Europe: governing cultural diversity and its heritage towards unity

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Summary
Unity and diversity in Europe are perceived as unique expressions of culture and of cultural heritage. In discussions about Europeanization there is a believe that culture and cultural heritage miraculously may both unite people and separate communities. The results of a discourse analysis of European cultural heritage policies and territorial programmes that is based on social system theory will be given to analyse this view on Europe. Although calling it a core value, Europe primarily fears its cultural diversity for reasons of a single economic market and of dangerous regionalism. It will be argued that cultural diversity is considered to be governed by the tourist economy ensuring the emergence of a universalist European identity, social cohesion, cross cultural understanding and cultural stability. These wishful concepts reflect a single core understanding of the European society, in which local identities are embedded in regional, national, macro-regions and European ones. This view is confronted with the practice of interregional projects that aim to profile regional identities in a way prescribed by European policies. Here a different picture emerges of cities and regions that organize ethnicity and identity by means of culture and cultural heritage in disputes that are highly positional and strategic. This paper aims at addressing the scientific dispute and political challenges of conceptualizing more complex images of society in which pluralisation of culture and cultural heritage is a key process.

Introduction

Europe’s cultural diversity is often portrayed as its key value. The ideologies of European cooperation, unification or integration differ with respect to the inherent cultural pluralism of its communities (Middelaar 2009). Middelaar (2009) explains cooperation as a collaborative process implying the persistence of the elements of the whole, unification to involve the emergence of something new while its constituting elements remain recognizable and integration as a process of constituting something new and unprecedented. These ideological differences have their implications for the widespread use of culture and cultural heritage in discussions about Europeanization based on pluralism and assimilationism (Barnett 2001; Berbrier 2004). Although culture is portrayed as divers and plural, its heritage is often seen as the expression of universal values (UNESCO 2005). Others see cultural heritage as the unique selling points of European regions (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 2005). The strive for becoming united leads to conflicting opinions about the significance of cultural heritage.
Cultural heritage is a key issue in discourses on Europeanization because it relates to the history of Europe. It supplies the arguments of Europe existing long before its nations that are now tied together in the EU. The concept of Europe has been delineated by the history of the Celtic and Greek civilizations, the spread of the Roman Empire and of Christianity (Unwin 1998). Today there are different concepts of Europe, defined along territorial, cultural, symbolic, political and ethnic lines. Unifying concepts of Europe are grounded in a common view of a continent of great cultural diversity. This inherent dualism has been chosen as a motto for the European Union by the European Commission: “united in diversity”. The concept of Europe of the Regions explicitly addresses this dualism. The discourse of Europe of the Regions provides an interesting environment in which to discuss claims on cultural heritage that address the need for unification or alternatively emphasise diversity.

Different policy imperatives on cultural heritage stressing either unity or diversity may conflict. Claims on cultural heritage can serve a goal of uniting European society, or even the whole world (like UNESCO World Heritage). Other claims on cultural heritage may serve the goal of distinguishing a certain community from other groups. The example of European investments in restoring Byzantine monasteries in the Greek peninsula of Athos illustrates the incompatibility that can exist between these views. This example shows a tension between democracy (universal human rights) and culturally defined autonomy. Byzantine religious culture prescribes the exclusion of all traces of female life from the territory of the monks. This collides with the democratic view on cultural heritage as an object of tourism, held by the European Parliament. A big discussion emerged when subsidies from the Raphael programme were directed towards the monks of Athos. They were accused of women discrimination. This small example raises the fundamental question “Does cultural heritage belong to the culture of its heredity or does it belong to all people?” This question is related to the discussion about pluralist and universalist value orientations. Those who believe in the necessity of common values lying at the basis of Europe see cultural heritage as a common good. Those who take a pluralist stance take the democratic inconveniences for granted.

This opposition can be found in other disputes on Europe. Does Europe need a common universal culture or should it just unite its mosaic of regional cultures? Those who believe in universal values tend to stress the common culture that is diffused in the idea of European citizenship. Those who believe in cultural pluralism prefer to speak about communities and their identities. Discussions on citizenship and identity pluralism are related in discussions about European identity and about social cohesion. A similar opposition can be found in disputes about public policy development. Different viewpoints stress either bottom up or coordination as a regulative frame in which signification takes place (During 2010). Bottom up mechanisms are indicated as subsidiarity in the so called white book on good governance (Commission of the European Communities 2001). Subsidiarity challenges the top down power relations and is embedded in ideas of pluralism. Coordinative mechanisms are indicated as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) or as multilevel governance. A quest for value consensus is perceived as the key issue for this OMC practice. Decision making on matters of culture and cultural heritage and applying the principle of subsidiarity would imply examples of Athos to be fully acceptable. Decisions taken as a result of a consensus oriented procedure can be expected to give primacy to accessibility and commodification. Consideration of these oppositions makes it clear that cultural heritage disputes are embedded in conflicting ideological interwoven viewpoints about how to create unity while respecting diversity. The discourse of Europe of the Regions and its related programmes and projects has been explored as a very interesting environment to observe the practical implications of pluralist or universalist imperatives on cultural diversity and its heritage (During 2010). Below a further analysis is provided on pluralist and universalist cultural heritage signification and its embedding in the cultural and regional policies of
the EU, and, consequently, its implications for EU funded projects. This analysis will be used to
discuss the question how Europe deals with its key value of cultural diversity.

**Methods**
The results on cultural heritage signification in INTERREG contexts are based on a discourse analysis
of INTERREG projects dealing with cultural heritage, a discourse analysis cultural heritage ideology
and on a cross-cultural analysis of INTERREG project narratives. For three case studies interviews
have been conducted with the project leader of one of its partners, with cultural heritage specialists
in the local context and with national experts. Specific disputes in the cultural heritage discourse
that were mentioned in the interviews were explored further with a study of scientific literature. The
analysis of European cultural heritage ideology focused primarily on the websites, periodicals, books,
recommendations and conventions of the Council of Europe, Europa Nostra and UNESCO. The
analysis of these documents was extended with a literature study on European cultural heritage,
aiming at exploring the most prominent points of debate. For specific items such as the ratification
of a convention additional interviews with European policy officers were conducted by phone.
Within the framework of INTERACT, an institute to give an impetus to the management of
INTERREG programmes, the INTERREG analysis took place in a three year research project called
CULTPLAN. Within CULTPLAN an international partnership chaired by one of the authors of this
chapter set out to explore the manifestations of regional planning cultures and political cultures in
twenty INTERREG projects with huge interregional partnerships. In all twenty cases partners from
different European regions were asked to tell the story of the project, its difficulties and lessons
learned. These narratives were analysed to reveal manifestations of culture and re-analysed by
another partner to ensure a minimum of cultural bias. Leading the project implied attending several
INTERACT and INTERREG events, giving presentations and receiving feedback. This research offered
a unique opportunity to observe planning practices within the well-defined INTERREG community. In
addition all Inforegio periodicals issued by DG Regional Policy have been scanned for articles and
interviews concerning cultural heritage.

**Theoretical framework**
Heritage can be understood as all aspects of the past, selected by groups/communities as significant,
representative of their (images of) history or contributing to their identity, to be passed on to future
generations. The process of elicitation of heritage –what is heritage— reflects what we value or
reject in our present surroundings. Moreover it shows how cultural roots are constructed and
perceived. This process of signification is what interests us for the purpose of this analysis. We
presuppose meaning of cultural heritage to become constructed in social interaction within interest
groups, professional disciplines, political communities, ethnic communities and many more. Within
and between such entities certain conversations and discussions on cultural heritage occur in which
signification is exchanged and established. Significance of cultural heritage may be grounded in
pluralist or on universalist value orientations or in single core or multicore models of society
(Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007; Dryzek and Simon 2006). A critical discourse analysis of
cultural heritage and its signification will reveal what images of society are grounding its
conversations.

Analysing this signification has been grounded in discourse and system theory. Discourse theory
presupposes that communication processes actually shape reality; system theory provides a set of
tools to study the dynamics of discourses. A discourse consists of a coherent complex of ideas,
concepts, categorisations and distinctions. This social construction of reality can been analysed by
means of discourse analysis. Analysis of discourses can reveal the hegemony of certain concepts or
perspectives. Systematic analysis of discursive interaction can reveal why some are marginalised
and others are gaining power. This analysis of discursive interaction has been grounded in system theory. Discursive practices on cultural heritage are theorised to be structured within social systems. Niklas Luhmann (1995) developed a social system theory in which the elements of the system are communications. This theory departs from a basic distinction between a system of communications and its environment. Luhmann’s main categories in social systems are: (1) interactions (conversations), (2) organizations and (3) function systems (law, economy, art). It is theorised that during a process of communication actors start with exchanging rather simple clichés embedded in their culture and gradually establish a complex conversation in which new semantic elements are exchanged and agreed upon. Every communication (operation in terms of Luhmann) builds on the previous one in a self referential process called autopoiesis. Information from outside the system of communication, its environment, is reformulated by means of the vocabulary and thesaurus that has been established in previous conversations. This process is called operational closure and is related to the theoretical concept of “framing”.

Based on social systems theory, organizations can be seen as self-reproducing systems of communications (Seidl 2005). The process of self-reproduction is based on the history of the organization and the history of interactions with its environment (Luhmann 1995; Seidl 2005). Organizations are thus marked by path dependence and interdependence. Organizations interact with their environment based on internally produced models of that environment, and these models may differ from the environment itself.

Interior and environmental complexity
Luhmann sees interior complexity as a necessary operational condition to observe and understand complexity in the environment of the system. He defines complexity to mean that the possible connections between elements in an observed system are too numerous to be grasped, and this, in turn, means that the elements themselves will change over time, making the observation even more imperfect. Luhmann see complexity as having a positive function: environmental complexity functions as a resource for the observing system, and internal complexity will be constructed to deal with the environments that the system deems relevant. A higher degree of internal complexity equals a more refined model of external environments (society in our case), and a more subtle understanding of possible adaptations. Part of this production of internal ‘models’ of the environment, is the development of adequate semantics, including words and ideas, to cover a certain aspect of an external reality. It is this level of semantics that was theorized by semiotics, e.g. the Russian structuralists such as Lotman. Luhmann sees culture primarily as a matter of semantics, where different social systems might largely share similar semantics. The identity of a social system can consist in a specific semantic in the form and function of images of self and, not unimportantly, in the specific autopoiesis of that system – the product of its history of adaptations to certain environments. For our analysis we are more interested in the models of society that are produced as a discursive product of internal complexity and serving the function of observing external complexity. The societal concepts, categorisations and basic distinction that are used in communications give clues how society is framed.

Cultural heritage and identity: the organization of ethnicity and culture
Claims to cultural identity usually involve attempts to establish stable cores that prove the authenticity of specific cultural assertions and the creation of cultural difference (Pelkmans 2006). Barth (1969) focused on cultural differentiation when saying “it is the ethnic boundary that defines a group, not the cultural stuff it encloses” (p 15). Although these are still important insights, one needs to pay specific attention to ways in which actors conceptualize, mobilize and consume cultural stuff (such as cultural heritage) to understand their significance in assertions of difference and commonality (Pelkmans 2006). Our theoretical approach of cultural heritage accounts for semiotic mechanisms in cultures that may result in nonhereditary memory of a community based on cultural
stuff and differentiation. Content and difference regulate the closing and opening of a culture on the basis of symbols and rituals (Lotman and Uspensky 1971). With Lotman, we see symbols and rituals as opposite sign systems belonging to cultures based on content and on expression. Rituals can be seen as expression of some content and capable of forming and influencing content. To merge in a culture based on rituals requires precise knowledge of the language (relation) between the elements of expression and the content. Here, culture functions as a system of rules (traditions or living heritage) and the rules are defined as the sum of precedents. On the other hand there is culture as an aggregate of creations related to normative contents, often designated as (monumental) heritage. This opposition can be designated as the difference between handbook and book and is extremely relevant for studying heritage frames, because it may illustrate the boundaries and core-values of an open and a closed model of society.

**Governance backgrounds**

Cultural heritage discourses occur in a governance environment. Decisions on management, on restoration, on commodification and many others are taken by organizations, based on an imperfect view of their outside world in which concepts of governance migrate from one discourse to another. Policy analysis in general is moving towards decentralized models, from government to governance (Bevir 2003). While different concepts of governance abound, the overall understanding is that centralized steering mechanisms rarely work, and that governmental and non-governmental actors at several levels need to be taken into account in this analysis (Flyvbjerg 2001). Consequently, there is also a focus on multilevel governance (Bache and Flinders 2004; Hooghe 1996; Scharpf 2002) and a recognition of the importance of various sorts of networks (Klijn and Teisman 1991). These recent angles on policy studies facilitate a better and more detailed understanding of interactions, steering mechanisms and policy-formation in civil society. More recent governance theories recognize that practices don’t necessarily have to be seen as the result of deliberate governing. Sometimes practices occur spontaneously and governance has to deal with them (Aarts and During 2006; Aarts, During and van der Jagt 2006; Dam et al. 2005; Dam, During and Othengrafen 2008; Duineveld, Beunen and During 2007; Neuvel 2009). One can observe a shift in policy analysis from concepts like ‘preference’ and ‘institution’ to new and more discursive and cultural concepts, where regulatory mechanisms are considered to be the contingent products of diverse actions and political struggles informed by the beliefs of agents as they arise in the context of traditions (Bang 2004; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1988). These authors go beyond the traditional horizon of politics and administration, by focussing on the rapidly growing interest in empowering lay people such as consumers, customers and the public in general. In Newman’s (2001) wake, Bang states that “a new great narrative for connecting governance and direct democracy is taking shape outside the arena’s of political parties and organized interests in representative democracy” (2004)(page 158). New ‘governmentalities’ (Foucault) emerge, facilitating processes of self- and co-governance. Planning is defined as a coordinated and integrative practice aimed at recognizing problems of public concern, defining objectives and solutions to manage them in terms of scenarios and strategies, designing an adequate process of implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the results. Planning is influenced by culture in a broad variety of mechanisms as discussed above (During and van Dam 2007; Knieling and Othengrafen 2009). So called planning cultures arise from regional/local policy making styles. Planning can be perceived and practiced as a method of making rational decisions, where the focus is on the ‘right’ procedure to justify statements as the foundation of the plausibility and legitimacy of public planning activities. The fundamental belief is that rational procedure is strictly connected to effectiveness. This planning culture is strongly influences by the working routines (technical discourse, openness etc) of the planners involved. On the other hand, planning can be perceived and practiced as an intersubjective endeavor in a plural context, where the focus is on the processes and problems of joint action (consensus, collective sense making, social integration etc).
The fundamental belief is that consensus achieved by interaction process is strictly connected with effectiveness.

**Applying Luhmann to INTERREG’s cultural heritage discourses**

Based on Luhmann’s social system theory, operational closure has been theorised to occur in cultural heritage discursive dynamics. In this way cultural heritage signification can be understood as a product of autopoiesis. Thoughts on cultural heritage (e.g. this is important for me and my generation because of...) are vocalised and exchanged in discourse (e.g. we should save it for future generations because it shows....) and then institutionalised (this is agreed upon as this special category of cultural heritage of this group/entity) as a result of autopoiesis. This recursive process is called institutionalisation, see fig 1.

![Heritage ontology diagram](image)

**Figure 1.** A graphic representation of heritage ontology through the processes of thinking, discussing and institutionalisation (Andersen 2003)

The INTERREG system functions as an environment in which projects (other systems) can be initiated but, once started, the projects become operationally closed. Luhmann is commonly misunderstood to mean that this entails full closure of the system. Nothing is less true: organizations, as social systems, need continuous observation of and adaptation to environments during their self-reproduction. The point is that everything will be interpreted using the elements and structures of the system, including self-images. (Questions like: Who are we? What is our organizational goal? What are our relevant environments?) For example, if actors start communicating outside INTERREG, the INTERREG system interprets this information with the assistance of the concepts (regulations, information) in use and the response will reflect the way the
issue is normally dealt with within INTERREG. An INTERREG project can thus be designated as a 
ystem of communication and environments can be found in both vertical and horizontal 
governance interdependencies. Actors often operate at different levels in different systems and 
bring their experiences from the one into another. It is worth reflecting on how this effects the 
ystem. Every actor plays a role in the system and in a part of the systems environment. For 
instance an actor can be a partner in a project and at the same time advisor in a regulative group 
and also a representative of a specific region or an associated institute or discipline. In all systems 
this actor is faced with different interpretative concepts of the outside world. Different forms of self- 
referential operations may occur and the actor may bring the information from one system as 
thematic information into another system. Our theoretical perspective on cultural heritage allows a 
useful distinction on discursive and legal ownership. Ownership can be fully institutionalised by law, 
convention or governmental regulation. But it can also be in between the idea and the institution, as 
a product of discourse. Discursive ownership may result from ascription to a certain societal entity 
(e.g. the EU) of claiming by a group (e.g. an ethnic group or a political community). Ownership 
reflects power relations (in case of exclusiveness) and an attitude to share it’s cultural heritage with 
others (in case of inclusiveness). Analysing such ownership discussions can provide the clues on the 
images of society claims are based on. Having clarified our theoretical points of departure and its 
tools, we now are ready to discuss and interpret our observations from INTERREG practice.

Results and discussion

First we describe and discuss INTERREG, its ideology and its environment of Europeanization 
discourses that relate to cultural diversity and its legacies, mostly indicated as heritage. This 
account of various discourses serves as an environment for INTERREG projects. These projects 
however are simultaneously embedded in regional and local contexts. For three of them we discuss 
this hybrid embedding when analysing their discourses on cultural heritage.

INTERREG

INTERREG is an EU-funded programme framework that helps Europe’s regions to form partnerships 
to work together on common projects. European regional policy assumes that regions have a 
regional identity and that this identity can be strengthened as a result of INTERREG participation. 
This rationale implies INTERREG to sustain a federalist approach towards Europeanization. 
INTERREG III primarily addresses cultural heritage from an economic, rather than a cultural, 
perspective. The very idea of cultural heritage as asset is embedded in economic ideas of ‘Unique 
Selling Points’. Three programming periods have been defined for INTERREG during which the 
initiative grew in budget and significance. INTERREG III ran during the third programming period 
from 1999 to 2008 and is divided into three strands: A, B and C. Strand A aims at the local 
development of social facilities, the economy and the environment through cross-border cooperation, 
strand B is focused on spatial development strategies, linking cities and resource management 
through transnational cooperation and strand C aims at the development of networks and joint 
structures in interregional cooperation. Each of the strands has a programme structure and regional 
actors are invited to submit projects. Acceptance criteria include willingness to cooperate with other 
regions and to co-fund the project. The process of choosing partners and the contents of the project 
is a bottom up process.

The INTERREG Community Initiative intends to prepare border areas for a Community without 
internal frontiers. Connecting activities on both sides of a border are promoted and subsidized, 
providing an environment in which new cross-border identities and affiliations can be constructed. 
Moreover the INTERREG initiative can be interpreted as a form of clientelism, aiming at 
strengthening identity frames that compete with national ones. The B strand of INTERREG III is
most outspoken in their ideas of establishing new identities. This strand aims at establishing broad regional groupings that should adopt a common approach to their development. The INTERREG IIIB programmes try to establish regions that transcend national boundaries and occupy a space somewhere between the level of Europe and the nation state. This is done by defining an eligible territory for each programme covering a so called macro European region. Some of the European macro-regions are anchored in history. While this seems relatively simple it means that strand B of INTERREG contains two concepts of region: one that exists below the level of the nation state and another that is above it. This implies regional identities to be embedded in national and macro-regional identities (Amin 2004; Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge 2007; Risse 2003). The basic idea is that identities correspond like the layers of an onion: city identity is a specialised form of a regional identity, which is encompassed by a national and a macro-regional one. This results in a very complex picture whereas some macro-regions are anchored in history whereas others seem more invented to compete with national identities of even to combat historic identities that are too well anchored. The Baltic Sea Area as a macro-region for instance compares itself to the Mediterranean macro-region with its MEDOCC programme (European Commission 2005), which however has been broken down into specific programmes for smaller macro-regions, such as South-western Europe, Central Europe (including the Adriatic, explicitly based on the historic region of Pannonia), Archimed (Greece, Sicily, Calabria, Apulia and Basilata). Here we see that these macro-regions tend to ignore national borders. The Netherlands for instance is divided between the Atlantic and the North Sea Regions. This seems unproductive because the Dutch feel strongly connected with Belgium and Luxembourg in the so called Benelux, but in fact it shows how these macro-regional concepts intend to weaken the idea of nations and their national identities.

In the IIIB programmes frequent statements are made about “the problem of a lack of a harmonized view on the region as a whole” (e.g. page 13 in European Commission, 2005 #311). As a consequence, despite the idea of bottom up initiation of projects, the programmes lodge projects on macro-regional identity creation (such as the project Identité Méditerranée) and on harmonization of planning approaches with exactly the same aims and output description. The COMMIN project in the Baltic Sea Programme and the Technolangue project in the MEDOCC programme seem to have copied their ideas on good planning. Cultural heritage is described as the collection of typifying elements for the macro-region which should be taken up in a commodification approach. The MEDINS project in the MEDOCC programme aims to standardize categories of intangible cultural heritage; it was established out of a perception that the heritage categories employed by UNESCO were being interpreted in different ways in different regions, and this hampered its valorisation and protection. The IIIB programmes share the overarching idea of strategy development by means of harmonisation and have identical internal structures. Projects resemble these notions on strategy for specific fields of development: among INTERREG practitioners it is widely known that a project application should contain the same words, ideas, concepts as the programme that it is submitted in. Some respondents qualified this as obligatory Eurotalk, and a director of a IIIB programme explained it to be a negotiation between programme strategies and project aims. As a result it is widely accepted that common cultural heritage requires a harmonizing approach, indicated as the Open Method of Coordination in which Europa Nostra, UNESCO and cultural heritage networks like HEREIN can participate. INTERREG programmes such as the IIIB ones appear to function as a nexus in European wide and localized identity discussions. Both dimensions, European and regional, will be discussed below in order to grasp their dynamics and intertwining.

**European Heritage discourses**

European heritage discourses interact with the European policy development on cultural heritage, primarily organised by the Council of Europe. In developing cultural heritage policy the emphasis
has been redirected from a monumental approach to one based on societal values. This latter has been described in the Faro Convention (2005) which is moving away from the traditional approach that prescribes the obligatory care of the monuments that are exclusively valued by experts. Valorisation raises the questions of what is being valorised and for whom? Is it about a single European society, or about a society that takes cultural diversity as a key characteristic? The preamble of the Convention reveals its underlying ideologies and rationale. The following quotes illustrate the complex of claims towards unity and diversity:

- one of the aims of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and fostering the ideals and principles, founded upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which are their common heritage
- recognising the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage

The Council sees cultural heritage as playing an important role in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society, in promoting sustainable development and enhancing cultural diversity (article 1). The general definition of cultural heritage is “a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection of their constant evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions”. The common heritage of Europe is described as ‘all forms of cultural heritage in Europe which together constitute a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity’, and “the ideals, principles and values, derived from the experience gained through progress and past conflicts, which foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.” This quote is very important, because for the first time it provides a concrete description of the concept of European heritage. The explanatory report, (which is annexed to the convention) explains how this issue is rooted and how cultural heritage is to be categorised. It clarifies the idea of the “common heritage of Europe” consisting of two inseparable elements:

- “the cultural heritage, which represents a resource and a source of collective memory for people in Europe, and
- the shared intellectual heritage of an agreed set of social values, rooted in history, which form “the European ideal” in terms of how society should operate” (page 7 expl.rep).

European heritage consists of cultural and intellectual heritage which together provide the unifying theme of the Convention: objects of European significance and a democratic way of dealing with them. It states Faro to be “a Convention which, without excluding the exceptional, particularly embraces the commonplace heritage of all people”. The resistance towards what is called “rigid ethnicity” relates to the peace discourse, which was gaining importance at this time due to the Balkan conflict. The periodical European Heritage that was issued by the Council of Europe between 1994 and 1999 gives proof of the stabilizing role the Council saw for cultural heritage in an enlarging Europe (Fisher 1995; Leniaud 1994; Leniaud 1995; Muller 1995). Moreover it shows how the Faro discourse on cultural heritage is embedded in older discourses on cultural stability and enlargement. The Council promotes the idea of heritage tourism as a regulative mechanism towards ethnic rigidity or dangerous regionalism. The concept of Cultural Routes is supposed to answer the “urgent question of awareness of a multicultural European identity and of a set of values shared by all European citizens” (Thomas-Penette 1999). Cultural Routes supplied new tourism opportunities, based on people’s sincere interest in cultural exchange. The example of Santiago de Compostella was deemed a huge success and the concept was copied (in vain) around other themes such as the Silk Route, the Route of European gardens and many others. Tourism seemed a logical strategy, because “travel has been a permanent feature of European history” (Théond 1999) page 11. The focus on heritage tourism reflects ideas of achieving more stability and less pronounced
ethnocentrism. Cultural heritage tourism is seen as a regulative mechanism for cultural diversity. This opened new perspectives on economic valorisation, a theme almost completely neglected by the Faro Convention (the tenth article, dealing with economic activity, addresses the issue of economic potential, but immediately emphasises the importance of taking into account the special characteristics and interest of cultural heritage and respecting the integrity of these). Recently the Commission became interested in cultural heritage and came up with the so called European Heritage Label. This label combines two purposes: labelling important cultural heritage sites as European and promoting the cultural heritage tourism with this extra category of importance. The Faro Convention challenges traditions based on nationalised monument ownership with new discursive modes of (co-)ownership, that take societal value into account, including the importance of European value. This move away from expert driven restoration is disputed by the cultural heritage networks and network organizations such as Europa Nostra, and UNESCO. The emphasis on heritage tourism is very much welcomed by them.

**European heritage organizations and their networks**

The ideological viewpoints given above are influential in European heritage networks, such as Herein and Europa Nostra. The Herein network was established as a follow up to the third and fourth conferences of Ministers responsible for cultural heritage. These conferences passed a resolution to set up a permanent information system to keep authorities, professional researchers and training specialists in touch with heritage developments in other countries (Resolution 1 of the 1996 Conference in Helsinki). This work was organised in a programme entitled ‘Heritage Information and Training’ abbreviated to Herein. The need for a permanent network was further acknowledged in the Portoroz Conference of European Ministers (2001) which led to the Herein network coming under the supervision of the Council (Pickard 2002). Here in this network the ideas on societal valorisation as expressed by the Faro Convention interact with the more traditional views on cultural heritage which are particularly focused on architectural and archaeological heritage and are guided by the contexts set by the European Cultural Convention, the Granada (1985) and Valetta (1992) Conventions. This network organises virtual exhibitions, “intended to illustrate European cultural diversity through the discovery of its common heritage”. This tension between cultural diversity and common cultural heritage often emerges in discussions on ethnicity, subsidiarity and autonomy.

The Herein network has close links with UNESCO (a partner of the network) and many others, while focussing on shared vocabulary with a thesaurus and on vacant themes like digital heritage. The same is true of Europa Nostra, which claims that “cultural heritage.. bring(s) Europeans closer together, regardless our cultural or ethnic backgrounds”. This Europa Nostra sees itself as “the voice of European civil society caring for cultural heritage”. It’s interesting to notice that Europa Nostra and UNESCO (among others) also function as a network. Their network is based on national offices and national representatives. The networks of UNESCO and Europa Nostra are very influential and promote the ideas of cultural heritage as a prerequisite for social cohesion and of cultural diversity as a vehicle for pluralism. Their interest in cultural diversity has grown recently and this concept has been translated within their heritage discourse into intangible cultural heritage.

There is much cross over and communication between these organisations and their networks, which contain political, disciplinary and institutional discourses that represent a wide range of positions with regard to Europeanisation, - in terms of governance, culture and cultural heritage. National perspectives applied to the European society play a significant role in the UNESCO and Europa Nostra discourses, which are countered by anti-nationalist perspectives from the Council of Europe and to a lesser extend the Commission. Autopoiesis within these networks may reaffirm the European significance of cultural heritage, but this does not necessarily imply that participants act likewise and establish European heritage as described in the Faro Convention. The analysis of the
European heritage discourse reveals striking differences between those who give primacy to the cultural aspects of heritage and those who give the economic aspects primacy. The economic perspective tends to a view that, to promote economic cooperation and free trade, culture should be open and universal. From this perspective cultural heritage is often framed as diverse, location specific, territorially bound and as an asset for planning and regional identity. The cultural perspective presupposes and values a diversity of cultures but frames cultural heritage as a common good that enables intercultural understanding. Both positions pay tribute to the motto of “unity in diversity” but in diametrically different ways. In terms of Luhmann they are operationally closed towards each other. The cultural and economic cultural heritage discourses both promote ideas on commodification, but with a different accent. From an economic perspective cultural heritage can be used to advocate the unique selling point of a region, whereas the cultural perspective implies it to become the object of tourism.

Networks of cultural institutions function as privileged intermediaries between EU institutions and the grassroots initiatives involved in fostering cross border cultural cooperation. Access to EU support is dependent on the ability to link up with other organisations elsewhere in the EU to form and to participate in networks. They serve as platforms on which cultural heritage organisations meet, observe each other and where semantic products like new categories of heritage migrate from one discourse to another. Like organizations they are self-referential with regards to the production of heritage semantics. These networks generate a plurality of politics in the Open Method of Coordination, characterised by new forms of representation, accountability and decision making. The European society is conceived as their working environment and when referring to society they all share a universalist approach. Cultural heritage is deemed relevant for social cohesion, and this gives proof of a single core Durkheimian view on society. Pluralist approaches towards culture are ok, but they should be governed and regulated by means of heritage tourism.

INTERREG as an organisation does not take part in the European heritage discourse. But within its programmes a multitude of cultural heritage projects emerged: a representative of a IIIc secretariat spoke in public about a problematic huge interest in cultural heritage. Thousands of projects took up the challenge of expressing their regional identity as an asset for economic prosperity. Now that we’ve discussed the INTERREG imperatives and the cultural heritage discourses in its environment we will have a closer look on the mechanisms involved in reconciling European interests with the regional and local planning cultures and political constraints.

Three INTERREG projects on cultural heritage

Spread over Europe, three INTERREG projects from the B strand have been selected for a further analysis. They have been seen as social systems, as outlined before on theoretical considerations. Their cultural heritage discourses have been related to the networks and organisations in their environment. This environment supplies the information for the partnership to exchange ideas about opportunities, good practices, and guidelines and about improving their competitiveness. Within partnerships, regions, networks and disciplinary discourses there is autopoiesis, giving rise to organisational cultures defining the strategy to acquire European funding. Below a short impression will be given on the ways how cultural heritage in the projects Baltic Fort Route, Restauronet and Crossing the Lines was valorised in a regional approach and signified towards a European relevance. We will discuss the discourses on cultural heritage in these projects and how these were fuelled by other discourses on culture, economy, identity and so forth. We cannot go into much detail and focus briefly on discursive interactions.
The general objective of the Baltic Fort Route project was to construct a network to develop and economically valorise a line of fortifications that lie in Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Russia. The idea for the Baltic Fort Route (BFR) project was a response to widespread concern that this extensive line of military fortresses in northern and Eastern Europe might disappear forever into ruins. The project aimed at developing a new thematic route which offered cultural and recreational opportunities and built up tourist infrastructure. The German project-leader was well connected to the European heritage networks and strived for establishing a pan European network on fortification management. The project fits in the Baltic Sea Programme as it connects regions and cities along the Baltic Sea, including Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian and Russian partners. Below we will focus on the Lithuanian partner from Kaunas whereas here identities are wrapped up in vivid political discussions.

The city of Kaunas in Lithuania contributed to the scientific and the operational aims of Baltic Fort Route (BFR). Surfing on the ambitions of the German project leader, the partner from the university is working on a European wide documenting system of fortification remnants. In this way they can make many contacts with other universities and cities and building a database that can be used for scientific research. They established a new foundation that can serve as a permanent platform for these contacts. The city itself, also active in the project, faces big problems when complying with the aims of the project as a whole. A former alderman showed the forts and explained their problems. The forts were in a state of ruin, and therefore can not in any way be taken up in a touristic route. They need restoration. But the inhabitants of the city of Kaunas dislike the forts, because they see it as Russian heritage. There is no sympathy for the forts and some even pleaded to get rid of them. He explained Kaunas to have a military past and almost every building in the centre has had a military function. Endorsed by the university system, the forts of Kaunas are categorized as technical heritage. This is a move away from the problematic social memory on Russian suppression. The partner from the university explained the alderman to be one of the initiators of the singing revolution, giving more weight to his opinion. This alderman advised the city administration to use European funding to convince the inhabitants that the forts are worthy objects of history that should be preserved. And this is what they did in the project: producing leaflets, organizing discussions and excursions. The Kaunas partner denies any relevance of its heritage for the region Kaunas is located in. The European idea of connecting a city to a region and its identity is strongly rejected. The arguments are produced in a discourse on the competition between Kaunas and Vilnius. Kaunas sees itself as the capital of Lithuanian people and not of a small region. This claim is based on arguments of history (the city was capital in the Interbellum) and of purity (less minorities such as Poles and Russians when compared to Vilnius). On this national level there are competing identity discourses that relate to the great Duchess Lithuania in the 15th century, when Lithuania, Poland, parts of Ukraine and Belarus were united as the greatest country of Europe. The BFR project encounters a major identity problem in Kaunas when discussing the usual valorisation strategies prescribed by the INTERREG rationale and that migrate through the European heritage networks. Identity discourses in Kaunas appear to be self referential, conveying arguments of path dependency in which the course of history necessitates current identity frames. The idea of a Baltic identity has been taken up in local identity discourses and translated into Lithuanian identity models in which ethnicity, ambivalence towards Poland and anti Russian sentiments plays a key role.

Restauronet aims at running a long term network working on management and restoration of historical monuments of the Mediterranean area. The main objective of the project is to reinforce the economic, social and cultural role and centrality of historical sites. The focus lies mainly on urban and metropolitan areas, promoting sustainable development, securing the overall inheritance of cities as living organisms while offering quality housing and services for residents. The partnership, comprising a great number of Mediterranean cities and regions, expressed their wish to improve the competitiveness of cities and strengthening local assets by limiting weaknesses. They
have been paying study visits to discuss their local issues. They strongly believe in the exchange of
knowledge in Mediterranean spatial contexts, to increase the efficiency and performance of their
work. This project was one in a row. Most of the partners know each other very well for more than a
decade. Their products are preferably technical, because they already established a high level of
complexity in their cultural heritage discourse. Below we will focus on the Greek involvements in
this project, because Thrace contains a problematic border region of the EU and because of an
interesting autonomy discourse in Crete.

The Cretan partner in Restauronet has good reasons to join the project, because Cretan
entrepreneurs in Rethymnon do not comply with any heritage regulation when exploiting a
monument for the tourism industry. This partner used the project to collect foreign examples of
regulation that do not imply loss of income for the tourist industry. When interviewing the local
project leader from Rethymnon a picture emerged of an island heavily divided because of its
modernization. European projects are considered as a threat to Cretan identity and autonomy by
those who do not get their income out of the tourist industry. They observe an overexploitation in
the northern part of the island by foreign entrepreneurs not respecting Cretan culture. In the words
of the project leader there was a warlike situation caused by the historic nature of Cretan people:
they see themselves as brigands that have to obey no rule whatsoever. In the southern part people
earn their income from traditional agrarian work. A former mayor of a small village explained more
about this discourse on genuine Cretan culture. Crete has a great Diaspora, and besides, many
Cretans are living in cities like Athens. These people try to preserve their cultural roots when living
abroad or in the city with clothing, singing, dancing, cooking etc. Every year in summer, they return
to their villages of origin and participate in cultural events. There are always big disputes between
residents and Diaspora about history, authenticity, culture and identity. The Cretan countryside is
perceived by both respondents as the fountain and reserve area of Cretan culture. But there is the
problem of youngsters moving away and to counter this process, European money is necessary.
There is an ambiguous attitude towards the EU and its programmes. European money is deemed
necessary to solve the problems that have been caused by European money that went to the tourist
industry. Moreover this money is welcomed to ensure the continuity of a culture that is being
affected by it.

Xanthi, the Thracian partner in Restauronet, joined the partnership to exchange ideas on keeping a
monumental city vibrant and alive. They used the project to tie the city to the Mediterranean culture
and move away from the Balkan and from its Slavic identity frames. The city has a special office for
European projects and the director explained to be very interested in the cultural diversity of
European nations. He believes in a future European society with only one culture. He explains the
monuments of Xanthi to be national heritage because most of them are owned by the ministry of
culture in Athens. For him legal ownership is more important than discursive ownership. When
asked about regional identity he explained most of the cultural heritage of the past to have been
destroyed by the Bulgarians, during the two Balkan wars. Obviously he dislikes them much more
than his Turkish neighbours. In Xanthi local discourses are influential which use historic evidence to
tie their identity in with Macedonian history and consequently to the idea of greater Greece. Other
aspects of history are considered less important such as the Muslim past of the region. Muslims still
make some 50% of the population in Xanthi, but in history they are marginalised. According to the
director they were always insignificant in the tobacco past of the region, doing ordinary work as taxi
drivers for example. A collateral interview with a lady who has been a teacher of the Pomak Muslim
people living in the mountains just outside Xanthi, gave insights how the Muslim community has
been marginalised. As a consequence of Greece entering Europe the Pomak community got a legal
minority status and received support and funding from the EU. Nowadays this Pomak community is
claimed to be of Turkish origin by the Turks, of Slavic origin by the Bulgarians and of Greek origin
by the Greeks, based on arguments of religious culture, language and blood-relationship.
Apparently Restauronet in Xanthi offered new opportunities for expressing cultural affiliations and boundaries. But the arguments were retrieved from history, ethnicity and culture and not so much from cultural heritage.

The "Crossing the Lines" project involved the communities of Utrecht (the Netherlands), Mortsel (Belgium) and the County of Essex (Great Britain) who jointly set out to protect and redevelop the defence lines of the "Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie" (Utrecht), the east coast of the UK (Essex) and "Vesting Antwerpen" (Fort 4). The partnership was led by the Municipality of Utrecht. The overall objectives are to develop and implement knowledge on restoration techniques, to make investments for opening the fortified sites to the public and jointly develop new presentation techniques that can provide new visiting opportunities and reveal the history and current use of these post-Napoleonic fortifications. This partnership was new as they picked up the initiative of a failed project application by other cities.

The three partners have different motives to join the project. The county of Essex wishes to improve its attachment to European networks by creating a new network on fortifications and expects the other partners to convey this process. The Belgian partner, the village of Mortsel, want to learn from the Dutch planning approach of the National project called New Dutch Water Defence Line, in which all forts and inundations zone between Amsterdam and the Biesbos were taken up in a huge visionary project. This partner envisaged such an approach for the total of the Brialmont Ring around Antwerp that would put an end to the short-sightedness of the localised planning practice common in Belgium. In Utrecht the project has been carried out by a bureau called Special Maintenance. This bureau wanted to redevelop one of the forts of this defence line (which they bought for one guilder) and establish an economically sustainable maintenance of the fort with limited public investments. Utrecht applied for subsidy at the project bureau of the national project, but this was denied. Afterwards the city did not want their project to be taken up in the framework of this national project. One of the reasons is that they were committed to the IIIB programme to realise a very high level of expenditure and they were worried about needless and endless meetings with this project bureau. This expenditure discussion is important for the IIIB programme secretariat, because the rules of de-committed funds had changed on a European level: unexhausted money is not refundable to national governments. This discourse on expenditure put a severe constraint on the project and the project leader qualified it as a dare-devil project. Initially the fort in Utrecht was claimed to be just a "park", belonging to the surrounding residential areas. They borrowed this semantic trick from the Belgian partner to avoid interference of the national project bureau. The Belgian partner spoke of a park because he believed that a fort invokes unfortunate Wallonian associations with military history. He explained military history to be related to the French speaking part of Belgium, because in the army only French was spoken. There is a myth in Belgium that Flemish casualties were due to the fact they could not understand the French commands.

During the interviews several times different employees of the Bureau Special Maintenance stressed their strong organizational culture prescribing to be very close on the job and to make very realistic financial calculations for ten years ahead. They are very precise when dealing with money, with regulations and with contracting private partners that were involved to manage the touristic facilities on the restored fort. Their organisational culture is totally different from the English partner, that considered itself to be a spider in the web of many networks. They are keen on passing subsidies to fieldwork organisations and are specialised in involving the public in their plans, for instance by means of oral history inventories. This approach they offered to the other partners, but in vain. Special Maintenance considered the English wish to create a new network as totally irrelevant and redundant regarding existing networks like Europa Nostra. They saw the oversee symposium visits of the English partner as a waste of time and public money. The idea of passing
subsidies to organizations in the network without informing them as lead partner is considered a death sin. This all resulted in huge trust problems. When the project ended a high level meeting was organized in Essex. Politicians were invited and celebrated the project with an obligatory statement on the relevance of fortifications for European history and European tourists. Dutch politicians were absent, much to the annoyance of the English organiser. This is caused by a lack of status Dutch politicians can acquire with European projects. Moreover as was made clear in the interviews, the Dutch lead partner has a very critical stance towards Europe. This is not unique in the Netherlands, considering the recent revival of nationalism. The Crossing the Lines project faced huge differences in organisational cultures, in planning cultures and it faced an anti-European stance in the environment of its partners. It seems that the expenditure discourse on programme level enhanced the different forms of self referentiality that was exposed by its partners towards any idea of European heritage, citizenship, regional identity or all others that are produced in discourses on European culture and its legacies. Moreover it caused the partners to be closed to each others expectations and expertise and rely mainly on their proven organisational cultures.

**Conclusions**

In none of the case studies a specific interest was put on expressing or strengthening regional identity, which is one of the major rationales of INTERREG. Only the Restauronet partner in Crete made some reference to regional identity, because European projects tend to enlarge already present problems of overexploitation in the tourist industry. In Xanthi regional identity discussions in the environment of the project were exclusionary towards Muslim identities or Slav (Balkan). The project itself was not considered relevant for these identity discussions, especially because of its focus on monuments that were commonly ascribed to the central Greek government. In Kaunas and Utrecht regional identity remained totally untouched in the project discourse. Crete shows regional identity to be a natural focus for a region that already has a strong identity, due to autoopoiesis in identity discourse. In Kaunas identity discussions in fact were important, but they were wrapped around the idea of being the former capital city of Lithuanian and claims of being the present capital of Lithuanian people.

The analysis showed the universalist cultural heritage discourses in European networks to be producing new ideas and concepts that are taken up in INTERREG projects. These ideas depart from the basic idea of cultural heritage being the expressing of cultural diversity and uniting the people of Europe. But signification in INTERREG projects primarily appear to a product of local discursive interactions in which commodification has precedence. The model of a society of nested identities, resembled by the layer cake or onion model, is not recognised in practice. A more complex picture emerges of culture and cultural heritage being used as a reference to turn away from or affiliate to others. It seems that culture is mostly used to set boundaries, whereas cultural heritage is used to organise the ethnic content to be taken up in the tourist industry. Discursive interactions seem complex and unpredictable: e.g. the supposed anti-European sentiments not only occur at national level but may even be stronger on local levels as the cases of Crete and Utrecht have shown.

Regarding the complex nature of culture, cultural heritage and societal valorisation, this brings forward the question of planning and public policy making. Who is in control? It seems that the Open Method of Coordination is not working well when it comes to dealing with cultural pluralism. Immediately the autoopoiesis reproduces the European talk like efficiency, good practices, management and control. This discourse is a universalist one, in which harmonisation of practices seems the highest possible purpose to achieve. It doesn’t favour cultural pluralisation as a contrast to unifying concepts such as European heritage. Based on the analysis above, more complex models of society need thorough consideration in the discourses on Europeanization. A basic distinction
between cultural diversity and unifying cultural heritage is contested in interregional practice. Approaches that combine elements of pluralism and universalism are needed for economy, culture and its legacies. Principles of subsidiarity provide a good framework for this if Europe would also express firm claims that go far beyond the idea of a European Heritage label. Europe should not be afraid of pluralising cultures and manifesting itself: it should organise its own contents and boundaries.

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