

CALL FOR PUBLICATION

Logics, Stakes and Limits of Cultural Heritage Transmission in EurAsia

The question of cultural heritage presents several challenges for minority groups across Asia, because of their link with international (e.g UNESCO) and State institutions. Considerable regulations are done by those institutions that reshape local conceptions of transmission and tensions may thereby appear between these different representations.

States and private institutions usually see cultural heritage as a powerful resource for economic development, more particularly through tourism. China has developed its own tools to classify and bound what in culture was and is acceptable first to match socialist goals during the Maoist period and then to develop tourism with the economic reforms. In Russia, socialist priorities prevailed in cultural affairs until the 1990's. In both countries, new stakes appeared when local administrations and populations got involved with the question of cultural expression.

Global and State politics affect the valorization of what is considered as culture or “craft” and their local (re)creation. Since the 1990's, in these two multiethnic states, a management of cultural affairs can be observed which results in a redefinition of local notions such as “tradition”, “culture”, or “ethnicity”. The comparison of these two contexts shows how these redefinitions influence the self-perception of the group's identity, its outward perception and visibility. Fieldwork data collected among ethnic groups in Russia and China illustrate the role of political instances in the valorization of cultural heritage and how different cultural political regimes reveal themselves through the heritagization of craft and folklore.

In China, the Mosuo are facing new identity issues concerning the folklorisation of their culture. In the North, at the border with Russia, the safeguarding of Hezhe crafts resulted in the creation of a new type of artefacts made from fish skins, different from what can be found with the same material amongst their Russian kin group, the Nanais. In Southern Siberia, “museumification” of archaeological remains creates tension between politics, industrial and indigenous populations of the Altay. In the Russian Arctic, the administration entrusts public

“centres of popular creativity”, employing local artists and craftspeople, with the organisation of the representation of autochthonous people in the public space.

This thematic issue aims at comparing the varying notions of “tradition” and “safeguarding of culture” within an empirical approach. We focus on conflicts about the creation of culture and how these globalised and specific contexts shape a changing self-perception of “ethnic identity” in Northern Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The articles may be on local as well as global expressions of cultural heritage: poetical genre, engraving or wood carving, architecture, ethno-parks or ecomuseums, cultural tourism, opposition to projects of valorization, *etc.* Analysis may also focus on the role of actors involved in local projects, on historical contexts or on international fashions.

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Abstracts may be sent to the four directors of the thematic issue:

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