rather build new buildings instead of renewing the old ones. There were several examples for this action prior to the economic crisis. This is due to the fact that local government often gave permission to build new buildings instead of sticking to the old ones in bad conditions, the renewal of which would not be solved in a foreseeable amount of time. These buildings spoil the spirit and the image of the area, and it also spoils the life quality of the residents which leads to their moving out from the territory. The mass outmigration from the territory would reduce the prices of the properties, which would lead to the immigration of people of even lower social status than the present residents, who would be even less able to maintain or renew the buildings. This way the buildings would fall into a far worse situation and a so called downward filtration would begin. Thus by preserving the original forms of the buildings the rehabilitation is not executable in the Inner-Erzsébetváros. Due to the present economic crisis and the stagnation of the property market, at the present there are no significant changes in the building stock of the area. In the future the

strategy delineated by the local government may be the solution. According to them, the investors should be obliged to keep the façade or the front part of the buildings, but they should be given the opportunity to build new buildings where it is not visible from the street. This strategy would mean that the cityscape or streetscape would preserve its unique forms and heritage characteristics, but due to the possibility to build new buildings as well, it would turn to a rather convenient offer for the investors as well. Aligning heritage buildings to the present needs, besides keeping their basic characteristic features, would actually meet the principles of heritage based urban renewal. But this approach is not supported by the present national institution of cultural heritage.

It would be hard to use a unified strategy in the quarter also because the question of preserving built heritage is often not regarded to be an important one by the residents. As often, in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, not even the physical needs (clean air, water, aliment, housing) or the needs of security (living without fear) of the residents of Inner-Erzsébetváros are met, the higher levels of the hierarchy (the needs of belonging, appreciation, self-realization, aesthetics and transcendence) are not revealed at all. This is reflected by the results of the questionnaires that showed that out of the three examined areas it was the Inner-Erzsébetváros where the residents did not reckon with the cultural values and the atmosphere of their residences as positive quality. Thus in the Inner-Erzsébetváros, as opposed to the two other examined residences, it is not only the bad conditions of the built cultural heritage but the residents' weak adherence to the built environment and the lack of the sense of community too, that urges the establishment of a strategy based on the consensus of the actors taking part in the development of cities.

7. The better conditions the cultural buildings are in, the more they can become the engines of their economic development. Thus the built cultural heritage of the Buda Castle significantly contributes (mainly through the revenues of tourism) to the economy of the area. At the same time, the worse condition of the built heritage of the Wekerle Estate and the Inner-Erzsébetváros makes the development of these neighbourhoods slower and more difficult. Thus it can be stated that the starting phase of the development process is hardened by the protection of the monuments, but if the buildings of an area are in better conditions (or get into it via rehabilitation), the built cultural heritage may turn to be an advantage as it may serve as a basis for development, creating city image and strengthening the local identity.

V. The practicability of the research results

The results of the research can be utilized in practice several ways:

- One of the results of this study is that it emphasizes the important role cultural heritage and the local identity has in urban planning and development. As there have been very few researches in Hungary regarding this topic, the results of this study may serve as a basis for other researches carried out in this field.
- As the results of this research show what kind of consequences some measures regarding the maintenance of built cultural heritage may have on the investors or on the residents of the area, these results may be important for some districts or areas (especially if they are rich in built cultural heritage) to phrase their future strategies.
- The results of the dissertation may contribute to the foundation of the future development strategies of the examined territories.
- The results may be useful for other territories (regions, cities, districts) rich in built cultural heritage when steps are taken to reveal, handle and prevent the possible conflicts regarding the built cultural heritage.

VI. Possible directions to continue the research

The results of the study phrased several questions, thus the study may be continued in several ways.

- It would be useful to redo the research in several years' time so that the results of this and the new research could be compared. This would reveal the changes of the residential areas. It would be rather useful to redo the examination when the economic crisis is over, and when the property market becomes dynamic again. This way some information would be gained on the processes that go on under more lively circumstances.
- The results of this study could be further softened by carrying out more interviews with property investors and private entrepreneurs (the owners of hotels, bars, restaurants, ruin pubs, etc.).
- The results of the residential questionnaires could be also softened further by making some interviews with tenants moving out of the areas and tenants moving into the area.
- It would be also useful to make a longitudinal analysis on the media publications and find out how the cultural heritage of the surveyed territories was presented in the media (how emphasised they were and in what context they were presented).

- It would be also useful to do the same research on international grounds, which would reveal what are the difficulties and the possible solutions regarding the questions of the built cultural heritage in other countries

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