Identities and the Production of Local Cultural Heritage

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Abstracts

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(Re)Defining Regional Images: Visions, Perspectives and Rural Places in Context of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Present day making the selected elements of intangible cultural heritage acknowledged and making them inevitably visible (e.g. farmers markets, festivals, museums, spectacle workshops etc.) can effectively contribute to the social and economic valorisation of a local culture or a community and to the redefinition of image of a region or a place. Otherand, the growing importance of traditional local cultures passed from generation to generation originates from the fact that local and regional interests are strengthened against the negative effects of globalisation. In this perspective local cultures, besides their continuity, are able to radiate certain uniqueness and a special local spirituality, as well as the sense of security. At the same time a region or a place becomes clearly recognisable, identifiable and unique thanks to regional cultural resources based developments and promotions. But it means also local societies and cultures keep being re-evaluated and keep getting new considerations not exclusively from local viewpoints. In these processes local intangible cultural heritage shall potentially carry such symbolic contents and additional meanings, whiches are able to represent regional and local identities outside the community. E.g.
phenomenas and notions related to a local product as the guarantee of authenticity are dependent on their origins and the venue's landscape and natural values, together with the notion of a good place constituted of built heritage and traditions living aside. In context of all of these problematics it could be instructive to ethnological interpret some case studies and to take a regional approach of Western Transdanubia region of Hungary, especially in Vas County and řrség small region.

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*Crafting Identity and Cultural Heritage in Avinurme, North-East Estonia*

Handicraft can be regarded as a channel of (personal) identification, used as a way of communicating both certain society's and people's own creative individual and cultural identities. In this paper we are looking at one aspect of local and also spatial identity: the tradition of woodwork in Avinurme parish, North-East Estonia. This district has been long known as a centre of crafting (and now manufacturing) various timber products in Estonia, documented to have been renowned for its woodwork already in the 18th Century. Today, many people in the parish are creatively keeping alive and also recreating these traditions, seeing the woodworking as an important part of their (place) identity and local cultural heritage, but also a means of personal self-expression, a way to make living, and as a possible tourism attraction. Very recently two centres have been established in the area, dedicated to promoting and selling local woodwork: Avinurme Cultural Heritage Center and Avinurme Wooden Handicrafts Centre. In our paper, based on the fieldwork done in 2009–2012, we will look at how the idea of Avinurme as traditional woodworking centre has been sustained, (re)created and employed in this area and how is this space for woodworking (re)constructed; trying to analyse the goals and desires of different stakeholders and look at the perspectives of the craftsmen and the people representing the two abovementioned centres.
**Locality and Local Associations**

Local associations have long history in Finland. Many movements behind the local associations were established on the second half of the 19th century, during the time Finnish nationality and identity were built by several actors. In this presentation my focus will be on the locality represented by local heritage associations and village associations.

The first local heritage associations were established already at the end of the 19th century to create local and at the same time municipal identity. Today local heritage associations create locality by collecting and preserving local heritage and keeping up locally important monuments and buildings, like local heritage museums. In comparison with local heritage associations the village activity is a young movement and the first commissions were established not until in the 1970’s for the purpose of rural areas in Finland. In two previous decades the Finnish countryside had faced many changes and there was a need for rural activity. Nowadays village associations are focused on maintaining village’s vitality and their pleasant character. The central feature in both movements and their associations is operation which is based on the locality.

During the last decade there has been an administrative aim to reduce the number of municipalities in Finland. Altogether 68 consolidations of municipalities have been implemented during the years 2007 – 2012. At the same time there have been a lot of discussions about what will happen to the identity of local inhabitants as well as how the locality is understood and represented after the consolidation of municipalities. In my presentation I will discuss what kind of effects the consolidations of municipalities have caused on the operations of local heritage associations as well as village associations. How and what kind of locality these associations represent after the consolidations of municipalities?
Dr Erika Vass, Hungarian Open Air Museum, Szentendre

**Social Structural Changes in Two Areas of Transylvania**

In my paper I compare two regions of Transylvania: Hunyad (Hunedoara) county, which is a diaspora from the viewpoint of Hungarians; and Szeklerland which is mainly inhabited by Szeklers.

According to sources the members of most Protestant congregations in Hunyad County were already bilingual in the 18-19th century, and there were close ties between Orthodox Romanians and Protestant Hungarians. From the second half of the 19th century the rise of the manufacturing industry in Hunyad County was huge, the utilization of natural resources (coal, iron) was started. Because of industrial production small villages grew into big cities and soon their communities became more open. As a result of this, mixed marriages were abundant and the use of the native language confined to the sacred space.

Hungarian speaking Szeklers lived in closed village communities in underdeveloped Szeklerland; their migration into towns speeded up in the 1960s because of the nationalization of lands and the setting up of co-operatives. In my lecture through the example of Homoródlalmás (Meresti), I will show how modernization processes (eg. building of surfaced road) have reshaped Szeklerland. In narratives in Hungary Szeklerland is represented as the place of ancient authentic life and unspoilt nature. I show how the political elite in Homoródlalmás is using this myth to improve cultural heritage tourism and develop their identity by using European Union support. I point out the processes because of which the number of gipsies is growing owing to the emigration of the young generations. Thus in my opinion drastic social changes and losing space will take place in the next decades, a similar scenario to what has earlier happened in Hunyad County.
Traditional Wooden House Environments with New Identities and Expectations

In my doctoral thesis (2010), I have examined how traditional wooden house environments in Finland have changed in both their internal structure and external character during the latter half of the 1900s. The development has been examined using the concept of gentrification, which describes the physical and socio-economical changes to an area, and also by placing emphasis on the cultural heritage process, resulting in the emergence of these areas as cultural heritage sites.

One of the most visible changes in the physical appearance of these traditional wooden house areas is that the environments have been renovated and improved and gained a higher status as living environments. It is mostly the residents that have been behind these physical improvements, but also city officials have had a role in regenerating these types of environments. My paper deals with the process of cultural heritage in the Old Town of Porvoo. Moreover, the quiet residential area of Old Porvoo has re-flourished as a new area of business much more concerned with outward appearances than has been common in these areas traditionally.

My aim is to describe and discuss the outcomes of these changed listed above and to examine how the wooden building area of Old Porvoo has been changed from an everyday setting to a setting with a cultural heritage value and made use of as a resource for different purposes.

The flourishing of the experience industry and the demand for visibility has turned the wooden building environments into a consumer landscape for new experiences. Traditional wooden building areas are no longer only residential areas, but instead increasingly attractive areas for visitors. This new role does not automatically bring about a revival, but yet another identity not dependent on the role they had previously. The individual aspects collected thru interviews give a personal insight into the process of change and to the consequences these changes have had.