

Study report, a group number 3 team: “Cycles of time”

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Context

Some of the most important monuments of Crete are located in the area around *Arkadi*, providing that there has been an uninterrupted human presence here from the prehistoric period down to recent times.

In the high villages of *Psiloritis*, a particular type of culture has been preserved to this day, consisting of the customs and unwritten canons of a code of ethics which can get to extremes. This is where you can meet Cretans who wear their traditional costumes, where authentic Cretan delicacies can be sampled, the real sounds of Crete can be heard, and where you can join in with truly passionate dancers.

In the area of *Mylopotamos* and *Yeropotamos* is the rich ceramic tradition of Margarites, a beautiful natural environment, a wealth of traces of Byzantine and Venetian past, but also modern tourism development, make up this region which extends from the northern foothills of *Psiloritis* to the sea.

Introduction

It has been noted at many levels of society that a dynamic cultural sector is a prerequisite for a well-functioning public sphere with arenas for critical debate and the exchange of ideas. Culture is a vital for developing a sense of identity, attachment to place, and social participation. The cultural sector also affects the economic climate of a country region, for example through culture and business development.

Globalisation and technological advances have opened up new opportunities for cultural workers across the globe. At the same time the growing trend towards homogenisation and commercialisation puts pressure on many cultures. Minority languages and cultures, and developing countries with weak cultural institutions, are particularly vulnerable. Protecting and promoting cultural diversity affects various policy areas, and is an important item on the international cultural agenda. One of the main challenges is to strike a balance between a country's international obligations and its freedom to develop and implement policies that maintain and protect its own cultural diversity and identity.

Culture in a sense of local identity

Culture can be identified as identity: common values, attitude, preferences, knowledge, etc. that underlie behaviour in a particular social group, and that can have a positive or a negative influence on social development in a given country or region. In development work this means that culture needs to be taken into consideration and more than that; it should be the base of it. This cultural aspect can be strengthened by increasing intercultural competence, by cultural analysis and by using culture as a tool. Culture is thus a crosscutting theme in development work.

Culture can also be characterised as an expression. Cultural expressions are tangible or intangible manifestations of cultures, for example in the form of art, literature, music, dance, theatre, film, storytelling etc. Such manifestations have a cultural value, and can also be of economic value. Cultural expressions are also tools for communication, information and public debate. Cultural goods and services are vehicles of cultural expressions. Cultural activities are actions devoted to cultural expressions. Culture is also understood as a sector area policy intervention and administration, which in this policy is termed the cultural sector. When referring culture as a business sector, the term cultural industry can be used.

Culture in a sense of time

Culture of Crete has a unique natural environment and history going back 5000 years which has left its marks scattered across the landscape. It has a rare ecology and a particularly interesting geological formation. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty and at the same time many historical places of the great historical value and weight. It is both a settled area and a place of productivity where thousands of people live and work, and a place of culture and entertainment, which attracts thousands of visitors each year. It seems that long history, a rich nature, the traditions and skills of making local agricultural products are voices from the past, which are well preserved at the present time. Long history is one of the key concepts and addressing cultural diversity as a resource, as a main spring of wealth of communities and individuals.

Culture as tool for sustainable tourism

The long, always visible and present history guarantees that the tourism entrepreneurs don't have to build plastic theme parks, artificial surroundings or built beaches. The cultural values are one of the main reasons for the tourists to return to the island year after year. This is a good base to both; sustainable tourism and protection of cultural, historical and nature values.

The strong local culture is also a good and steady background for international cooperation. Innovations are on safe grounds and can't spoil the local identity; on the contrary everything new created together is sustainable, equal and in good balance with the origins.

Conclusions – reflections from a study tour

In the villages there are some good examples that reflect mixture between tradition, history, existing culture and modern life that is in different ways connected with globalization. The people seem to be really friendly and open for the visitors. In a way outsiders or foreign people are not only researchers but also tourists and manage very easily to become a part of their village's life.

It seems that time stops in the villages and at the same time life goes on. People as a community live in a modern world and modernity is also a part of their community. At the same time there are old ladies in black and silent men as a grail of Cretan eternity. Local people look relaxed as if nothing is bothering them. Even the tourists that are everywhere feel that they are able to melt into the everyday life.

Cretans have found out how to live today in a balance with the past. At the same time from this can appear a good business. This might be one of the most important challenges of Crete and also one of the biggest risks for the eternity of Cretan values and culture. It is necessary to talk and discuss more about those risks which can lead Crete to become an average Mediterranean tourist destination. Risk is for example that ladies in black use their clothes only for the marketing, "local" handicrafts are made in Far East, big mass tourism hotels are occupying the best beaches etc. The connections in the community are strong. There exists the contra version between tradition and modern economy. Protection of myself, my place, my family, can also be an obstacle of development as networking should be one of the most important tools.

This is very shallow reflections as "researchers". In general there seems not to be really huge mass tourism, globalization might be hiding around the corner, some reflections of it can of course be seen in the most popular tourist sites. Everything seems to be in a balance and this balance can be recognized.

The soul of Crete is really strong and also people reflect it. This is expressed in many ways: in stones beside the road, terraces in the mountains, the smell in the air as a mixture of the sea and different herbs, the waves of the sea, in the eternity of the villages and in peacefulness of local people. Everything you see reflects the culture of the island. That is the reason why outsiders can enjoy it so much - as researchers and as tourists.

BALLAD OF THE LAUGHING MASK

ROLLING BY THE MOUNTAIN
ROLLING BY THE SEA
OUR MIND IS AN ISLAND
OUR SOUL IS FREE

POTTERY SO PEACEFUL
LANDSCAPE YELLOW GREEN
CRETE LOVELY CRETE
TELL ME WHAT TO BE

HOW TO FIND MY PAST TIME
ANCIENT VOICES SPEAK
THEATER OF THE STONES
OUR LIVE'S, A TREE

CIRCLES, CIRCLES, MOVING IN CIRCLES
NIGHT OF THE TIMES
DANCING STARS BY THE SEA
CIRCLES, CIRCLES, MOVING IN CIRCLES
LEGENDS AND FEELINGS
MEDITERRANEAN MYTH

SALT AND SUN
THE SUMMER
SOME FLAMENCO BEAT

IN THE MONASTERY
LOST IDENTITIES

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ROLLING BY THE SEA
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