HERITAGE COMMUNITIES ….AND BEYOND

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Preliminary Remarks: The Context

- The belonging of CH to the Human Rights Sphere

- Mutual Contamination (between legal instruments)

- Regaining of an unitary notion of CH

- Heritagization

Heritagization, as a term, was firstly used in 2005 by Hartog to indicate "a process where heritage affirmed itself as the dominant category, including if not overwhelming cultural life and public policy".

«today, cultural heritage manifests itself in real life as well as in the imagination of individuals, communities and groups, and mankind, with an overwhelming force» (Venice International Conference, 25-27 November 2015).
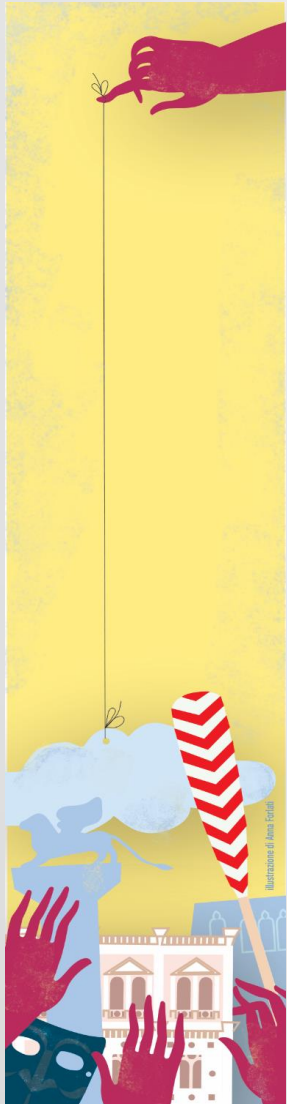
Outline

- On (legal) features of the Faro Convention

- Innovative notion of heritage community

- Lights and shadows of the notion

- The issue of participation – cooperation / partecipazione – partecipativita'

- Some peculiar cases of heritage communities: Contemporary Circus, Museums, Venician artisans

A Provoking Start

Is the diversified set of Italian civil society initiatives and projects toward the application of the Faro Convention – only signed by Italy – an heritage community or, more specifically, a heritage community of communities?

Heritage Communities
Definition

- Art. 2 b): Heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations

- Heritage communities are self-organised, self-managed groups of individuals who are interested in progressive social transformation of relationships between peoples, places and stories, with an inclusive approach based on an enhanced definition of heritage (Faro Action Plan Factsheet)

A Stand-still Obligation?

Art. 12(b) of the Faro Convention:

The Parties undertake «[to] take into consideration the value attached by each heritage community to the cultural heritage with which it identifies».

Indeterminacy – not on the existence on the positive undertaking of States, rather on the content of the «taking into consideration» - "undertake to", that is a positive undertaking, explicit (on the contrary we would find "should undertake to", that in any case it does not cancel the obligation).

The apparent indeterminacy of heritage community for us defines a full body, not an empty one.

Scholarly Comments

The heritage community is defined in the absence of «*societal parameters, national, ethnic, religious, professional or based on class*" (G. Dolff-Bonekämper).

"The heritage only grows to the extent that new 'mediators' succeed in adding further heritage categories to a list that is hedged about by criteria selected in a far from diversified or consensual fashion by routine, prejudice and conflicts of power" (Leniaud).

Flemish Vision Paper (2010)

"as a result the individual has a **plural identity** and identifies with various groups and communities. Heritage can be designated within each of these groups, if we use the concept of such a plural identity to develop an intangible cultural policy, this means that we are looking for intangible cultural heritage which (alternatively composed) groups and communities in Flanders identify with".

Features from the Text Notion

- Reference to people – Collective dimension of the notion

- Participation in the selection of cultural heritage

- Desire to sustain and transmit that CH to next generations

- Process within the framework of a public action

Features - Our Understanding

- Valorization of the element of identity in the individual and collective dimension – plurality of identities

- Eligibility-autoeligibility

- No-strict territorial nature of the heritage communities but practical experimentation on a territorial scale

- Need or not to provide a juridical statute to heritage communities

- The issue of public action: relationship with the public authorities; relation with other civil society communities and organizations, participation

- Respect of Human rights

Eligibility/Autoeligibility of HC

Unlike the communities called 'natural' by virtue of their belonging to a common ethnic or historical, or territorial group, being part of a heritage community means a modality of «aggregazione di collettività che mette in luce la natura costruita di ogni comunità i cui membri, dispersi su uno spazio che può essere **transnazionale o discontinuo, riaffermano costantemente e volontariamente la loro adesione**» (Bortolotto)

A heritage community exists because its members share common objectives, among them the interest to perpetuate the chosen (valued) cultural heritage

Voluntary nature of membership

Do Heritage Communities Need a Juridical Status?

- No binding requirements for them to get this status

- Could such a status be helpful?

- Italian example: 'non-recognized associations', case of "cooperative di comunita'" (Basilicata, Puglia, Emilia)

On the Public Action

What does it mean to transmit the CH within the framework of a public action?

Italian experience – most of the public authorities are not involved and supportive (eventually only in small municipalities)

So: how to proceed when a dialogue between the two is totally missing?

- Heritage Communities V. Communities and Groups Ex Art. 2(1) 2003 Unesco Convention

- Some networks work other do not: relationship between the Faro network and the ICH-NGO network

Challenging Proactive Experiences

- Forum Nuovi Circhi – Bologna Citta' di Circo

- The position paper on "Living museums for living ICH" (Lapicirella Zingari – Clemente - Perricone) – living heritage embodied in museums

- Venice – right to speak for the artisans,

Generative indeterminacy

Which Role for 'Academics' In this field?

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- The problematic relationship between traditional knowledge and "saper fare", on one side and its safeguarding, also as commons, opens the way to a high-level research on the protection of the TK.

- More than any other place in Europe, Venice is the right workspace for carrying on this research.

- Is it valuable to promote an intellectual co-operation to the benefit of local communities, also by establishing an «**intellectual service structure**»?

THANK YOU!

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