DEHUMANIZING AND REHUMANIZING THE COUNTRYSIDE.
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A HUNGARIAN AND A SLOVENIAN REGION
(BARANYA, KOČEVSKA, 1945–2022)

Introduction

The abandonment of landscapes reflects a post-war trend not only in Western Europe (McDonald et al 2000: 47, Szymanowski – Latocha 2021: 1), but also in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite the similar consequences (emptying of villages, disappearance of infrastructure, migration to cities, etc.), there are many remarkable differences between European regions. The case of Slovenia and Hungary offers an interesting comparison. We examine two regions, Baranya in Hungary and Kočevska (Gottschee) in Slovenia. The studied regions are different in many aspects (geographic background, agriculture, livelihood strategies etc.), although they hold similarities. Both regions were traditionally characterised by small villages and hamlets and can be described as mixed-language areas (see Judson 2006). However, ethnic composition or ethnic relations played an important role in population change and in the abandonment of landscapes in the 20th century. In both cases, it was the German population that was resettled, while the expulsion and/or resettlement processes triggered negative effects in the countryside. Baranya has been struggling with societal problems related to migration and population change since the 1960s, the Kočevska region was emptied during World War II in the winter of 1941/42. In our paper, we examine cultural and societal consequences of the processes of abandonment and their manifestations in both locales. First, the historical background of both regions is presented, followed by changes within the rural society after World War II, and the democratic change in the 1990s (i. e. depopulation, changes in ethnic structure and agriculture, etc.). Finally, we examine recent trends and current regional characteristics. The paper interprets the recent landscape as the manifestation of competing values and attitudes of rehumanization and rewilding intentions.

Approaches and methods

Between the years 2007 and 2015, Anja Moric conducted her research project, “The Maintenance of the Gottscheer Identity,” among Gottscheers living in the United States, Canada, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia. She used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (a survey questionnaire with 166 Gottscheer respondents, followed by the collection and analysis of 62 life stories and reflections of Gottscheers from the above mentioned countries). Using methods of visual anthropology, she also made an ethnographic film about the Gottscheers in Slovenia and in the diaspora. Since 2007, she has attended several events organised by Gottscheer associations in Slovenia, Austria and the USA, and has visited several Gottscheer associations and individuals around the world. She lives in the Kočevska region and is very involved in the local non-governmental sector. Since 2016, she has been the
director of the Putscherle Institute, Centre for Research, Culture and Cultural Heritage Preservation, where she also implements regional development projects.

Gábor Máté has been doing fieldwork in a small village in Baranya since 2005, where he studies landscape change from different aspects, focusing on the individual and settlement levels of change. His current research is based on semi-structured interviews, sensory detection, and visual documentation of the landscape. He also conducts historical research ranging from the late 17th century to the present. He mainly uses archival land use materials, manuscript maps, lawsuits, and archaeological fieldwork evidence to identify and measure the changes. He detects alterations in land morphology, land use systems, land coverage, village structure, and road networks. Besides the small village mentioned above, he is intensively engaged in the study of the settlement ethnography of the Mecsek Mountains, especially in Baranya and Tolna counties.

As part of the below-mentioned bilateral project, the authors have visited both locales; Baranya in September 2021 and Kočevska in September 2022. However, the present study is mainly based on the two authors’ fieldwork in the last 20 years, especially their visual anthropological observations and semi-structured interviews conducted in different parts of their study regions.

Baranya county and Kočevska region - ethnographic background

Baranya is a historical county located in southern Hungary. Before the Turkish occupation (1541–1687), the region was populated mainly by Hungarians, but under Ottoman rule, many South Slavic settlers reached the border area of the empire and settled here (Bunijevci, Sokci, Serbs). After the liberation, most of the lands were confiscated by the Habsburg Chamber and the estates were given to loyal noblemen and merchants. Extensive colonization began, and by the middle of the 18th century, a newly colonized area emerged, named "Schwäbische Türkei" after the colonists. Interestingly, these were not only from Swabia but mainly from the southern and central parts of the German lands (Seewann 2012: 114–126), yet they were given the "sváb" etronym in their new homeland. Since the 18th century, Hungarians, South Slavic groups and Germans lived side by side and shaped the landscape by their work. Since the region is fertile, most of the serfs lived from agriculture, cattle breeding and winemaking. Especially in the Mecsek Mountains and in the forested floodplains (Danube, Drava), people were also engaged in forestry and woodwork (wainwrighting, tool making, charcoal burning, lime burning, etc.). As a result of the impopulation movements of the 18th century, the German-speaking population increased and reached 33% in the 1910 census of the county population (Kovacsics 2003: 47), with great importance in agriculture and industry. After the Potsdam Conference, almost half of the Hungarian Germans were relocated to Germany. Especially the poor and the workers in heavy industry had better chances to stay in the country. In contrast to the Slovenian

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1 The article was written as part of the bilateral project „Rethinking the urban-rural relations/migrations in Europe” (BI–HU/21-22-002) financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency. From the Hungarian side, The project no. 2019-2.1.11-TET-2020-00175 has been implemented with the support provided by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology of Hungary from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund, financed under the „Anthropological study of rural-urban and urban-rural migrations in Central Europe: The case of Slovenia and Hungary” funding scheme. The work was also supported by „The Weight of the Past. The Heritage of the Multicultural Area: Case Study of Gottschee” (J6–4612) and the research program „Ethnological research of cultural knowledge, practices and forms of socialities” (P6-0187), financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.
case, the abandoned villages were immediately repopulated with Hungarian inhabitants of different origins. Most of the abandoned German houses were given to the displaced Hungarians from Slovakia and Romania (Seklers) (see Tóth 2005). Other houses were inhabited by landless Hungarians. Miklós Fűzes named these turbulent changes twister-like processes (Fűzes 1990). Not a single community was able to resist the forced or/and inevitable migration in the post-war period. After the “Communist turn” in 1948, the newly created political and economic system started to reshape the country life in Baranya. In the 1960s almost all the land was brought into socialist co-operatives. From 1968 farms, hamlets and smaller villages lacked financial support, unable to modernize infrastructure and maintain social and educational institutions. This resulted in huge migration to the cities (Kovács 2008: 5). The abandonment of the landscape started largely due to socialist settlement and agrarian politics, and not because of the war (Farkas 2009: 78). Nevertheless, migration also affected the connectedness to the land, because of the social disruption of local communities and the exchange of village inhabitants. Urban–rural migration was also notable, while it was mainly the poor, who moved into villages from cities, due to cheaper properties and living costs. In the 1970s the governmental and local authorities drove (sometimes forced) the Gypsy population to leave their forest dwellings and move to the emptying villages or to the suburbs of nearby towns. As a result of the period, many agrarian lands became a wasteland, forests took over large areas, while in flat areas the land was transformed into huge mechanized agrarian blocks, where especially monocultures (corn, wheat, sunflower, etc) were favoured. This resulted in depopulating, in some cases abandoned, villages. The abandonment is more clearly seen in the forested regions (Mecsek mountains, Zselic hills), where whole villages had become deserted.

In this article, we focus more on these parts and not on the plain territories. First traces of human settlements in the Kočevska region in southeast Slovenia can be found in prehistory, and other finds testify that the Amber Road passed through these places. Nevertheless, the area was not largely settled until the 1330s, when the Counts of Ortenburg began to settle it with their subjects from their northern estates. There are no reliable sources on the actual origins of the colonists. According to linguistic studies of the Gottscheer dialect they are said to have been brought there from upper Carinthia and eastern Tyrol (Hornung in Petschauer 1984: 87). According to the writings of Tomaz Hren, a bishop of Ljubljana (consecrated in 1599), after the initial stages of colonisation, 300 rebellious families from Frankonia and Thuringia were sent to Gottschee as well (Grothe 1931: 33). And the other part of the immigrants came from other Slovenian speaking regions – Stari Trg, Lož, Cerknica and Idrija (Petschauer 1984: 87–88) as well as Carinthia (Ferenc 2005: 31). From 1492 until World War II, the inhabitants who were mostly peasants, economically helped themselves with peddling, i.e. selling home-made products in the Austro-Hungarian lands. Peddling was a form of social correction that enabled them to survive on the poorly fertile Kočevska karst land. Over the centuries an interesting linguistic area has evolved in the Kočevska area. The use of Gottscheerisch, a dialect that preserved elements of medieval German and at the same time adopted elements of the Slovene language, prevailed. *Gottscheer* has become an appellation for an inhabitant of that land (English and German: “Gottscheer”; Gottscheerisch: “Gottscheabar”; Slovenian: “Kočevar”; Hungarian: “kucséber”). Before the spread of nationalism in the mid-19th century, the term was neutral and did not denote the ethnic origin of the inhabitants. National differentiation began with the arrival of foreign German-speaking intellectuals who sought elements of Germanness in the Kočevska region (Moric 2021). A period of the so-called “linguistic island” began when multiculturalism and multilingualism in the area was forgotten and Germanness was emphasized. Thus, Kočevska was also caught up in the “national battle” or differences between the Slovenes and the Germans. World War I and the downfall of the
Austro-Hungarian Empire brought new political circumstances and a changed status for the Gottscheers, who became a minority in the newly formed Yugoslav state. The conflict escalated with the spread of Nazism and with the resettlement of the Gottscheers to Eastern Slovenia (near Brežice (Rann), then under German occupation) in 1941/42 on the basis of an agreement between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. From there the Slovene population was deported. After the war, the Gottscheers fled from these areas. They sought new homes in Austria, Germany, the USA and Canada. Before the resettlement in 1941/42, 12,498 Gottscheers lived in the Kočevska region (Ferenc and Repe 2004: 148). After the war, less than 600 remained in Slovenia (Ferenc 2005: 269). However, economic emigration from the Kočevska region began long before the political emigration briefly described above. Already in the 19th century Gottscheers began to emigrate to the USA and Canada for economic reasons – because of large families, small homesteads, and lack of fertile land (Kobetitch 2000: 3). Due to emigration, the population of the Kočevska region steadily decreased in the years 1880–1921 (Drnovšek 2005: 15). Before World War II, there were more Gottscheers in the USA than in the Kočevska region (Ferenc 1993: 27), and according to the national cadastre from 1936/37, every third to fourth house was already abandoned or in ruins (Ferenc 2006: 416–417). In the 1950s new immigrants from other parts of Slovenia found homes in this almost deserted region.

Abandonment of villages, changing landscape and taskscape

So far, in both cases, we have seen the emergence of agriculture and small villages, along with the development of a mosaic ethnic background, which was also typical in the regions studied. As a result of various historical and social changes, there was a break in the relationship between the peasants (their descendants) and the land. In Slovenia, the socialist regime allowed peasants to keep their lands, but the Kočevska region was an exception since it was used as a model for the socialist administration of agriculture (Ferenc 2006). Thus, the situation there correlates to the situation in Hungary, where people had no individual access to the main agricultural resources; only 1 hectare was allowed to be farmed privately (the so-called “háztáji” intensely cultivated and privately owned lands), but strongly tied to the socialist cooperatives (sourcing, sales, etc.). This resulted in the change of taskscape and the landscape as well. The taskscape – according to Ingold – is the pattern of dwelling activities, while the landscape is the congealed form of the taskscape (Ingold 1993: 162). The consequences are similar to the rural exodus elsewhere in Europe (Mcdonald et al. 2000), but within a shorter period of time, and together with the circulation of people from rural to urban areas and vice versa. According to the classical structural approach in landscape studies, the landscape is a rich historical record consisting of readable layers (Muir 1999: 49–98). This means that one can read the landscape, survey it topographically, sort the identifiable elements on a time scale and measure the changes. In Baranya and Kočevska, especially in the more distant, hilly, forested areas, there are many remains of the old "private world" (before WWII): abandoned cemeteries, crosses, shrunken roads, farmsteads, water mills, houses (see photos 1, 2, and 3).

Photo 2: Abandoned village site of Petőcpuszta (Viganvár), Hungary, with the bell tower (built in 1925). Photo: Gábor Máté, 2017.
Total abandonment such as has happened in Kočevska (see below), however, is rare in Baranya, with only a few examples. Korpád and Gyűrűfű are the most famous cases, but other independent villages such as Kán, Gorica, Kisújbánya, Püspökszentlászló, Dömörkapu, Úveghuta and numerous attached (not independent) villages (called puszta, major, etc.) also died out. At the same time, the villages situated in hillier areas and in picturesque natural landscape gained importance and soon became popular with tourists, such as Kán, Püspökszentlászló and Kisújbánya. There are numerous marked hiking trails and tourist routes in the formerly inhabited hilly zone, and overall, the disappearance of settlements (or parts of them) is not as obvious as in the Kočevska region. Many houses have been renovated and preserved, and even whole villages have been transformed for purposes of tourism (Photo 4). In comparison, renovations are far less common in the Kočevska area where the last remaining pre-war houses are on a large scale being left to deterioration or replaced with new buildings.
In Kočevska landscape changes took place on a much larger scale. The resettlement of the Gottscheers, together with the rampage of World War II, had tragic consequences for the region. The cultural heritage of the former settlers has almost disappeared. Only ruins remained of many derelict villages, most of which were burned down by the Italian army in an offensive in 1941 and were never rebuilt or repopulated. At the end of the war, up to two-thirds of the residential buildings were damaged, and the condition of the industrial facilities was similar (Ferenc 2006: 416). Kočevje was the second most destroyed town in Slovenia, as much of its architectural heritage was destroyed in the bombardments. After the war, especially in the early 1950s, as Ferenc (2005: 599; also Jaklitsch 2013: 31) notes, traces of the German presence in the Kočevska region were forcibly removed for nationalist reasons. In addition to anti-German sentiment, the reason for this devastating march was ideological (atheist) intolerance, which led to the destruction of most churches, chapels, and religious landmarks. Of the 123 churches and chapels that stood in Kočevska between the wars, only 28 remain. Of the more than 400 chapels and landmarks, only 38 still stand. The majority of the Gottscheer gravestones were removed. The German names of the villages were translated into Slovène, some places were renamed, many were abolished or merged, and some were newly founded (Ferenc 2005: 659–670).
Part of the Kočevska area belonged to the so-called closed-off military area Kočevska reka, which was – especially after the dispute between Tito and Stalin – intended for military facilities of the highest Yugoslav political leadership. Movement was restricted there, sacral facilities were removed, the remaining residents were evicted, and strict silence was commanded. In addition, until the mid-1950s three penal camps operated in the closed-off area. After the war, the forests of Kočevska became a scene of mass killings or the authorities' altercation with political opponents. It was not until July 8, 1990, that the first reconciliation mass was held in Kočevski rog on the site of the mass graves.
In Hungary, the Yugoslav border zone of Baranya county was also militarized, and a new defence system was planned to be set up strengthening the Drava river’s line in the southernmost part of the county (but had not been finished due to Stalin’s death). Movement was restricted here too, and many peasant families (the so-called “kulaks”) were expelled and enclosed into forced labour camps in the Hortobágy. Their example caused fear and urged the rest of the inhabitants to leave their villages, especially in the Ormánság region. The result was not the total abandonment of the countryside, but the acceleration of the migration processes (village to town, town to village, small villages to larger villages).

The taskscape has also changed throughout the communist era in both Baranya and Kočevska, which is recognisable in the shift of land cover. In more distant and hilly parts arables and meadows mainly became forests or pastures, in lower terrains meadows were transformed into arables or lakes. In Baranya generally, the good quality lands are in use since then, but the pattern has changed, big blocks of land are favoured instead of the strip-shaped pattern. The percentage of agricultural workers has dropped dramatically. Also, the spatial activity has changed, which can be measured and mapped in a quantitative sense (Máté 2009). But it is also recognizable in individual memory: „In the fifties, we used to go up to the fields in the holloway at dawn, nothing was to be seen, but you were able to hear others being there, people went to hoe and made sounds, and talked to each other. And we greeted each other without seeing each other. Now hardly any people are out there, only who go to steal.” So not just the arrangement of man-made objects, but the traffic itself, the way of communication has changed with the changing lifestyle.

Even before the end of World War II, discussions about the post-war regulation of the economy in the Kočevska region began. Common to all was the idea of devoting the territory to cattle breeding, forestry, and collective cultivation, following the model of Soviet collective farms (Ferenc 2006: 416). After the war, the town of Kočevje became a distinct “industrial, workers’, designees’ and school town” (Ferenc 2006: 423), and most of the buildings were state-owned (as much as 73% in 1950). The one- and two-family houses in the town, managed by the municipality, were sold in the mid-1950s, but the residential buildings in the countryside, managed by the state agricultural estates and forestry administrations, were not. If before the war private land ownership prevailed in Kočevska, the emptying of the area after the war allowed the introduction of a socialist economy on a large scale, "with a different method of cultivation that changed the shape, size, use, and ownership of land" (Ferenc 2006: 424). The property was mainly state-owned; the ratio between private and state ownership was as high as 1:10 (Ferenc 2006: 430). The main economic sectors were mining, agriculture, forestry and timber industry. Agriculture was dominated by animal husbandry, and it was the main provider of fodder for the animals. Postwar migrants were given land only for use without proprietorship. Relocation to Kočevska was possible only in the framework of the establishment of agricultural cooperatives as employment on the state agricultural estate and in the forestry industry. Private agriculture was in poor condition, as evidenced by the fact that in 1960 as many as 71% of farmers had no private property at all (Ferenc 2006: 425–432). At the same time, employment in forestry increased as the forest overgrew abandoned settlements and pastures.

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2 Large grazing area in North-East Hungary close to Debrecen, covered mainly with grassland.
Rehumanizing and Dehumanizing (wildening) the landscape. Changing and competing values and attitudes.

In Baranya, the retreat of human presence in the landscape is not so obvious at first sight, since the vast majority of small villages still exist. However, the social and economic dimensions have changed significantly. In some cases, the entire community has left the village and settled in nearby villages with better conditions. The most famous “lost village” in Hungary is Gyűrűfü, which was completely depopulated by 1971. The case represents the negative effects of communist policies, while the abandoned village served as a memorial and symbol of passive resistance to the regime (Farkas 2009: 84). In 1991, a group of people, mainly intellectuals, re-established the village, creating the first ecovillage in Hungary. However, their example was not followed by other communities in Baranya. In the course of suburbanization, the population grew and the importance of other smaller villages near the county capital (Pécs) and near smaller towns such as Mohács and Komló increased. Since the regime change, the value gap between the town and the village residences has widened. As a positive effect of the pandemic, prices have increased lately, and even formerly unsaleable houses have been sold. The newcomers come mainly from the cities, especially from the neighbouring centres already mentioned. The landscape has not yet changed significantly as a result of the new urban-rural migrational trend, apart from the rapid reconstruction of old houses.

Large parts of the Kočevska region remain uninhabited to this day. This is mainly due to remoteness and lack of infrastructure. In the 1970s, there was a migration to the larger
Slovenian cities. These were not farmers, but mainly factory workers and daily commuters to work in the capital, Ljubljana, an hour away. Since Slovenia’s independence in 1991, the preservation of the remaining Kočevska tangible (material) cultural heritage was mostly present in the Kočevska area. New immigrants who moved to the Kočevska area after the war, some Gottscheers who had not resettled, and their associations made efforts to restore churches, chapels and monuments. Individual Gottscheers and some Gottscheer societies from abroad also contributed financially to the restoration of the monuments (Moric 2016).

![Photo 8: In Koblarji, Slovenia, at the place of an old church of St. Stephan, demolished in the 1960s, a chapel was built in 2004. Photo: Anja Moric, 2020.](image)

After Slovenian independence, with the formation of new Gottscheer organisations in the Kočevska area, work began on the preservation and restoration of the Gottscheer intangible cultural heritage as well. Classes of the Gottscheer dialect and cooking courses were organised, a number of publications and short collections were issued, etc. Gottscheer songs have been sung for 20 years by the Slovenian choir Cantate Domino, and in 2015 the field of dance also began to awaken with the founding of the folklore group of the Gottscheer Altsiedler Verein in 2005. The knowledge of school children about local history is gradually increasing, as elementary schools participate in the project "I Love You Kočevska" promoted by the Municipality of Kočevje. Within this project, students learn about local history and heritage. In most cases, these are efforts of non-governmental organisations and individuals who themselves do not have sufficient staff or financial resources to more than fragmentarily ensure and promote the conservation of this heritage.

There is a long tradition of placing crosses at crossroads, i. e. building calvaries, which we can call the "sacralization" of the landscape, in both Baranya and Kočevska. Walking through the landscape, we find many crosses and sculptures in poor condition, especially at focal points, at...
crossroads, indicating that not only have people left the countryside in large numbers, but spatial activity itself has also changed greatly. In a sense, these are not only signs of a transforming world in the religious sense, but also signs of a changing attitude toward the land, and the changing presence of people in the landscape. If this process happened “spontaneously” in Baranya, the situation was “forced” in Kočevska in the first decade after World War II, when due to ideological (atheist) intolerance (see above), most churches, chapels, and religious landmarks were destroyed. We can call both processes not only desacralization but also dehumanisation of the landscape. In response to the dwindling presence, state-owned forestry in Baranya (which is responsible for the majority of the forests) has launched a project to renew crosses and chapels in its territory, placing and renovating old and new objects. In Kočevska the public institution Slovenia Forest Service also tries to maintain remains of cultural heritage overgrown by forest, such as remains of the water containers and orchards in some of the derelict villages (Kocjan and Konečnik 2019: 22). Tourism is stimulating not only the restoration of sacral heritage (in Baranya, but not in Kočevska), but also other infrastructure such as lookout towers, tourist signs and so on. While the infrastructure in the forests has been significantly modernised, the role of the forests and their future vision have changed. They are perceived as a natural habitat rather than a place for industrial activities. In the forests and even in the villages, the number of wild animals and their encounters with humans is increasing. In Baranya – according to the experiences of local hunters and farmers – especially the number of deer, roe deer and wild boars has increased. While other animals, whose habitat is more tied to the meadows and farmlands, are decreasing. This is causing the countryside rewilding, partly because of changes in the perception of nature, but more likely as a side effect of conflicting interests between hunters, foresters, farmers, private citizens, and tourists. In the wildening countryside animals cause damage in gardens, fields, and even accidentally in cars. That is why more and more people are fencing their properties with cable or wire fences. Inhabitants in the region no longer make their living from agriculture, and for those who still run farms, gardens, or vineyards, it is important to keep wildlife and even people out of their area. They make the access more difficult for people to enter with gates and stop signals.

In Kočevska tourism also took a turn towards natural heritage, which is more neutral or “less heavily burdened” than the cultural heritage of the area. Today, the region is particularly known for brown bears, while cultural heritage is believed to be “non-existent”, and therefore not (significantly) included in the tourism strategy of the area. Breaking the continuity of settlements disrupted the connectedness to the cultural heritage of the area, as there was no transfer of knowledge from the native inhabitants to the new immigrants. This is especially characteristic of tourism promotion which focuses mainly on recreational tourism like hiking, mountain biking etc. In recent years heated debates have taken place in Slovenia about the hunting of bears and wolves, whose numbers have increased due to protection and limited hunting. There was damage to sheep, which are sometimes the prey of wolves.

Tim Ingold underlined the importance of dwelling in understanding the landscape, and also states that landscapes tell stories. “For both the scientist and the native dweller, the landscape tells – or rather is – a story. It enfolds the lives and times of predecessors who, over the generations, have moved around in it and played their part in its formation.” (Ingold 1993: 152). These stories are remembered with memorials, commemorating villages and villagers. Commemoration of the old village life and communities can be traced throughout the Mecsek forest in Baranya. Here we can see memorials for different reasons. The first picture illustrates the former Gypsy presence with a memorial on the site where their dug houses stood. While in Kočevska a collective forgetting of the heritage of the former inhabitants has taken place, the situation in terms of remembrance is different for the Gottscheers who live displaced in Austria, Germany, the USA and Canada today. The emigrants and their descendants, whose feelings for the homeland are connected to the Kočevska area (Moric 2018), search there for traces of their ancestors and their lost villages. Even the remaining Gottscheers, who refused to resettle, leave various traces in the area with the help of local communities, e.g. they put up memorial plaques, build monuments, crosses, information boards in abandoned villages, etc.

A tombstone-like memorial can be seen in a small village called Püspökszentlászló in Baranya, where all the native dwellers left the village, but the stone preserves the names of the former owners of the settlement, with the help of an engraved map. A similar example can be found in the Gottsheer village Pajkež, where one can see an inscription on the cleared-out ruins of the house of Sophia Stalzer Wyant, who resettled with her family in 1941 and now lives in the USA.

In Kisújbánya in Baranya, a treadmill was set up after collecting the local memories of this almost forgotten equipment. This farming tool regains the space from the green, wooded landscape, and warns tourists of the traditional use of the land and the legacy of the German settlers.

Photo 14: Renewed treadmill at Kisújbánya at the center of the East Mecsek mountains, Hungary. Photo: Gábor Máté, 2012.
Not far from Kisújbánya, a long-vanished settlement can be found, abandoned by its glass-making workers at the beginning of the 19th century. The local civil society helped the archaeological excavations, which perfectly uncovered the glasswork in 2018.


On the other hand, not just the tangible, but also the intangible heritage is made visible. Still functioning communities are practising their traditional festivals, while others are re-invented, or invented, to celebrate their existence and/or to make themselves visible in the market of localities. For example, one of the oldest festivals in Baranya county is the firewheel-rolling festival at Óbánya, where the small German community each year celebrates the end of the winter with the traditionally practised and re-introduced event. One of the good practices of preserving and reviving the cultural heritage of the Gottscheers in Kočevska is the event called Days of Gottscheer Culture, which has been organized jointly by 3 municipalities in the area of the (former) Gottscheer settlement: Kočevje, Semič and Dolenjske Toplice since 2015. In the festivity, a series of events (creative workshops, concerts, art colonies, guided tours, etc.) take place, presenting the history and ethnological features of the area and its former inhabitants.

Conclusions

According to Ingold, "landscape is always in the nature of 'work in progress'" (Ingold 1933: 162). The example of Kočevska and Baranya shows that the desolation of the landscape is an ominous trend and has been a reality since the middle of the 20th century until today. While there are different reasons for the abandonment processes, and in our examples the rate and quality of the abandoned landscape also differ, nevertheless, there are two main similarities. People are leaving the countryside, especially the peripheral areas, and migrate to the cities and central settlements. The result is a dehumanization of the land, which means that fewer and fewer people use the area for economic reasons. Man-made objects are disappearing. At the same time, other groups of people are using the landscape as heritage or source of enjoyment, and even the local, native population is making efforts to "transform" the land into an intangible sphere. Others are trying to push humans out of the landscape by giving wildlife more rights and more space. Both tendencies (dehumanization, rehumanization) are controversial and compete with each other. On the one hand, the landscapes of both regions become more homogeneous, in Baranya by the new cultivation techniques and management forms, and in Kočevska by the afforestation, and on the other hand, they become more diverse in people's minds, in theory. So a mosaic of different landscape interpretations can be encountered in these areas.

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