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Abstract of the PhD Dissertation

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Cultural Interactions in Balaton Region 1822–1960

(Autochthones, tourists, holiday-makers)

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Reminder of the problem at issue

The Balaton area is one of the most important touristic regions of today's Hungary. The local touristic activities have been shaping the environment and society of the lake for about 300 years, since the first decade of the 18th century. In my dissertation I am analyzing the middle section – these almost 150 years were the most significant in the transformation of the local autochthon – of this period according to the cultural interactions of the area.

In the background of the cultural interactions economic and social processes can be observed. The significance of these processes are well shown by the statistical data of the environment- and society-forming factors, which are in a complex connection-system with each other. The water surface of the lake decreased by its 1/3rd, its water-level by meters in the examined period, while the soil of the beaches and in connection with this, the flora and fauna of the lake has partly changed. The number of water-privileged settlements (47) had increased at the beginning of the 19th century but later this number has decreased (34) by the second half of the 20th century. By 1960 a great number of new independent civil parishes has appeared (7), while old settlements has become parts of villages or towns, and their background settlements. There are still visible changes in the system of settlements, as last improvement Balatonakarattyá became independent (2014). While in the 19th century the only town around the lake was Keszthely, by now more than 1/3rd of the settlements are towns – five of which are administrative centres – and the urbanization index of the villages are a lot better than the average data of the rest of the country. Some of the once been built-up peripheries, such as Balatonföldvár is by now a small town made up of 72 streets, asphalt roads and shopping centres. The population number has also changed differently from the average Hungarian ones, it has shown a 700% increase since the feudalism plus even the number of seasonal residents are significant. According to some calculations, during the summer all residents of Balatonkenese get only 4 centimetres of Balaton-beach.

These changes of the Balaton area have not been subjects of historical and social-historical experiments. The history books of the settlements and the tourist-based publications all see the changes as improvements. But the numerous data regarding the quality of life of the autochthon are significantly modulating this picture. Not only their population number within the residents has decreased (by now only about 1/3rd) but also the amount of territory (both watery and land) they use. Parallel to this process, in the studied era, and even till today- the

quality of life has increased above the average, but the autochthon has lost its significance regarding decision-making. In my dissertation I am studying and analyzing this process-which can be seen as the success-story of the urbanization of the area, and both as the mental and physical duty on the autochthon – through the social interactions and mainly conflicts of the social groups using and owning the territory together. The „bet” of the interactions is the transformation of the traditional culture of the Balaton-area. I show this process through the topic of the physical and symbolic territory-usage and the social relationships in connection with this, dividing the studied one and half century into six well-differentiative phases according to social history and thus from the point of the analyzed interactions.

The tourism has transmitted their modernization efforts as well as their sometimes conservative and exclusive patterns towards the autochthon inhabitants. The new population of the lake mainly transmitted the urban lifestyles and values to the local residents during their meetings. On the other hand, while building up their own vacation houses to make them parts of their lifestyles, they depended on the local knowledge, by adopting, overwriting or reinterpreting cultural habits. In my dissertation I introduce all types of interactions I found during my research, based on data from very various sources.

In the last section of my dissertation I make an attempt to analyze this dataset according to the transformation of the traditional culture of the autochthon. First of all I am searching for the answer for the question: Has the layering of contradicting cultural effects enabled the modernization or the isolation the local society? In my opinion this questioning does not only has historical value but it can be the key to understand the crisis syndromes and conflicts of the contemporary area. Firstly three academic paradigms were at hand to approach the topic. In the early phase of my ten years long research I mainly used ethnographic descriptions to draw questions about the culture of the area, but this approach – mostly cause of its scant viewpoints – turned out to be inadequate. Similarly using the embourgeoisement paradigm as analytic point of view lead to a dead end, mainly cause of methodical reasons. The examination of the phenomena of tourism and modernization, the analysis of the mass of data suggesting complex problematics made it clear that to understand the cultural changes of the area, the way is through questions of tourism anthropology. This is the paradigm within which the questions of cultural interactions and modernization-antimodernization can both be drawn, though the concept system of this science, which was born to understand the postmodern culture, has to be used with historical connections.

The structure of the dissertation

The 1st chapter is mainly the terminology of the most important concepts of the dissertation (Balaton, tourism, vacation houses, autochthon) and I made an attempt to explain the frames of the assigned area and time period, later this chapter introduces the methods and sources used during the research.

The first part of the dissertation (the 2nd-3rd and the 4.1th chapters) presents the macro phenomena of the cultural changes of the area. The social- and tourism-historical periods dividing the studied era, the arrangement of the local traditional culture before the appearance of tourism, then the homogenization of the cultural patterns and its new kind of differentiation in the meanwhile shows general phenomena common in the whole area, these phenomena give the frames of the interactions on the level of the individual village communities, holiday sites and households.

The 4.2th and the 5th chapters reveal the system of relationships and conflicts born in the tourism of the Balaton-area in its microspaces: on the level of the individual, the households, and the commonly used territories.

The 6th chapter introduces the mutual understanding attempts, partly on the level of private relationships, partly on the whole of the area. I made an attempt to reenact the picture which was created in the studied era between individuals and groups, having various cultural roots, meeting each other in the Balaton-area, including the other level of understanding which made the flowing and price-coding of cultural goods possible.

The 7th chapter is a kind of conclusion of the studied phenomena from the point of the local cultural patterns, how capable of living these have been in the area. If the sliding of them into one another were the earnestness of modernization as some historians studying the phenomena of tourism around Lake Balaton claimed.

Methods, sources, scientific frames

The cultural interactions of the Balaton-area have not yet been subjects of ethnographic, culturanthropologic, sociologic or cultural historic researches in this correlation system. Due to the lack of direct bibliographical antecedents and as a result of the nature of the topic I had to depend on a heterogeneous database from various sources. These data studied together has revealed so far unknown correlations thanks to the richness of the sources. The used sources can be put into two different groups: explanatory edited copies (eg.: short-stories, ethnographic descriptions), which in themselves were based on other sources (eg.: individual experiences, journalism, fieldworks) and primary sources (interviews, documentary materials from archives). In my dissertation I treated both types of sources as pure data source, using the appropriate source critics.

Among the various types of sources, those helping to understand the traditional culture of the area, were the statistical country profiles, the landscape- and people describing literature, the ethnographic and culture-historical bibliography and the local historical literature. The 3.1th and the 5th chapters are mainly based on data from these sources. I have not considered drawing the ethnographic picture of the area as my task. Rereading the rich ethnographic databases about the Lake Balaton firstly helped to find out the structure and the peculiarity of the traditional culture, which got in contact with the bath culture. On the other hand it helped in the introduction of the water-based lifestyle of Lake Balaton, this had not yet been subject of ethnographic studies before. Moreover the existence of this Balaton-related special lifestyle had been denied so far by researches. The journals, touristic issues, and the settlement historical monographies first of all made possible to reveal the touristic phenomena - important in my topic -, while the archive sources provided data about the functioning of the institutional system of tourism. I used data from autobiographic writings - diaries, recalls, literary works - more empathetically, showing the cultural visible of the onetime characters of tourism more sensitively. I used the results of my own and group field works (interviews, questionings, pictures) on questions rarely or never before mentioned in the related bibliography. Such as the touristic engagement of the autochthon from letting out rooms through food-providing for vacation houses till the various touristic service providers or employees. The other sector, which was clearly revealed by interviews and proved by data from other sources was the water-based lifestyle with activities from poaching through washing clothes to cutting the ice.

The uncovering and analysis of the data of the heterogeneous groups of sources lead to perfecting the special questions of the dissertation and drawing the time and geographical frames. The connection and interference of the different cultures around Lake Balaton is a phenomenon which is still alive even today and results in new twists. The data collection has been done in the decades of state socialism and I studied even current phenomena. But I studied the cultural interactions only between 1822-1960, to be able to analyze homogenous data from at least two points of view, despite of the complex social historical phenomena. The two keywords of studying the interactions are the commonly used territories and the social relationships forming here, in the field of which the phenomena of traditional culture are created. According to the last archive researches the tourism of Lake Balaton started in 1702: the letting contract of the medical bath of Fűred's periphery is dated that year. Oppositely to the almost one and half century long medical bath experience (drinking treatment, effervescent bath, scarification etc) in 1822 the official opening of the so called "coldbath" of Lake Balaton was a symbolic event of the rearrangement of the Balaton-areas. This was the first event of the phenomenon during which the Balaton-picture of the autochthon has changed a lot. The first touristic related names of the lake were: the "healing Balaton", later in the Hungarian Reform Era the "patriotic Balaton". These were the first tourism-related understandings of the lake, later new meaning layers has been added to it. These new and new layers have faded, covered up and questioned that understanding frame which was filled with the actions (fishing, water drinking, etc) of the traditional Balaton-usage.

The closing date is justified by another qualitative twist in the usage and meaning of the area. As I have shown it in the 5th chapter, the lifestyle of the autochthon had had changed in several points as a result of the expanding tourism, most visibly in the last two decades before the second world war. Neither the broadening of jobs and social relationships, nor the narrowing of the territories and activities giving the frames of the traditional peasant lives has eliminated the culture of the autochthon in its own system. This happened only by the collectivisation of agriculture between 1958-1960, this has faded the perspectives of the traditional culture for good and made the autochthon to change their agriculture-based lifestyles. This provoked wandering away and on the other hand resulted in - first time during the history of tourism of the lake - active, initiative, moreover investor behaviour, thus tourism became the main pillar of making a living. This phenomenon has also sped up the restratification of the local societies, which had started before. After 1960 masses of people has moved to the Balaton-area to be residents and at the same time to provide touristic

services from other parts of the country, or from background settlements, later from 1990 even from other countries, thus the social and cultural phenomena of the last fifty years can only be seen as interactions of the “autochthon” and the “holidayers” with strict limits. This gives a further reason to use the year 1960 as closing date of the studied era in my dissertation.

I have drawn the geographical frames of the analysis according to the same principle: to be able to handle the studied interactions as homogenous datasets as possible. The analysis of the history and social history of the Balaton-area was not my goal. As the subject of my dissertation is the change of the environment and society around the lake as a result of the appearance of tourism, and the various economic and cultural contact forms. Within my dissertation the “Balaton-area” means all the settlements having been affected during these phenomena. I mainly studied those physical territories which were commonly used by the different social classes, firstly based on water-privileged, secondly due to common residence and living-territory, and thirdly as a result of tourism.

I used the complex criteria and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of tourism anthropology to discuss the issues of the mutual effects of the meeting of different cultures in the Balaton-area. To draw the special connection-system of the territory, the web of settlements, the society and the cultural patterns, I mainly used three problems, born in the last decades as results of the tourism anthropological researches: 1. The tourism is in a really complex dialogue with tradition and modernization. 2. All types of tourism – even those “mild” travelling forms appearing in the bourgeois culture of the 19th century –, as interpretation culture, colonizes the other types of lifestyles. At the same time, tourism always brings economic benefits to the local residents, even if they are not always the main winners of the changes. On the other hand, tourism always evokes repugnancy from the local citizens, it can be milder or more visible. 3. The tourism-phenomenon is really changeable both historically and typologically. The local culture can work out variously too in this changeable environment. The traditional culture can fade and disappear into the new one, or oppositely, it can be appraised in the word of tourism. The expectations from the land and the people are not independent of how the history of tourism was related to ethnographic researches and how much it was based on its results and values.

Results

The starting statement of the dissertation is that the changing of the Balaton-area into a touristic region and its consequences can not be understood without recreating the traditional cultural picture of the area. The settlements taking part in the phenomenon have not gone through the same changes in the studied period, nor later. Some villages rapidly urbanized to be leading settlements of the touristic region, while others became stagnant background settlements. These differences were partly in connection with special subregional as well as environmental and social aptitudes, these are not derivable from the ethnographic picture of the “Balatonmellék” on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries: the real and imagined differences between the Northern and Southern coasts of the lake. Instead of using the simplified culturmorphological pattern based on the differences between the northern and southern coasts, the settlements of the Balaton-area should be seen as a culturally divided region, with settlements having economic and social relations with each other in loose strings or standing individually, but not making up a centralized network around the lake. These settlements has different modernization potentials based on their historical developments and social aptitudes-these can not be defined nor by the various micro regions drawn by geographic and ethnographic methods, nor by the visibly different northern-southern coasts, like geographic-ethnographic units based on statistical data. At the same time, the traditional culture of this very divided area has a homogenous feature, which has not yet been emphasized enough, moreover it had been denied as well, it is the peculiar land use of the Balaton and its waterside areas.

This cultural pattern has been rearranged during the touristic phenomena. These changes are usually said to be homogenization due to urbanization, but in my dissertation I analyze them from an opposite point of view emphasizing the changes as differentiation. From the traditionally uncentralized area, touristic centres, trip destinations, vacation places - with holiday houses of different social statuses - have emerged, all with various cultural interactions. The touristic roles, cultural opening or isolation of the autochthon has been decisively influenced by the changes due to the appearance of tourism in their settlements.

A peculiar line of change of the area is the appearance of the tourism-directing and advocacy institution systems, which has not yet been subject of researches. The dissertation is not about the history of the individual directing levels, government branches, institutions and

associations, but it describes the phenomenon during which the autochthon gradually lost its significance and decision-making about the developments of the area, thus they can hardly make their will to be taken into account and the lawmaking processes become more and more impenetrable. The phenomenon has not only had influence on the unequalization of the cultural relations, but it has also made the process of becoming responsible citizen more difficult decades before the communist takeover, before the totalitarian state was born.

Since the appearance of tourism, there have been several sources pointing out its effects on the autochthon, mainly their financial growth. But so far no one tried to systematize the types of roles (providing services, building companies, working as employees etc) they could take in tourism. In my dissertation I describe this system of relations, dividing the parts of it into five groups based on how balanced the relationship with the autochthon has been and about the presence or absence of the exchange of cultural possessions. I made an attempt to show the duality of these touristic connections, the business, the possibility of throwing was as important as the possibility of building up relationships to the ways of social mobility. Cause of this relations it is very important to point out – unlikely to other tourist destinations – the role of the holiday sites, characteristic to the Balaton-area. These sites, as the recreation places of the town- or city bourgeois has both evoked and satisfied touristic needs, thus they have been not only the territories but even the concurrencies of the autochthon.

The holiday sites meant special weight even on the transformation of land usage and continued to widen the inequality of the cultural relationships. The special ways of water- and waterside usage of the autochthon at the lake and the gradual suppressing of these activities due to tourism has never before been subjects of any researches. In my dissertation using the scarce data provided by interviews and local historical- and ethnographical issues I made an attempt to draw the map of the two systems of land usage different in construction and logic, showing their connections, conflicts and effects on each other. The water usage of the autochthon has mainly suppressed to the direct watersides in the studied era. The process of landclaiming has also started in this era, resulting in the almost complete disappearance of the traditional culture.

The process of landclaiming evoked the reconsideration of the Balaton-area, and this is the fact that makes the conquering behaviour of tourism really visible. In the various cultural connections, the change of cultural goods has been continous. The autochthon has taken over the modernization units of the cultural supply - digestible in the given economic and mental

state - brought by tourism, while they isolated themselves from the new cultural patterns born by the meeting of the cultural and economic system of the new modern units and the traditional ones. The holidayers has got to know the chosen elements of the traditional culture within the consumerism system of tourism, while they had had contradicting requirements towards this traditional culture, the reasons for its existence had been question at the end.

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